COLONIAL/POST-COLONIAL LITERATURE - I

M.A., ENGLISH

Semester – III, Paper-V

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M.A. ENGLISH - COLONIAL/POST-COLONIAL LITERATURE - I

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FOREWORD

Since its establishment in 1976, Acharya Nagarjuna University has been forging a head in the path of progress and dynamism, offering a variety of courses and research contributions. I am extremely happy that by gaining 'A' grade from the NAAC in the year 2016, Acharya Nagarjuna University is offering educational opportunities at the UG, PG levels apart from research degrees to students from over 443 affiliated colleges spread over the two districts of Guntur and Prakasam.

The University has also started the Centre for Distance Education in 2003-04 with the aim of taking higher education to the door step of all the sectors of the society. The centre will be a great help to those who cannot join in colleges, those who cannot afford the exorbitant fees as regular students, and even to housewives desirous of pursuing higher studies. Acharya Nagarjuna University has started offering B.A., and B.Com courses at the Degree level and M.A., M.Com., M.Sc., M.B.A., and L.L.M., courses at the PG level from the academic year 2003-2004onwards.

To facilitate easier understanding by students studying through the distance mode, these self-instruction materials have been prepared by eminent and experienced teachers. The lessons have been drafted with great care and expertise in the stipulated time by these teachers. Constructive ideas and scholarly suggestions are welcome from students and teachers involved respectively. Such ideas will be incorporated for the greater efficacy of this distance mode of education. For clarification of doubts and feedback, weekly classes and contact classes will be arranged at the UG and PG levels respectively.

It is my aim that students getting higher education through the Centre for Distance Education should improve their qualification, have better employment opportunities and in turn be part of country's progress. It is my fond desire that in the years to come, the Centre for Distance Education will go from strength to strength in the form of new courses and by catering to larger number of people. My congratulations to all the Directors, Academic Coordinators, Editors and Lesson-writers of the Centre who have helped in these endeavors.

Prof. P. RajaSekhar
Vice-Chancellor
Acharya Nagarjuna University

Semester – III

305EG21: COLONIAL/POST-COLONIAL LITERATURE - I
Paper-V

SYLLABUS

UNIT – I

Colonial rule and the destruction of native cultures, Reclamation of the African Past, African theatre, Theme of Exile in Caribbean Literature, Use of Myth and Landscape, Oral Idiom and Narrative Techniques.

UNIT – II

Raja Rao : *Kanthapura*

UNIT – III

Chinua Achebe : *Things Fall Apart*
Wole Soyinka : *A Dance of Forests*

UNIT – IV

Ngugi : *A Grain of Wheat*

UNIT – V

V. S. Naipaul : *A House for Mr. Biswas*
Coetzee : *Waiting for the Barbarians.*

SUGGESTED READINGS:

1. Colonialism and Post Colonialism- Ania Loomba- Routledge-2016
2. Colonial and Post Colonial Literature – Migrant Metaphors- Oxford UniversityPress- 2014
3. Prem Podder & David Johnson " A Historical Companion to Post ColonialLiterature in English" 2005.
4. Elleke Boehmer, Colonial and Post Colonial Literature, Migrant Mataphors.

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CONTENTS

LESSON 1
COLONIAL RULE AND THE DESTRUCTION OF NATIVE CULTURES

OBJECTIVES

The aim of the lesson is that the exploration of the British rule or colonial rule in India and Africa. It specifically addresses the colonial rule and destruction of native cultures. The main objective of the lesson is to understand the philosophy of colonialism in the world especially in India and Africa.

STRUCTURE

1.2 INTRODUCTION

Colonialism is a practice or policy of control by one nation over the people living in different areas or countries, often by establishing colonies and generally with the aim of economic dominance.

Due to colonialism, the colonisers were able to impose their cultural practices, economics and language, and spread their religion. Colonialism in history involved the subjugation of one nation by another nation and the conquering of the people of other nations.

Indian society underwent many changes after the British came to India. In the 19th century, certain social practices like female infanticide, child marriage, sati, polygamy and a rigid caste system became more prevalent. These practices were against human dignity and values.

The era of European colonial rule in Africa was relatively brief. Most of the colonies conquered or annexed after 1885 were independent less than eighty years later. Yet this brisk episode produced a massive disruption of African societies and left a legacy of strong, centralized, authoritarian governments. European colonial states differed dramatically from the traditional political systems Africans had developed during their long precolonial history, and not surprisingly most Africans regarded them as the imposition of an unfamiliar, unwanted, and unnecessary means of governance. Within a generation of colonization, their

discontent began to be organized into movements that soon demanded political equality and ultimately independence, but by then the European ideas of strong, protective governments had become so deeply entrenched that, ironically, on independence leaders of the new postcolonial states perpetuated colonial-style government, the very system they had vowed to dismantle. Even today the administrative structure in most African states has changed little from that bequeathed to them by their European conquerors. Although European influence inheritance differed according to the traditions of law and government introduced by French, British, Portuguese, Belgian, German, and Italian officials into their African colonies, the diverse methods of administration employed by these imperial rulers shared some fundamental features in the governance of their colonies.

1.2 SUMMARY

Colonization is the practice of domination. Colonization is when a country violently invades another and claims the land as its own. New inhabitants move in and forcibly push out, control and oppress people who are indigenous to the land. Not only is *land* stolen in the colonization process but the colonizers also steal much of the indigenous people's *culture*.

There were two great waves of colonialism in recorded history. The first wave began in the 15th century, during Europe's Age of Discovery. During this time, European countries such as Britain, Spain, France, and Portugal colonized lands across North and South America.

The motivations for the first wave of colonial expansion can be summed up as God, Gold, and Glory: God, because missionaries felt it was their moral duty to spread Christianity, and they believed a higher power would reward them for saving the souls of colonial subjects; gold, because colonizers would exploit resources of other countries in order to bolster their own economies; and glory, since European nations would often compete with one another over the glory of attaining the greatest number of colonies.

Colonial logic asserted that a place did not exist unless white Europeans had seen it and testified to its existence, but colonists did not actually discover any land. The "New World," as it was first called by Amerigo Vespucci, an Italian navigator and cartographer, was not new at all: People had been living and thriving in the Americas for centuries.

Yet, in many history books, Europe's expansion is remembered as exploration, and the men who helmed ships that landed in foreign countries — and proceeded to commit violence and genocide against native peoples — are remembered as heroes. One of these men, an Italian explorer named Christopher Columbus, even has a federally recognized holiday to honor him. Columbus thought he was on his way to Asia, but found himself in the Caribbean instead. The first Indigenous people he came across were the Taíno, who accounted for the majority of people living on the island of Hispaniola (which is now divided into Haiti and the Dominican Republic). They had a highly evolved and complex culture. But this did not stop Columbus from claiming the island and its inhabitants for Spain. By 1550, a mere 58 years after he first landed on the island, what was once a thriving culture and community was severely decimated by European diseases and the brutality of a newly instated slave economy.

The second wave of colonial expansion began during the 19th century, centering around the African continent. In what is called the Scramble for Africa, European nations such as Britain, France, Portugal, and Spain sliced up the continent like a pie, creating

arbitrary borders and boundaries, and claiming large swaths of land for themselves. These artificial borders split cultural groups, resulting in fierce ethnic tensions that have had devastating ramifications throughout the continent. Indigenous political, economic, and social institutions were decimated, as were traditional ways of life, which were deemed inferior.

Among the most brutal of colonial regimes was that of Belgium under King Leopold II, known as "the Butcher of Congo." His well-documented acts of violence against the Congolese people resulted in an estimated 10 million deaths.

The treatment of the Indigenous people on the land now known as the United States is just as horrifying. The primarily British Europeans who settled here — just like the Europeans who settled in Africa and the rest of the Americas — overall did not care that there were people already living on the land. The majority did not want peace and harmony between cultures; they wanted the land for themselves. They did not want to share the abundant resources; they wanted to generate wealth to fill their own pockets. Most had no respect for Indigenous cultures or histories; they wanted to enforce their own instead. These colonizers did not care that land was considered sacred and communal. Most believed that everything, including the earth, was meant to be bought and sold.

Unlike the colonial occupation of much of the African continent, however, the Europeans who settled in the United States never left. This is called settler colonialism, a distinct form of colonialism that seeks to replace, often through genocide and forced assimilation, an Indigenous population with a new settler population. A settler is defined as any non-Indigenous person living in a settler-colonial state like the United States, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand. Understanding settler colonialism allows us to see colonialism not as a singular event, but an ongoing process of violence against and erasure of Indigenous people.

The Europeans who first settled along the East Coast of the United States believed it was their Manifest Destiny, or God-granted right, to claim territory for themselves and their posterity. As they spread across the entirety of the continental U.S., they pushed the Indigenous populations — who had lived on and tended to the land for millennia — farther and farther west. Native Americans were moved to reservations — parcels of land that were barren and far from economic opportunities. In 1830, President Andrew Jackson, hailed by President Donald Trump and commemorated on the U.S. $20 bill, signed the Indian Removal Act, which led to the forced removal, relocation, and mass death of thousands of Indigenous people. In 1838, the Cherokee were forced west by the U.S. government, which seized control of their land. Forced to walk thousands of miles, an estimated 4,000 Cherokees died on what would later come to be called the "Trail of Tears."

It may be easy to brush colonialism off as a relic of the past, but we are all living in a world shaped by these histories of brutal and violent conquest. The wealth and prosperity of what were once the most powerful colonial nations in the world can be attributed to the theft of land, resources, and people from former colonies.

Walter Rodney's book How Europe Underdeveloped Africa asserts that systemic poverty on the continent can be directly linked to European exploitation and resource extraction. After Haiti's liberation from France, the island nation was ordered to pay $21 billion in reparations to cover the cost of France's losses during the Haitian Revolution in

exchange for its independence. This calculation included the cost of lost slaves. Haiti, the poorest nation in the western hemisphere, made its final payment to France in 1947. Here in the United States, Native reservations have extraordinarily high poverty, alcoholism, unemployment, and suicide rates. These are the effects of what Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, a social worker and professor, describes as historical trauma: intergenerational emotional and psychological damage.

The violence of colonial thinking continues to shape the trajectories of countries that were once colonizers too. Colonizers believed the world was theirs for the taking, saw Black, Indigenous, and other people of colour as disposable, and believed that nothing mattered more than the currency in their pockets. The world's wealthiest countries continue to hoard the earth's resources, and their unending quest for profit continues to trump the needs of the majority of people.

Wherever colonialism has manifested in the world, from all over the Americas to every corner of the African continent, it has been met with a fierce struggle of resistance. Throughout history, Indigenous people have routinely risen up and successfully overthrown colonial powers, demonstrating that while colonizers may steal land and resources, they can never steal the dignity of a people determined to be free.

In the United States, ongoing protests in Minnesota are being waged against the proposed Line 3 oil pipeline, which the tribes who live along its planned route say would violate their sovereignty. Led by the Ojibwe people, the protestors, or water protectors, decry the pipeline's potential impact on climate change, historic and sacred sites, and the water supply and food systems. Just a few states away, NDN Collective, an Indigenous organization based in South Dakota, launched a Land back campaign in 2020 calling for the return of all public lands to Indigenous people, beginning with Mount Rushmore. The Land back manifesto says the campaign's goal is a "reclamation of everything stolen from the original Peoples: land, language, ceremony, medicine, kinship." These are just a few examples of protests across the country being waged to remind us that decolonization, or the struggle to free oneself from the shackles of colonial rule and tyranny, is not a metaphor.

1.2.1 British Colonialism in Indian History – First Established in Bengal

Colonial rule was first established in Bengal by the British.It was in Bengal that the British made the earliest attempts to reorder rural society, and establish a new revenue system and a new regime of land rights.In 1793, the Permanent Settlement was implemented by the British.Each zamindar had to pay a fixed revenue, and this was decided by the British East India company.

1.2.2 British Colonialism in Indian History: De-urbanisation and Rise of New Cities

For administrative purposes, colonial India was divided into 3 "Presidencies".In the late eighteenth century, Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras rose in importance as Presidency cities.They became the centres of power for the British in India.When these cities rose in power, many other cities started declining.Due to a drop in the demand for the goods produced, many towns manufacturing specialised goods declined.When the flow of trade moved to new cities, the old ports and trading centres could not sustain.When the British defeated local rulers, the earlier centres of regional power collapsed.The above-mentioned

process was known as de-urbanisation.Surat, Srirangapatnam, and Machalipatnam were de-urbanised.

1.2.3 British Colonialism in Indian History – Effect on Different Communities due to Forest Management

The British Colonial Government found it hard to calculate taxes due to shifting cultivation.They felt that it was an obstacle to growing trees which were useful as timber for railways.Hence a decision to ban shifting cultivation was taken by the British Colonial Government.Due to this decision of the government, many communities living in the forests were displaced.Some communities resisted the changes through small and large rebellions; others had to change their occupations.

Colonialism, which refers to the establishment of political and economic control by one state over another, had an enormous impact on Africa. The colonial experience began in the late 1400s, when Europeans arrived and set up trading posts in Africa. It reached a peak in the late 1800s and early 1900s, when European powers dominated many parts of the continent. Colonialism in Africa created nations and shaped their political, economic, and cultural development. The legacy continues to influence the history of the continent.

1.2.4 Overview of Colonialism

Between the 1400s and 1800s, Europeans began to take an interest in Africa, mainly the coastal regions. Sailing along the shores of the continent, they established trading posts and engaged in commerce with local peoples. They made little attempt to explore the interior. During this period, Europeans had very little influence in Africa.

From the mid-1700s to 1880s, Europeans became more involved in the continent. One reason for this increased involvement was growing opposition to the SLAVE TRADE. In 1787 the British founded a colony for freed slaves in SIERRA LEONE. About 30 years later, a group of Americans established LIBERIA for freed slaves and their descendants. Along with efforts to end slavery, Europeans also tried to bring Christianity to Africa. Their missionaries traveled throughout the continent, seeking to convert Africans and spread Western culture.

By the late 1800s many Africans had begun to accept and adapt various elements of European civilization. At the same time, the nature of European interest in Africa changed dramatically. Impressed by the continent's abundant supply of natural resources, Europeans sought to exploit the potential wealth. To achieve this goal, they attempted to overpower African peoples and force them to accept foreign rule. In the 1870s rival European nations raced to colonize as much African territory as possible. By the late 1880s, they had divided up most of the continent among themselves, without permission from the African peoples.

1.2.5 Patterns of European Expansion

The first European settlements in Africa were established by traders. Although merchants generally operated independently, from time to time they called on their home governments for help in dealing with hostile Africans. Eventually, European nations negotiated alliances and trading treaties with the coastal peoples. They also appointed officials to protect commercial interests at strategic points along the coasts.

Christian missionaries were the first Europeans to establish outposts in the interior of Africa. The missionaries acted as intermediaries between Africans and Europeans and often helped settle disputes between indigenous communities. However, Christian missionaries also became a disruptive force in African society. After converting to Christianity, many Africans would no longer recognize the authority of their local chiefs. In addition, some missionaries provided essential information to European armies and supported military expeditions against African groups that refused to accept Christianity.

African rulers did not develop a common policy toward the Europeans. Some tried to regulate or prohibit contact with Europeans. Many coastal states, however, had already become too dependent on overseas trade to cut their ties with Europe. Meanwhile, Europeans took advantage of rivalries between African peoples and forged alliances with some groups against others.

By the late 1870s, Africa had begun to attract other kinds of Europeans: adventurers and entrepreneurs. Many of these individuals were interested only in obtaining riches or in recreating European culture in Africa. They urged their governments to establish colonies that would serve as sources of raw materials and as markets for European goods.

The drive to establish colonies and obtain raw materials led to the socalled "scramble" for Africa. At first four nations—Belgium, France, Great Britain, and Portugal—struggled to claim territory and establish colonial outposts. Various individuals tried to get African rulers to sign treaties that would cede control of land.

Between 1884 and 1885, representatives from several European nations met in Berlin, Germany, to discuss ways to avoid conflict over the competition for African colonies. The European powers agreed on a set of rules for annexing territory. In the years that followed, they signed various treaties that resulted in the partitioning, or division, of Africa into colonies with clearly defined borders.

As the pace of European imperialism increased, many African peoples became very concerned. Fears that Europeans would seize all the land led to a number of armed conflicts. Some of these developed into full-scale wars as well-equipped armies from Europe invaded Africa to secure territorial claims. By 1914 Europeans had taken over the entire continent except for ETHIOPIA and Liberia. European imperialism now moved into a new phase—establishing colonial administrations that would maintain order and provide economic benefits for the governing nations.

European policy in Africa had two parts: the colonial government and the colonial economy. The colonial government was concerned with the affairs of a colony at the central and local levels. European officials directed the central government, which made and carried out laws and oversaw the judicial system. The local governments were supposedly run by traditional African leaders. In most instances, however, local chiefs and kings were allowed little real authority.

European officials dominated almost all colonial governments until after World War II, when some countries permitted Africans to play a greater role. Although colonialism brought stability to some regions, it did little to promote the development of African political institutions or to provide administrative training for local people.

The colonial economy was perhaps the most important aspect of European policy in Africa. Before the 1800s Africa had developed a system of local and foreign trading networks, and Africans and Europeans were fairly equal trading partners. This situation changed, however, as Europeans took steps to control trade and natural resources in Africa. The colonial powers flooded Africa with European-made goods, causing many African industries to fail because they could not compete.

Europeans also encouraged the growth of cash crops in Africa, with each colony specializing in a different crop. The emphasis on cash crops destroyed many traditional forms of agriculture. In some colonies white farmers received special treatment. They claimed the best land, forcing Africans to work less desirable plots. Some colonial governments-imposed taxes on Africans. To pay them, many Africans had to abandon their land and work for wages on white-owned farms and in mines.

1.2.6 Impact of Colonialism on African Societies

Colonial governments brought roads, railroads, ports, new technology, and other benefits to Africa. However, their policies also damaged traditional economies and dramatically changed patterns of land ownership and labor. Although the colonial system provided opportunities—such as education, jobs, and new markets for goods—for some Africans, it left many people poor and landless. In addition, the emphasis on cash crops raised for export made African societies dependent on foreign nations. Little was done to develop trade between colonies. As a result, many African nations still trade more with overseas countries than with neighbouring states.

Colonial rule disrupted the traditional political and social institutions that had developed in Africa over centuries. As Europeans carved out empires, they destroyed existing kingdoms and split up or combined many ethnic groups. In time, the colonies they created became African nations consisting of diverse groups with little in common with their fellow citizens. Furthermore, European powers destroyed much of the political and social control of traditional African chiefs and rulers. They failed, however, to establish lasting replacements for these authorities. Finally, European colonialism introduced Africans to various aspects of Western culture. African schools and universities are based on European systems of education and religion. But other parts of Western culture have not taken root as firmly.

The impact of colonialism varied somewhat with each European power. Moreover, some governments used various approaches from one colony to the next. The handful of European nations that dominated Africa—Belgium, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Spain—developed different sets of policies for their colonial possessions.

Great Britain acquired a huge colonial empire in Africa during the late 1800s through a combination of diplomacy and military force. In ruling this vast territory, Britain's policies varied according to local conditions and the nature of British settlement. In some areas, colonial authorities favored a form of “indirect rule,” in which local African rulers had some degree of power. In others, British officials took a more direct approach to governing, controlling all aspects of society. Although a few well-educated Africans—mostly lawyers—held high government posts in the late 1800s, they were replaced by British officials after 1900.

The British colonies in West Africa were NIGERIA, the Gold Coast (present-day GHANA), Sierra Leone, the GAMBIA, and—after World War I—CAMEROON. Throughout West Africa, Britain tended to exert its power indirectly, often cooperating with African kings. In areas without established rulers, the British generally chose Africans to serve as chiefs.

The British established a system of law and order in these colonies. They also built a network of roads, railways, and ports for the movement of cash crops and other goods. They imposed taxes on Africans, which had to be paid in cash, to increase the labor force. The only ways Africans could make these tax payments were to sell products or work for wages. Colonial authorities sometimes allowed forced labor as well.

The British provided few benefits for Africans. Although the colonial governments established some schools, most educational institutions were run by missionaries. Services such as medical facilities and electricity were concentrated in major cities and, as a result, reached only a small number of Africans.

In the early 1940s, British authorities began to offer more services and to involve Africans in economic planning and government. Ultimately, however, such policies were not enough to satisfy the desire of Africans for self-government. By the mid-1960s Britain had granted independence to all its colonies in West Africa.

Britain's colonies in East Africa were UGANDA, KENYA, ZANZIBAR, British Somaliland, and Tanganyika, a former German colony known as German East Africa. The British also governed the islands of MAURITIUS and the SEYCHELLES in the Indian Ocean. They began to take control of East Africa in the late 1800s and eventually set up quite different administrations in each colony.

The British authorities in Uganda gave their political support to the Ganda, one of the country's many ethnic groups. However, the Ganda became too powerful and other African groups came to resent them. The Ganda tried to prevent the British from interfering in Uganda's affairs and providing social services, education, and agricultural improvements to the people. During the 1940s, other Ugandan groups organized protests against the Ganda. Eventually opposition to European and Asian control of the cotton industry united the people of Uganda, and Britain granted the country independence in 1962.

In contrast to Uganda, the colonial government of Kenya was dominated by European settlers. The fertile highlands of Kenya attracted many European farmers who established huge plantations, taking the best land and forcing Africans to resettle elsewhere.

For many years, British policies in Kenya benefited the white settlers. As the population grew, Africans began to press for the right to expand onto white-owned lands. This expansion was strongly resisted by the settlers. In the early 1950s, a group known as the MAU MAU, made up of members of the GIKUYU people, began a violent uprising against the settlers. After attempting to put down the rebellion, colonial authorities realized that they would have to agree to some of the Mau Mau's demands. The government allowed Africans to farm in the highland regions, making some white settlers give up their land. In addition, the British began discussions with Kenyans about independence, which was granted in 1963.

Located south of Kenya, Tanganyika was a German colony until World War I, when Britain took it over. Initially, the colony attracted few British settlers and little investment. In the 1950s, however, Britain became more involved in Tanganyika, encouraging settlement and introducing various political and economic measures. Although the Africans resisted some of the British policies, the move toward independence—granted in 1961—was relatively peaceful.

Zanzibar had been a colony of the Arab state of Oman since the mid-1800s, used mainly as a source of slaves. It had been ruled for years by an Arab upper class. When the British took Zanzibar over, they continued the tradition, appointing Arabs to most government posts. Rivalries between the Arabs and the indigenous population led to conflicts that Britain was unable to resolve. The colony was granted independence in 1963. The following year, Zanzibar and Tanganyika united to become the nation of TANZANIA.

British Somaliland was located in the northern portion of present-day SOMALIA, near DJIBOUTI. Britain established a protectorate there in the 1880s. In 1960, the region joined with Italian Somaliland, farther south, to form the independent Republic of Somalia.
Britain captured the island of Mauritius in 1810 and then formally received control of it under the Treaty of Paris (1814), signed by several European nations at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. The same treaty gave Britain the islands of the Seychelles. Mauritius gained its independence in 1968, followed eight years later by the Seychelles.

Britain's colonial possessions in central and southern Africa included Southern Rhodesia (present-day ZIMBABWE), Northern Rhodesia (ZAMBIA), Nyasaland (MALAWI), Bechuanaland (BOTSWANA), Basutoland (LESOTHO), and SWAZILAND. Before 1910, when SOUTH AFRICA became independent, Britain also had two colonies in that region—the Cape Colony and Natal.

Involvement in South Africa dated from the early 1800s, when Britain acquired the Cape Colony from the Dutch. British immigrants flooded into southern Africa in the late 1800s. They never gained more than partial control there, however, because of the presence of large numbers of Dutch settlers, known as Afrikaners, or Boers. As British settlement increased, many Afrikaners tried to move north into Bechuanaland. The African rulers of Bechuanaland, fearing an invasion of the Dutch settlers, asked Britain for help in 1885. Britain agreed and Bechuanaland became a British protectorate. Britain maintained a system of indirect rule there until Bechuanaland gained independence in 1966.

A similar situation occurred in Basutoland, a mountainous land that the Afrikaners had originally considered unsuitable for settlement. In the 1850s, however, the Afrikaners began to expand into Basutoland. In response to an appeal from the local people for help, Britain established a protectorate in Basutoland. Originally governed as part of the Cape Colony, Basutoland came directly under British rule in 1884. However, most of the administration of the area was left in the hands of indigenous authorities.

Swaziland also became a British protectorate. In this case, the British stepped in to end warfare between two African peoples, the Swazi and Zulu. Once again, Britain established a system of indirect rule. It granted Swaziland self-government in 1967 and full independence in 1968. In 1889 Britain gave the British South Africa Company, headed by Cecil RHODES, rights to the area that became known as Southern Rhodesia. Attracted by the offer of large tracts of land, white settlers flooded the region. Attempts by Africans to

rebel against the settlers were brutally crushed, and Southern Rhodesia became a highly segregated society, dominated by whites. Forced to live on poor farmland in special areas known as reserves, many Africans had to work for the settlers to earn a living.

The British South Africa Company also gained the rights to Northern Rhodesia. At first, the British administered the region mostly through local African authorities, and there was little opposition to colonial rule. As in Southern Rhodesia, however, the settlers took over the best land and gained political and economic control of the colony and its rich copper mines.

The area to the east of Northern Rhodesia became known as Nyasaland. Ruled after 1904 by British colonial officials, it never attracted as many white settlers as the Rhodesias. Nevertheless, the spread of European-owned plantations in the region eventually aroused opposition among Africans, which led to armed rebellion in 1915. For many years, Nyasaland served as a source of labor for other colonies. Whites in Northern and Southern Rhodesia relied on Africans from Nyasaland to work on farms and in mines.

In 1953, in an effort to promote the economic and political development of the region, the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland joined together as the Central African Federation. Meanwhile, African protests against colonial policies grew stronger. By the early 1960s, the colonial administrations of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia began allowing Africans greater participation in government. Both regions won independence in 1964; Nyasaland took the name Malawi and Northern Rhodesia became Zambia.

In Southern Rhodesia, settlers fiercely resisted any attempts to increase African power. In 1965 the white-dominated government declared independence for the colony. African opposition to the government erupted in guerrilla warfare, and in the 1970s the administration's power began to crumble. By 1980 a majority black African government ruled the nation, which was renamed Zimbabwe.

North Africa

Britain was involved in governing two large territories in North Africa—EGYPT and the SUDAN. Egypt had been conquered in 1517 by the Ottoman Empire, based in Turkey. Ottoman influence spread to northern Sudan and other parts of North Africa. In the 1800s Britain gained control of Egypt as a result of dealings over the newly built SUEZ CANAL, which provided a shipping route between the Mediterranean and Red seas. Facing a financial crisis in 1876, the Egyptian ruler sold all of Egypt's shares in the canal to Britain.

The sale made Britain the majority shareholder. As Egypt's finances continued to worsen, British power in the region increased. In 1882 Britain responded to an Egyptian revolt by invading and occupying the country.

At the start of World War I, Britain made Egypt a protectorate. After the war, local opposition arose to the British, who introduced harsh policies to keep the peace. Tensions continued to grow and Britain granted Egypt limited autonomy in 1922. Britain continued to maintain some control until the mid-1930s.

South of Egypt along the Nile River, the Sudan was conquered by British and Egyptian forces in 1898. Britain set up a joint administration with Egypt to govern the region.

As in Egypt, the British had to use brutal measures to maintain control in the Sudan during World War I. British and Egyptian rule continued until 1956, when the Sudan gained independence. The new nation faced bitter regional differences between the Muslim-controlled north and the Christians of the south.

French colonies in West and Central Africa included SENEGAL, GUINEA, IVORY COAST, TOGO, Dahomey (presentday BENIN), Cameroon, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, GABON, and French Congo, (now CONGO, BRAZZAVILLE). Before the mid-1800s, France had little interest in these areas except to establish trading posts and missionary stations along the coasts. During the "scramble" for Africa, however, the nation set its sights on a number of areas in each region, hoping to get territories with valuable resources.

France used military force to take over most of its colonies in West Africa. In some areas—such as Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Dahomey—the French met fierce resistance from the Africans. After establishing control of the coasts, it sometimes took a number of years to move inland and gain possession of the interiors. In 1904 France's colonies in West Africa, including some in the southern Sahara, were formally organized into a large administrative unit known as FRENCH WEST AFRICA. Eventually, French West Africa included Senegal, French Sudan (present-day MALI), Guinea, Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Upper Volta (present-day BURKINA FASO), NIGER, and MAURITANIA. Some of the people of Senegal were granted French citizenship and a few became members of the French legislature in Paris. After World War I, the former German colony of Togo was divided between France and Britain.

France acquired Cameroon in Central Africa as a result of World War II. Formerly the German colony of Kamerun, it was divided into East Cameroon (or Cameroun, controlled by France) and West Cameroon (or Cameroons, controlled by Britain). France gained Congo, Gabon, and the Central African Republic as the result of treaties with local rulers and military force. In 1910 Gabon, Congo, Central African Republic, and CHAD were combined in an administrative unit known as FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA.

Serious challenges to French colonial rule began after World War II, when Africans began agitating for greater autonomy. Drained financially by the war and by problems with its territories in Southeast Asia, France was unable to put up much resistance to African demands. The Overseas Reform Act in 1956 gave the African colonies autonomy in their internal affairs, while France remained responsible for defense and foreign policy. By 1960 all the French colonies of West and Central Africa had gained full independence.

The French colonies in the southern Sahara, which included the area known as the SAHEL, were Mauritania, Mali, Upper Volta, Niger, and Chad. France colonized this arid region primarily to link its other territories and to prevent other Europeans from claiming it.

Although France gained control of most of the southern Sahara in the 1890s, the nomadic peoples of the area continued to resist foreign rule for many years. The French governed the vast and thinly populated region through local rulers, who had a great deal of autonomy. Most of the colonies were administered as part of French West Africa, with Chad included in French Equatorial Africa.

There were no strong independence movements in the southern Sahara after World War II. In 1958 France created the French Community, an organization that gave internal autonomy to its African colonies. Although created mainly to satisfy independence movements in other parts of Africa, the French Community also benefited the colonies of the southern Sahara. When France granted independence to its West and Central African colonies in 1960, it did the same with its southern Sahara colonies.

France's colonies in East Africa included MADAGASCAR, REUNION, the COMORO ISLANDS, and French Somaliland (present-day Djibouti). During the late 1700s and early 1800s, France competed with Britain for control of the island of Madagascar. For a number of years, France dominated the coastline of Madagascar while Britain held the interior. At the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, Britain agreed to let France establish a protectorate over the island. Resistance to French rule led to a bloody but unsuccessful rebellion in 1916. When Germany occupied France in World War II, the British took charge of Madagascar because of its strategic location along shipping routes between Asia and Europe. After the war France regained control but faced a growing movement for independence, which it granted in 1960.

The island of Reunion came under French control in the early 1700s. An important sugar-growing area, it was dominated by white plantation owners who used slaves to tend the sugar crop. By 1848 the French government had abolished slavery. In 1946 the island became an overseas department of France. The French established a protectorate for the four Comoro Islands in 1885, then made them into a colony in 1912. The islands declared their independence in 1975, but France still claims one of them—Mayotte—as a territory.

France obtained the tiny colony of French Somaliland as a result of treaties signed with local African rulers in 1862. Located at the southern end of the Red Sea, the colony allowed France to guard the shipping lanes leading to the Suez Canal and the railway to Ethiopia. France granted the colony independence in 1977.

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1.3 DESTRUCTION OF NATIVE CULTURES

Colonialism almost destroying an indigenous population through stripping them of their land, culture and family with no consideration for the repercussions. The aftermath involves unfathomable rates of diabetes, obesity and mental illnesses in indigenous communities, incomparable to the rest of the population. The parallels continue, with both populations having near identical alarming incarceration rates - in Australia, the 3% of the population who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders make up 27% of those in prison compared to Canada's indigenous people making up 4% of the population and 25% of its prison population.

These populations have come to have such similar circumstances following a series of near identical events inflicted upon them by their respective governments, including having children forcibly removed from their families. Over 150,000 Canadian aboriginal children were placed in residential schools between the late 19th and early 20th century. Residential schools were designed by the Canadian government with the purpose of removing children from the influence of their own culture and assimilating them into the dominant Canadian culture.

Throughout a similar time period to Canada's residential schools, Australia's "stolen generation" saw roughly 11,000 Australian aboriginal children removed from their families to be placed with non-Indigenous families or in missions. Given the years of psychological, physical and sexual abuse; dire living conditions and rejection of indigenous culture that occurred in these institutions and residential schools, there's no wonder why problems continue to prevail years later.

Culture, an assortment of human activities and principles, leads a group of people with common beliefs and values; but after it was taken away by the Europeans, all they felt was lost and with no identity Colonialism caused an abrupt decline of culture and tradition in the colonies because the Europeans imposed a new culture on the African's traditional one. Due to Africa's subjugation and it being controlled by the Europeans, Western civilization and life style began shaping the colonies. One can say that European culture is characterized by a Christian worldview and individualism. Consequently, imperialism caused African cultural heritage to become replaced by a prosperous European-based one. Moreover, Western civilization became the ideal civilization, and became way superior to African "civilization."

As a consequence, African tradition became perceived as primitive, outmoded, and sadly not welcomed by the rest of the world. Unfortunately, a lot of Africans experienced a trend of a dying out culture. It can be implied that even the Africans' self-perception dropped because the only lifestyle they knew was suddenly taken away from them and they were taught that it was substandard.

1.4 TECHNICAL WORDS/ KEY WORDS

1. Colonialism: Colonialism is defined as control by one power over a dependent area or people.
2. Post colonialism: it is the critical and economic legacy of colonialism and imperialism, focusing on the impact of human control and exploitation of colonized people and their lands.
3. Native:one born or reared in a particular place/ an original or indigenous inhabitant/ something indigenous to a particular locality.
4. Destruction:the action or process of causing so much damage to something that it no longer exists or cannot be repaired.

1.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Write an essay on European colonialism?
2. Write an essay on destruction of native cultures in the colonialrule?
3. Write an essay on the impact of British rule on African societies?
4. How did colonialrule influence the India and Africa?

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DR. K. NARASIMHA RAO

LESSON 2
RECLAMATION OF AFRICAN PAST, AFRICAN THEATRE

OBJECTIVES

The aim of the lesson engages with the formal and thematic reclamation of the past, writing and re-writing of history, and construction of individual and communal and the introduction of African theatre to readers. The main objective of the lesson is all about Black culture. It is the continuation of the African cultural orientation operating within another cultural milieu, which is primarily defined by the philosophical assumptions and underpinnings of the Anglo-American community. The African cultural manifestations of spontaneity, naturalness, and authenticity are important in the blacks' daily lifestyles. African traditional theater is a group activity, often without boundaries between creators, performers, and audience. Unlike modern plays, traditional rituals and tales are not written by individual playwrights.

STRUCTURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Reclamation is the process of demanding the return of property to a former owner in the event of dormancy, non-payment, fraud, or some other irregularity. Reclamation may be sought in a number of contexts:

- In the financial markets, a trader may demand reclamation, or repayment, for stocks or other securities purchased, due to some error in the transaction.
- Reclamation is sought to recover funds from neglected accounts.
- It may also refer to the right of a seller to resume ownership of a property if the buyer fails to meet the terms of the purchase agreement.

In an entirely different context, reclamation refers to restoring lands such as closed mine sites or defunct industrial areas to new productive uses. Land reclamation differs from rehabilitation, which involves restoring land to its natural state after it has been damaged or degraded.

Understanding Reclamation

Reclamation is the process of reclaiming property or payment if a counterparty to a deal doesn't deliver on their part of the agreement. In the securities industry, reclamation is minimized by cutting down the chances of bad delivery. This has been largely achieved by

the modern system of registering and transferring securities in book or electronic form rather than exchanging paper certificates.

The ancient African past refers to deeds and events of African peoples documented or narrated through oral or written traditions or other means from the time of human beginnings until the modern period. Africana studies is a transdisciplinary field of study pertaining to intellectual traditions and practices of African and African-descended peoples. The ancient African past is valued in the field of Africana studies. The value given to ancient Africa within the field may serve as a critical conceptual challenge to the colonial history of Africa.

This article calls for an Africana philosophy of history, that is, a vision and interpretive scheme to critically reflect on the historical field of concerns. It seeks an intellectual endeavor to recapture historical spaces, thereby leading not only to autonomous readings of ancient African history but also to engaging in the development of explanatory paradigms for the field.

2.2 SUMMARY

Reclamation of the African past in the works of Chinua Achebe.

Chinua Achebe: A writer who dared to reclaim his history

Achebe was the beacon who shed light on African deep-rooted tradition and lifted the spirit of young Africans. His writing encompasses not only the whole Nigerian experience but, in essence, and philosophically, it is for the whole humanity of the world, especially for the colonised and oppressed people

Achebe is the man who "brought Africa to the rest of the world," Nelson Mandela equated once. It is true that Achebe wrote particularly about his native Ogidi people; however, his writing encompasses not only the whole Nigerian experience but, in essence, and philosophically, it is for the whole humanity of the world, especially for the colonised and oppressed people. He is the beacon who shed light on African deep-rooted tradition and lifted the spirit of young Africans who were wrongly compelled to identify that Africa is a 'historical void'.

Achebe was born on 16 November 1930, in an Igbo village during the volatile and transition period of African history. Though he was born into a comparatively peaceful Christian family, his life was steeped between the Igbo traditional culture and the white intruders' culture then controlling, subjugating, and shaping the history of Nigeria and the psyche of the traumatised native people. This pushed him to draw the true image of Africa breaking the absolute and grand power of the canonical perspectives of Western literature and history.

It's not like he was critical of Western colonisation only, he severely castigated the corrupt post-independence African leaders who took away all the glorious achievements of Nigeria. To him, these leaders broke the spirit of young Nigerians and the emerging new independent nation as a whole.

Though Achebe has grown up with western canonical writers, it is Joyce Cary's 1939 book named 'Mister Johnson' that scathed his and his classmates' souls while reading in the

school as it depicts the death of a meek and docile black protagonist in the hand of his white master out of his apparent whim. He could not even sleep at night after reading this book.

This incident prompted him to write his world-famous book 'Things Fall Apart' (1958) which was initially turned down by white publishers. In this novel, he minutely detailed the African tradition and created a true African character named Okonkwo who was full of energy, vibe, and resilience but flawed in some ways. It is Achebe's nonpartial attitude to life and history that brought him international name and fame.

Dealing with history is always difficult as it is not all about merely showcasing some facts and figures. And, the course of history-like culture is not linear either. In his five novels starting with 'Things Fall Apart' to 'Anthills of the Savannah', along with all his poems, essays, and short stories, Achebe did not support African culture and tradition only, he vehemently criticised some inner loopholes and chasms as they were in some way rigid, raw, and so virgin in nature that 'to adapt' and 'to change' was not that much visible in their dictionary of life.

On the other hand, western culture and, in fact, the total phenomenon of it was too manipulatively orchestrated that invaded, disrupted, and dwindled both the inner and outer psyche of the native people and their culture.

The sensitive soul of Achebe was touched by this horrifically complicated situation. This tore apart his soul but became the source of him becoming a great writer. Like his protagonist Okonkwo (Things Fall Apart), Achebe is resilient. He follows the path of Ezeulu (Arrow of God) to embrace and shadow native tradition, and Chinua is our Obi Okonkwo (No Longer at Ease) – a British educated person who does not know how to swim in the wave of two conflicting cultures. As such, a super realistic writer, Chinua Achebe magically fits into the quote of American poet Walt Whitman: "Every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you."

To Achebe, the middle way is the best. Thus, he does not overdo anything. Even when he weaves and narrates his story, his style and voice are African in nature but his form is almost Western. The tale that he talks about Africa is oral in mood and his refashioning of English into 'New English' is a challenging thing to do while the total layout of the stories are somewhat canonical in the pattern.

Thus, we the readers sense his covert way of celebrating hybridity which dismantles the established norms of canons as Homi K. Bhabha writes, "it is the power of hybridity that enables the colonised to challenge 'the boundaries of discourse'."

He opted to write in English though he wrote some stories in Igbo languages too. He believed that the English language will be able to carry "the weight of his African experience." On the other hand, another African writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (b. 1938) believes that local African dialects should be the language of all African writers and he further evokes that 'every person, whether in Africa or Europe, has a right to their mother tongue or to the language of their culture.'

This is an ongoing debate; nevertheless, the position of Achebe is almost like the character of Caliban in Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' who resisted by saying that "You taught

me language; and my profit is, I know how to curse" as opposed to colonial master Prospero's claim that Caliban did not have any language before he taught him language.

Achebe's autobiographical essay collection named 'The Education of a British Protected Child' (2009) and his book 'There was A Country: A Personal History of Biafra' (2012) narrates his personal account of the Nigerian Civil War that carry the solid sense of his nationalistic idea too.

Achebe taught in different prestigious western universities to represent Africa and to voice out the importance of identity and one's ethnicity. But he is not an ethnocentric writer and historian at all. He, in truth, wanted to align the experience of Africa with the experience of all the oppressed of the world because it is Achebe who knew how difficult it is to grow up as a person in the then colonial Nigeria.

Achebe is a towering figure who compelled the world's audience to revisit Africa with renewed vigour. Though he had writer's block as he was totally shocked at the aftermath of the Biafran war, he continued writing until his death. Even his decades of life paralysed by a car crash in 1990 couldn't stop his imaginative writings as he rightly said that imaginative literature "does not enslave; it liberates the mind of man."

Though in his speech at Cambridge University at his late age he dubbed the Nigerian contemporary leaders as "indolent kleptocrats," he always longs and hopes for a prosperous Nigeria full of vigour, colour, and life. With cautious doubt, he always believed that Nigeria could be one of the most diverse nations in the whole world.

The historical process of colonization has always been the subject of Postcolonial writings. The writers of Africa are deeply concerned with the past and present history of their country and this concern is reflected in their works. The Kenyan national movement, its history, the violent phases have been the subject of many literary works of Kenyan writers writing in English. As such in Kenya’s history of struggle for independence, the Mau Mau movement occupies an important setting. NguwiWa Thiong’o’s engagement with history in A Grain of Wheat has been dealt extensively. It provides his vision of Kenyan history from the 1920s to the time of its independence. The novel weaves together several stories set during the state of emergency in Kenya’s struggle for independence. It is set in Kenya on the eve of independence dealing mainly with the events leading up to independence. Through the employment of devices like several narrative passages, interior monologues, dialogues, recollections Ngugi, reveals the state of mind of the characters their pain, struggle, hope and fears. The fragility of human life is revealed through the state of mind of the characters that are the product of violence of the independence of struggle. The novel is set in the contemporary Kenyan society, though the characters are all fictitious Ngugi however eludes prominent historical figures like Jomo Kenyatta, Henry Tukhu and Waiyaki who are unavoidably part of the history of Kenya. Descriptions of pain and sufferings, situation and problems mentioned in the novel are all part of history.

Historical events embedded in local and national politics stands as the core in Thiong’o narrative. The plot of the novel derives events from the Mau Mau uprising. In Kenya’s history of struggle for independence, the Mau Mau movement occupies an important setting. The birth of this popular movement dates back to 1947 arising out from a faction among the KAC (Kikuyu Central Association) and the KAU (KIKUYU African Association). The split between the KAC and the KAU led to the birth of the movement

known as the Mau Mau movement. This movement came up to keep the campaign against the British settlers. The Mau Mau movement grew into a paramount important force in the history of Kenyan struggle for its independence. The Mau Mau movement is thus said to represent the whole of Kenya's genuine voice of the suppressed Kikuyu. As the movement grew in strength the Britishers began to use repressive measures against the Kenyans at large and the Gikuyu in particular. The British government let loose most foul propaganda to paint the entire movement in black. News of atrocities on common Kenyan people in the reserves, those in the detention camps and those who sought for refuge in the jungles was suppressed. The magnitude of atrocities imposed upon the people during its emergency revealed a number of killings No detainee was released until he has been passed along a security clearance channel known as "pipe line". With all sophisticated weapons and machinery the British Government could not however crush the whole of Kenyan despite the brutalities and atrocities meted out upon them. The guerillas covered themselves with glory by continuing the struggle for more than four years which earned them an acclaimed position. This in brief is the history of Mau Mau struggle on various aspects of which many Kenyan writers writing in English including NgugiWaThiongo who have based their writing upon.

The novel weaves together several stories set during the state of emergency in Kenya's struggle for independence. Ongoing Parallel to this however is the story of the Britishers i.e the Whiteman who in every possible ways tries to suppress the freedom struggle by means of capturing and imprisoning members of the Mau Mau. Those who dared to stand up againstthe colonial government were captured and put behind detention camps where they were brutally tortured. All overKenya people were forced to leave their land and their villages were placed by military guards.Ngugi through his fictional work presents all the horrific experiences faced by the community of Kenya and he does this through multiple of narratives who share their own experiences of struggle. As such the novel moves back and forth frequently taking the readers to the early days of colonialism through the heroicstruggle against it by Waiyaki, Jomo Kenyatta in the 50's and finally Kihika the fictional leader of the Mau Mau rebellion. Through his fictional heroic leader Kihika, Ngugi presents the causes of resistance, he symbolizes the freedom fighter.

Ngugi is trying to assert that, the fight which the community of Kenya has taken up against the colonial government is that of pure genuine struggle. It presents the consequences, both physical and psychological minds concerning emergency. The title of the novel A Grain of Wheat serves an important theme. It is the idea that, before a seed can grow into new plant, it must dry out and sacrifice its own life. Grain of Wheat is therefore a symbol for the people who started the Kenyan independence movement. Waiyaki a warrior who fought against the Britishers was one of those people. It is said that he was buried alive at Kibwizi with his facing towards the centre of the earth as warning. He symbolizes the first seed that grows into freedom movement. Thiong'o writes "Waiyaki"s blood contained within it a seed, a grain, which gave birth to a movement whose strength thereafter sprang from a bond with the soil."

2.3 AFRICAN THEATRE

The term African Theatre is really quite a difficult one to define, and it has been used in numerous ways over the years - falling roughly into two broad categories:

(1) as a generic term, equivalent to African Drama and/or African Performance (see also Drama and Performance) and

(2) as the name of a specific theatre venue called The African Theatre.

There are a number of difficulties with the idea of using the umbrella term African to discuss theatrical, cinematic, media and performance activities from, in and on the continent.

The first and perhaps most important question to ask, given the variety, size and cultural diversity of the African continent is a question one may ask about "African Theatre, African Film, African Media or African Performance, is "What *Africa* are you talking about?" It is one often asked by commentators, one of the more critical being the Nigerian born author and academic Kole Omotoso (See for example Hutchison and Omotoso.

(1995.) The fact is that there are a multitude of "Africas", each with its own particular cultural, social, political, economic, ethical and other characteristics - and *ipso facto*, its own traditions, conventions and functions of and for theatrical performance. (See the entry on Africa)

The second point has to do with the rather dated notion that Africa did not have a tradition of *theatre* (or the *idea* of theatre), and that many African languages did not have a word for it. This stance assumes that theatre - as a cultural practice - was brought to the continent in the period of colonization by European settlers. But this belief is patently absurd, for it totally ignores the nature of theatre and performance as we see them today, as well as the growing archaeological evidence. For example, it is widely believed that the first human beings almost certainly came from the continent, and these peoples (e.g. the San in Southern Africa) had a long narrative and dance tradition, as evidenced by age-old rock paintings containing drawings and other physical indications. In addition, the northern regions, notably Egypt, abutted the European continent and yet are part of Africa. Accommodating this perspective in any discussion of African Theatre is imperative, though at times difficult.

The third difficulty has to do with the definition of the term African and where the lines are drawn between the indigenous and the imported theatrical and other events as it were: E.g the so-called indigenous performance forms and plays, as opposed to performances and texts based on Western or Eastern principles, forms and texts (e.g. Sophocles, Shakespeare, Moliere etc - and derivative work in their styles), in its turn again opposed to performances and texts produced or manufactured *outside* Africa, and then merely brought to and shown in Africa. Which of this work is to be considered African?

However, despite these difficulties with the generic term, it is still widely used, usually in one of two broad meanings:

Used as a generic reference to "theatre in and theatre of Africa", it. Also used may be African Theater, African Drama, or African Performance (or any combination of these). Alternately it may also be Theatre, Drama and/or Performance in Africa.

African theatre**,** effectively, the theatre of Africa south of the Sahara that emerged in the postcolonial era—that is to say, from the mid-20th century onward.

It is not possible to talk of much African theatre as if it fell into discrete historical or national patterns. Colonial boundaries ignored cultural and linguistic unities, and ancient movements throughout the continent sometimes motivated by trade (including the transatlantic slave trade), religion, or exploration brought different ethnic groups into contact with each other and often influenced performance in a manner that is still evident in the 21st century. It is also important not to divide the theatre into "traditional" and "modern," as the contemporary literary theatre predominantly written and performed in English, French, and Portuguese exists alongside festivals, rituals, cultural performances, and popular indigenous theatre. The richness of theatre in Africa lies very much in the interaction of all these aspects of performance. The broad subheadings under which theatre in Africa is considered should, therefore, be seen as an aid to access rather than as representing definite boundaries. This article aims to sketch the broadest patterns of work and highlight some landmarks in dealing with the extensive continentwide theatrical activity.

Anglophone West Africa

The countries of Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone (and to a lesser extent The Gambia), plus the English-speaking areas of Cameroon, have produced a theatre of great richness since their political independence. They are examined individually below. (Throughout the article, dates in parentheses are dates of publication rather than first performance, except where noted.)

Ghana

Ghana produced two of Africa's most-accomplished women playwrights, Efua Sutherland and Ama Ata Aidoo. Sutherland's plays were written in Akan and in English. *Foriwa* (first performed 1962) and *Edufa* (first performed 1962) dealt with political issues relevant to the challenges of independence. *The Marriage of Anansewa* (1975) is a witty but still politically relevant comedy in a form she described as *anansegoro*—that is to say, the creation in dramatic form of *anansesem*, the stories about Ananse the spider man, trickster, and entertainer. Sutherland was active as a director and created the Ghana Drama Studio in Accra to explore traditional performance spaces and styles. She is also known for plays she wrote for children such as *Vulture! Vulture!* and *Tahinta* (both 1968).

Aidoo, also a poet and novelist, wrote only two plays, *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965) and *Anowa* (1970). Both, however, are works of great stature. *The Dilemma of a Ghost* is concerned with the arrival in Africa of a black American woman married to a Ghanaian and the struggle she has in coming to terms with her cultural past and with her new home. An unspoken but powerful presence in the play is the legacy of slavery, a theme that is more fully explored in *Anowa*. That play based on a legendary source concerning a beautiful young woman who marries a handsome stranger is a remarkable exploration of Ghanaian history, both colonial and postcolonial, with a powerful indictment of the temptations to which contemporary politicians succumb. With those two plays Aidoo established herself as a major presence in African theatre.

A number of other playwrights should be noted, including Martin Owusu (with *The Mightier Sword*, 1973, and *The Sudden Return*, 1973), Asiedu Yirenkyi (*Kivuli*, 1980; *Blood and Tears*, 1973), and Kwesi Kay (*Hubbub in the House*, 1972). Those plays variously concern themselves with the tensions and temptations of modern urban life. Another important Ghanaian playwright is Mohammed Ben-Abdallah. His *Land of a Million*

Magicians (1993), inspired by Bertolt Brecht's *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (1943), is a work of considerable theatrical scale and dramatic power.

Ghana's Concert Party theatre a traveling performance troupe with a repertoire of broad comedies and social satires flourished in the earlier part of the 20th century and continued in its popularity and ingenuity into the 21st century. Concert Party theatre complemented the literary theatre with its particular kind of social commentary and its inventive use of both traditional and modern forms of entertainment.

Nigeria

Nigeria stands out in the continent for the vigour and range of its theatre. The rich cultural heritage of the nation, particularly of the south, made performance the natural means for political debate, social cohesion, celebration, and lament. The Nigerian playwright has grown up in a world where theatre literally takes place on the street, in the performances of such masquerade figures as the Egungun, or the festivals relating to trades, crafts, or seasonal rhythms, marriages and funerals. A vibrant tradition of popular theatre (such as the Yoruba opera) was also a resource that the literary playwright could be inspired by and draw upon.

Popular theatre practitioners such as Hubert Ogunde, writing in Yoruba, created biblical and political dramas that toured the country in trucks, performing in hotel yards or community halls to enthusiastic audiences, with lavish ingredients of song, dance, and spectacle. Two titles of plays by Ogunde indicate the range of his writing: *The Garden of Eden and the Throne of God* (1944) and *Bread and Bullet* (1950). Duro Ladipo was also an accomplished Yoruba opera artist, with sophisticated theatrical re-creations of Yoruba history and myth (*Oba Koso*, 1963, and *Oba Waja*, 1964) and an extraordinary version of Austrian author Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann* (*Everyman*), called *Eda* (1970). In the mid-1960s the Kola Ogunmola company, in conjunction with the Nigerian theatre designer Demas Nwoko, had great success with an adaptation of Amos Tutuola's novel *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*. In addition to the troupes led by Ogunde, Ladipo, and Ogunmola, numerous other Yoruba theatre companies enjoyed great success well into the 1980s, though they were gradually overtaken by the popularity of videos for consumption at home, which diminished their audiences. The Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, Africa's leading playwright, acknowledged the influence of such artists as Ogunde upon his work, and modern Nigerian theatre also owes a debt to James Ene Henshaw, whose well-crafted popular plays (*This Is Our Chance*, first performed 1948, published 1956; and *Medicine for Love*, 1964) can be seen as the beginnings of a literary drama.

Soyinka himself was part of a group of young playwrights who established their reputations in the years immediately before and after Nigeria gained its independence in 1960 and who are recognized as the formative creators of modern Nigerian theatre. Others were J.P. Clark (later known as J.P. Clark-Bekedemero), Ola Rotimi, and Zulu Sofola.

Soyinka maintained a strong theatrical output from the late 1950s (with two plays, *The Lion and the Jewel*, first performed 1959, published 1963; and *The Swamp Dwellers*, 1958, partly developed when he was associated with George Devine's young writers group at the Royal Court Theatre, London) well into the 21st century (with *King Baabu*, 2002, and *AlápatàÀpáta*, 2011). Soyinka's first major play was his alternative contribution to the independence celebrations, *A Dance of the Forests*, first performed 1960, staged by the company he formed on his return to Nigeria, the 1960 Masks.

Unlike many of the anodyne celebrations of nationhood, Soyinka's play brings ancestors to life to comment shrewdly on both the past and the present. In many ways that complex though (literally) fantastic play may be seen as a source for much of his later work.

Soyinka's main weapon was satire, from *The Trials of Brother Jero* (first performed 1960, published 1963) to *King Baabu*, which was loosely based on Alfred Jarry's farcical *Ubu Roi*.

In *Opera Wonyosi* (first performed 1977) he draws on Bertolt Brecht's satirical musical drama *The Threepenny Opera* (1928). Soyinka's career fragmented by imprisonment without trial during the Nigerian civil war and subsequent exile has produced a range of major plays, some dealing with what he saw as the bizarre antics of African leaders (*Kongi's Harvest*, first performed 1966; *A Play of Giants*, first performed 1984; *The Beatification of Area Boy*, 1995) and others with the clash between the spiritual and the mortal world (*The Strong Breed*, first performed 1963; *The Road*, 1965; *Death and the King's Horseman*, 1975 the latter widely regarded as his finest play) and fierce personal assaults on tyranny (*Madmen and Specialists*, 1971; *From Zia, with Love*, 1992).

Clark's first play, *Song of a Goat* (1964), was staged in the Mbari arts centre in Ibadan in a production directed by Soyinka. One of a group of three plays published together the others being *The Masquerade* and *The Raft Song of a Goat* explored Clark's native world of the Rivers area of the Niger River delta. His atmospheric and poetic style and his attraction to family sagas distinguish Clark's playwriting. *The Bikoroa Plays* (first performed 1981), a cycle of three full-length plays, follows the fortunes of a Rivers family, and another family-centred drama, *All for Oil* (2000), combines Clark's dedication to his family and region with a contemporary political commentary. Perhaps the most significant of Clark's plays is his 1966 version of the epic Ijo saga *Ozidi* a seven-day community festival.

Later, in 1977, Clark was to record and translate into English an oral version of the saga, but his rich play drawn from this fascinating source is not only a powerful drama in its own terms but also an informative introduction to the imaginative dramaturgy of traditional festivals.

With *The Disturbed Peace of Christmas* in 1971, Sofola became the first woman playwright to establish herself in Nigeria. *Wedlock of the Gods* (1972) and *King Emene* (1974) are two of several plays that explore the strains imposed upon traditional values; other plays have drawn criticism because of a perceived social conservatism in Sofola's attitude.

Of the quartet of early playwrights, the one who best compares to Soyinka is Rotimi. His first major play, *The Gods Are Not to Blame* (first performed 1968), is a reworking in Nigerian terms of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. It immediately established Rotimi's stature as a theatrical craftsman. He worked generally on a large scale, incorporating many different ethnic influences in the performance structure of his plays (in terms of song, dance, language, etc.). He also was deeply concerned with the dynamics between actor and audience, going so far in that respect as to design his own performance spaces, of which the most significant was the Ori Olokun centre in Ife, western Nigeria. Rotimi's themes were always political and often were based in the re-creation of incidents of Nigerian history: *Kurunmi* (first performed 1969) deals with the internecine wars of the Yoruba in the 19th century; *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi* (first performed 1971) treats the British colonial punitive expedition to Benin;

Hopes of the Living Dead (first performed 1985) examines the struggle in the 1920s for the dignified treatment for lepers; *Akassa You Mi* (2001) published posthumously presents the 1895 conflict between the Nembe people and the Royal Niger Company. Whatever the historical reference, however, Rotimi draws a contemporary parallel. The radical power of his playwriting is also evident in the pessimistic play *If: A Tragedy of the Ruled* (1983), though a sense of satiric fun is also seen in *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* (1977) and *Holding Talks* (1979). Rotimi had formal training in playwriting at Boston and Yale universities, and that training is reflected in his workmanship, but he created a very personal style of theatre, richly inventive and experimental. He was a dynamic director of his own work, forming at Ife the Ori Olokun Acting Company and later the African Cradle Theatre (ACT).

The example of the four playwrights mentioned above created an explosion of theatrical activity in Nigeria. A strong radical voice both in content and in form was established by, among others, playwrights such as Bode Sowande (*Farewell to Babylon*, 1979; *Flamingo*, 1986; *Tornadoes Full of Dreams*, 1990); Olu Obafemi (*Nights of a Mystical Beast*, 1986; *Suicide Syndrome*, 1987; *Naira Has No Gender*, 1993); Tunde Fatunde (*No Food, No Country*, 1985; *Oga Na Tief-Man*, 1986); and Segun Oyekunle (*Katakata for Sofahead*, 1983). A significant element of much of the new radical work was the use of pidgin a language of mass communication accessible to a much-wider audience than the educated elite. The plays of actor and director Wale Ogunyemi should also be noted dramas based in Yoruba lore and history, as well as an ingenious adaptation of *Macbeth* (*Aare Akogun*, 1969).

Two other major figures emerged in the latter part of the 20th century—Tess Onwueme and Femi Osofisan. Onwueme's early plays were based on domestic incidents, but she became more adventurous with political allegories (*The Desert Encroaches*, 1985; *Ban Empty Barn*, 1986), and—after a move to teach in the U.S. her work expanded in range and ambition with strong feminist dramas, often with an evangelistic edge. They include *The Reign of Wazobia* (1988), *Tell It to Women* (1994), *The Missing Face* (1997), *Shakara: Dance-Hall Queen* (2000), and *Then She Said It* (2002). Osofisan, however, is the colossus of Nigerian theatre in terms of output and popularity over the last decades of the 20th century.

His plays have been frequently staged in Nigeria and Ghana, and in Britain and the U.S. His dramaturgy is characterized by provocative open-endings, as in *Once upon Four Robbers* (first performed 1978), where, at the end, the audience is asked to vote on whether the armed robbers should be punished or released. Osofisan also reworks other texts either if they are Nigerian as a critique of an earlier generation (*No More the Wasted Breed*, 1982, in response to Soyinka's *The Strong Breed*, 1963; *Another Raft*, 1988, commenting on Clark's *The Raft*, 1964) or, if international, as a vehicle for his own interpretation of contemporary events (among them, *Who's Afraid of Solarin?*, 1978, from Russian writer Nikolay Gogol's *The Government Inspector*, 1836; *Tegonni: An African Antigone*, 1999; *Women of Owu*, 2006, from Euripides' *Trojan Women*, 415 BCE). Major plays include *The Chattering and the Song* (first performed 1976) and *Morountodun* (1982), both examples of Osofisan's radical political agenda, and a play about former nationalist leader of Ghana Kwame Nkrumah in exile *Nkrumah-ni. Africa-ni!* (1999). Osofisan said that he wished to speak to a young educated audience, as he felt that they were the people who could revolutionize society. He was hugely productive, with well over 20 plays to his name.

His robust plays are often crusading but are always inventive and entertaining and engaging with real issues: he may be regarded as one of the leading African dramatists of the 20th century.

Sierra Leone

Theatre in Sierra Leone tends to be concentrated in the capital, Freetown. Two plays by R. Sarif Easmon, *Dear Parent and Ogre* (1964) and *The New Patriots* (1965), dealt in a rather stilted way with concerns of the newly emancipated elite. A major initiative was the creation of a Krio language drama, particularly through the work of linguist and writer Thomas Decker, who in the 1960s translated *Julius Caesar* and *As You Like It* (as *Udat di kiap fit*) into the language that is widely spoken in the country. Other playwrights significantly Yulisa Amadu Maddy, Juliana John (with *Na Mami Bohn Am*, 1968, and *I Dey I Noh Du*, 1969), and Dele Charley took Krio language drama into a more-contemporary political sphere. Charley, who founded the Tabule Experimental Theatre in 1968, had great success with *Titi Shine Shine* (1970) and *The Blood of a Stranger* (first performed 1975).

Maddy, author of one of the most-successful contemporary plays, *Big Berin* (1976), and a writer-director committed to bringing traditional performance elements of dance and music into his plays to complement their realistic down-to-earth concerns, set up GbakandaTiata also in 1968. Songhai Theatre staged plays in Krio and English by its founders the playwrights Clifford Garber and John Kolosa Kargbo, and the Balanga Dramatic group was established in the mid-1970s. Julius Spencer, playwright and director, formed Spence Productions in 1989, and Charlie Haffner formed the Freetong Players in 1985.

Pampana Communications Drama Company was formed by the young playwrights Mohamed Sheriff and OumarrFarauk Sesay in 1993. Since the 1960s more than 20 other companies have been formed, often centred around one playwright or director, giving evidence of the vibrant theatrical culture of Freetown.

Cameroon

Cameroon is a predominantly French-speaking country, but it has a strong English-language theatre. Sankie Maimo established his reputation in 1959 with *I Am Vindicated* and wrote regularly into the 1990s. Victor Eleame Musinga is an established popular theatre practitioner, and Bate Besong and Hansel Ndumbe Eyoh made important contributions to English-language theatre. But the most-substantial Anglophone playwright is Bole Butake, whose plays have a strong political presence and deal with contemporary events. Foremost among them are *The Rape of Michelle* (1984), *Lake God* (1986), *The Survivors* (1989), *And Palm-Wine Will Flow* (1990), and *Shoes and Four Men in Arms* (1994).

East Africa
Kenya

In much of East Africa, especially Kenya, preindependence theatre was largely in the hands of the white settlers and reflected their tastes. Nairobi had a resident repertory theatre producing West End hits. Only an enterprising schools drama competition which increasingly opened itself up to all races offered a vehicle for indigenous writing and concerns. The often-violent struggle for independence in Kenya and elsewhere produced a powerful protest theatre, and it was carried on into independence where the drama

increasingly articulated the struggle against what was seen as neocolonial government. The major figure of Kenyan theatre is Ngugi wa Thiong'o, also distinguished as a novelist, who wrote originally as James Ngugi. His early short plays *The Black Hermit* (first performed 1962) and *This Time Tomorrow* (first performed 1968) explore the immediate post independent scene with increasing pessimism, but it was with *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (1976; written with MicereGithae Mugo) that Ngugi's stature as a dramatist became clear. The eponymous hero was a leader of the Mau Mau revolution against the colonial forces, eventually captured and executed. The play imagines his trial and confronts Kimathi with symbolic representatives of both the colonial and the neocolonial world, from ordinary unpoliticized British soldiers urged to see their common cause against exploitation to bankers, collaborators, and priests representative of the new oppression. Two children symbolize the idealistic hopes for a better future for Kenya, with a particular strength given to the girl. The play with its imaginative pseudodocumentary style and use of militant song and dance (reminiscent of the subversive use of those elements in the struggle for independence) is one of the major political works of the modern African theatre. Ngugi originally wrote in English but later, seeing English as a language that "colonized the mind," reverted to his native Kikuyu, with subsequent translation into English. This was the case with his 1977 play *NgaahikaNdeenda* (*I Will Marry When I Want*) written with Ngugi wa Mirii. The play was created with Kikuyu performers at the Kamiriithu Arts Centre, based in a settlement for agricultural workers, and gave voice to the perceived betrayal of workers by local landowners and politicians, again using rich elements of indigenous song and dance to articulate its protest. The popular success of that work caused it to be banned by the authorities, and Ngugi was detained. When, upon his release, the same two writers collaborated again in 1982 with the Kamiriithu community to produce *Maitu Njugira* (*Mother Sing to Me*) another play about colonial oppression that the independent Kenyan government significantly took as an attack upon itself—the authorities clamped down on the play and razed the open-air theatre to the ground. Ngugi went into exile. MicereGithae Mugo was also a playwright in her own right, championing the role of women in the independence struggle (*Daughter of My People, Sing!*, 1976). Kenneth Watene with *My Son for My Freedom* (1973) and *Dedan Kimathi* (1974) wrote about the experiences of the Kikuyu people in the Mau Mau "emergency." Francis Imbuga wrote a series of satirical plays of social comment in the 1970s (*The Fourth Trial*, 1972; *The Married Bachelor*, 1973; and *Betrayal in the City*, 1976), and from the 1990s onward a series of theatre companies were formed (Sarakasi Ltd., Miujiza Players, etc.) that concentrated on new plays in indigenous languages, often drawing upon traditional stories.

Oppressive censorship made free expression in the Kenyan theatre difficult after the violent response of the authorities to Kamiriithu's initiatives.

Ethiopia

Has a very strong theatre tradition, with, in the 1960s, major companies based in Addis Ababa and the regions. These were generally under the enthusiastic but autocratic patronage of Emperor Haile Selassie who also operated as censor. From the 1960s onward a new generation of young Ethiopians, often trained overseas, began to direct and write for the theatre, engaging with more-modern social themes though exploring traditional performance forms. The language of the theatre is Amharic, though much was translated into English. Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin is a leading figure, with plays combining sophisticated language with subtle social commentary: *Ye Kermasow* (1965; *A Man of the Future*) and *Tewodros* (1966), also translated into English, were early examples. His *Oda Oak Oracle* (1965), in English, is a play about Ethiopian history. The overthrow of Selassie and

his replacement in the 1970s by a Marxist military government forced many playwrights, among them Tsegaye, into silence, but in 1992 he returned with *Ha Hu Weyim Pa Pu* (*ABC or XYZ*) to welcome the overthrow of that regime while recommending caution about its successors. Other playwrights of note included Fisseha Belay, who wrote social comedies with a strong traditional base, and Mengistu Lemma, a writer of pointed comedies but also work of historical comment, including *Kassa* (1980), which looks back to the days of Italian colonialism through the eyes of a child. With its strong professional base and sophisticated infrastructure, Ethiopian theatre remains one of the most firmly established on the continent.

Eritrea

Eritrea, which has a history of bloody disputes with Ethiopia throughout the second half of the 20th century, produced a lively guerrilla theatre movement, with performances being created during the military struggle in order to reinforce the cultural legitimacy of the claim of independence from Ethiopia. *The Other War* (first performed 1984) by Alemseged Tesfai, Eritrea's leading contemporary playwright, is a sophisticated commentary on the relationship between the two countries. Southern and South Africa

Zambia

The Chikwakwa Theatre an open-air theatre created at the University of Zambia in 1971 symbolized the ambition of new young Zambian playwrights to both celebrate and comment upon the nation's independence and to draw upon the cultural resources of the people. The creation of Chikwakwa which toured as well as created work in English and Zambian languages at its base was a response to the mainly expatriate-dominated theatre that had prevailed before and immediately after independence in 1964, and it inspired other active groups, including Bazamai Theatre and Tikwiza Theatre. Playwrights generally wrote with a strong political emphasis: Godfrey Kabwe Kasoma's *Black Mamba* trilogy (1970) follows Kenneth Kaunda's fight for liberation from colonial rule; Dickson Mwansa's *The Cell* (1979) and Masautso Phiri's *Soweto* (first performed 1976) one of a trilogy of plays about Soweto are other examples. Many amateur drama groups are active in the country, often creating local festivals and competitions for new writing, and as in many other parts of the continent Theatre for Development work is significant (with, for instance, Kanyama Theatre and Mwananga Theatre). The playwright Stephen Chifunyise, Zimbabwean by birth, was another major contributor to Zambian theatre both through his involvement with Chikwakwa and later as director of cultural services. He later made an equal contribution to the resurgent theatre in his home country. A significant contribution was made by Michael Etherton, a founder of Chikwakwa, who later fell foul of the authorities and was deported.

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe, which came relatively late to independence in 1980, also had a dominant white theatre. Interestingly, a major factor in creating a new Zimbabwean theatre grew out of the liberation struggle, where plays celebrating heroes of the anticolonial struggle and ambitions for the future—expressed through indigenous performance forms—were an integral part of the education of the guerrilla fighters in their camps. After independence, theatre thrived, with the work of playwrights from other parts of Africa (Kenya, Ngugi wa Thiong'o; and South Africa, Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona, for example) playing an important part in creating a new repertoire. While the old white theatre audience

generally maintained its interest in Western theatre, a new black audience created its own companies and repertoire. By the 1990s a range of new work was present, performed by dynamic companies unafraid to criticize the new Zimbabwe when they felt it necessary.

For instance, the Amakhosi Company based in Bulawayo staged Cont Mhlanga's powerful play *Workshop Negative* in 1986, exposing corruption. Zambuko/Izibuko was a politically engaged youth-based theatre, and Glen Norah's Women's Theatre examined women's issues. Community theatre and Theatre for Development thrived in an experimental environment, exploring traditional forms and new creative methods, always with a radical voice. Zimbabwe's experience of the last decades of the 20th century was turbulent. A vigorous theatre in Shona, Ndebele, and English chronicled that turbulence with energy and honesty.

South Africa

South Africa achieved majority rule at the end of the 20th century, but a powerful alternative theatre articulated the struggle against apartheid from the mid-century onward. The collaborative work between Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona (*Sizwe Bansi Is Dead* and *The Island*, both 1974), had an international impact, as did *Woza Albert!* (first performed 1980), by Percy Mtwa, Mbongeni Ngema, and Barney Simon a brilliant political satire that sets Jesus' Second Coming in apartheid South Africa. The authors of that play connected with two other important companies in South African theatre, through Simon, who was the inspirational director of the Market Theatre in Johannesburg (where much of the most-challenging contemporary South African theatre had its roots), and Mtwa and Ngema, who were previously successful performers in the hugely popular touring theatre of Gibson Kente. Ngema became a leading radical playwright with, among other plays, *Asinamali!* (1985; *We Have No Money*) and *Sarafina* (1987). Various other radical theatre operations created new theatre—often through improvisation in a challenging interracial context, Workshop '71 (with *uNosilimela*, *Survival*, and *Crossroads*) being a leading example. Other important playwrights include Matsemela Manaka (with *Egoli*, 1980; *Pula*, 1982; and others), who created Soyikwa Africa Theatre, and Maishe Maponya (*The Hungry Earth*, 1981; *Gangsters* and *Dirty Work*, 1984; *Jika*, 1986; and others). Paul Slabolepszy wrote extremely popular plays about the plight of poor white people of South Africa, and Bartho Smit wrote perceptively of the often anguished situation of the Afrikaner in South Africa. Other notable Afrikaner playwrights were P.G. du Plessis and Reza de Wet.

The extraordinary (and often courageous) vitality of South African theatre during the oppressive days of apartheid to some extent dissipated with the coming of majority rule, but work from the second half of the 20th century particularly that of Zakes Mda confirmed its continuing relevance. Three early plays of Mda's *Dark Voices Ring* (1976), *We Shall Sing for the Fatherland* (1976), and *The Hill* (1977) established not only his inventive theatrical craftsmanship but also his sophisticated and independent critical voice. *Fools, Bells, and the Habit of Eating* (2002) is a collection of three satires that confirm Mda's status. The veteran actor John Kani also reasserted his stature as a playwright with *Nothing but the Truth* (2002), a moving and subtle comment on South Africa in the era of "peace and reconciliation."

Musical theatre has been popular in South Africa since *King Kong* in 1959, with Gibson Kente's long and successful career its best example. Though much of his work was melodramatic, its township location and audience ensured a political edge. In the 1970s

musicals such as *Ipi-Tombi* and *Umabatha* (a Zulu version of *Macbeth* by Welcome Msomi) were commercial successes in South Africa and internationally, but they were often regarded as exploitative of African artists and culture. However, *Umabatha* was praised by South Africa's iconic president, Nelson Mandela, under whose encouragement it was revived and toured again in the mid-1990s. Mda, MasithaHoeane, and others took part in a strong Theatre for Development initiative in South Africa, a role of theatre that also had a strong (and historical) base in Botswana.

Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire

Theatre had a strong, if variable, presence in the French- and Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa. Cameroon (*see above* in its Anglophone context) had an active theatre with a significant base in the universities, and it produced two major figures of the Francophone theatre, playwright Guillaume Oyono-Mbia and the director-devisor-playwright Nicole Wéré-Wéré Liking. Mbia was noted for his broad comedies for instance, *Trois prétendant sun mari* (1964), *Le Train spécial de son excellence* (1978), and *Le Boubier* (1989). Liking's main impact was in Côte d'Ivoire, where she moved in 1984 and formed the innovative Ki-Yi Mbock Theatre. That group explored the theatrical potential of ritual, making it relevant to modern concerns and using strong elements of physical performance, music, and dance. Liking's own playwriting commenced in Cameroon, with *La Puissance d'Um* (1979) the first of what are described, because of both form and content, as her "ritual theatre" plays and developed in the stimulating environment she found in Côte d'Ivoire.

A number of other companies in Côte d'Ivoire made (and continue to make) important contributions, some such as Atelier Théâtre Attoungblan and the Sekedoua Company inventively exploring the traditional African storytelling form. Leading playwrights in that vein were Bernard Dadié (*Béatrice du Congo*, 1970; *Les Voix dans le vent*, 1970), and Bernard Zadi Zaourou (*L'Oeil*, 1974; *La Tignasse*, 1984). Dadié's work is mainly political social realism though on a large scale whereas Zaourou is both more stylistically adventurous and more outspokenly radical. *L'Oeil* was banned in 1975 on the grounds that it incited civil disorder. Its plot is macabre: a district governor attempts to bribe his wife, who has discovered his infidelity, with a new healthy eye to replace one blinded in an accident. An impecunious minor official is bribed to offer his own wife's eye for the purpose, and, thus, the play exposes a world of official corruption and cruelty. Younger playwrights who were revolutionary in both form and content include Charles Zégoua Nokan and Amadou Koné.

Senegal

Senegal has a particular claim to be at the heart of the development of modern Francophone theatre through the innovative teaching of drama at the École Normale Supérieure by William Ponty in the 1930s. Many of Africa's later Francophone playwrights either studied at that school or were influenced by its encouragement of theatre. The nation's leading playwright is Cheik Aliou N'dao. His plays have a strong historical theme, as in *L'Exil d'Albouri* (1967), or discuss traditional social issues, as in *Les Fils de l'Almany* (1973), which debates the practice of circumcision. Many of the playwrights of the 1970s and '80s were drawn to historical themes, often (as in the case of Seyni Mbengue's *Le Procès de Lat Dior*, 1971) glorifying the heroes of the past from the viewpoint of the new nationalism. In addition to French, playwrights on occasion work in the national language of Wolof.

Republic of the Congo

One other Francophone African nation with a significant modern theatre is the Republic of the Congo, where three playwrights in particular have established major reputations: Sylvain Bemba, Sony Labou Tansi, and Tchicaya U Tam'si. Bemba (writing as Martial Malinda) offered the play *L'Enfer, c'estOrféo* (1968), a satirical and fantastical work of political allegory. Those qualities were also evident in his later plays, such as *L'Homme qui tua le crocodile* (1972) and *Un Foutu Monde pour un blanchisseur trop honnête* (1979).

Tansi, who was also a distinguished novelist and stage director and founder of the country's leading theatre company Rocado Zulu Theatre, created images of the tyrants of modern Africa that rivaled those of Soyinka, in a gruesome style described as creating a "grotesque world." Tansi's plays include *Conscience de tracteur* (1979), *Qui a mangé Madame d'AvoineBergtha* (first performed 1984), *Moi, veuve de l'empire* (1987), and his version of *Romeo and Juliet*, titled *La Rue des mouches*, produced in France in 1990.

Tchicaya U Tam'si is best known for *Le Bal de N'Dinga* (1988), a dance-drama on the theme of decolonization. *Le Zulu* (1977), first staged at the Avignon Festival in Avignon, France, is a tragedy based on the legendary African warrior Chaka, seeing in him a great leader destroyed by power. (Chaka, of course, has been the subject of many other plays and epic poems from African writers, from Senghor and Soyinka to Mali's Seydou Badian with *Le Mort de Chaka*, 1962). Tchicaya's *Le Maréchal NnikonNniku Prince qu'on sort* (first performed 1979; *The Glorious Destiny of Marshall NnikonNniku*) is a splendid satirical comedy about a mad dictator. Theatre activity based on companies often creating their own work has remained buoyant in the Republic of the Congo into the 21st century, despite the political and social difficulties of that area.

The level of theatrical activity in Francophone countries not specifically noted in the summary above is, as suggested earlier, variable, but nowhere is it less than enthusiastic, often through the efforts of amateur or semi professional companies. Modern Francophone theatre in Africa is often deeply involved in the exploration and artistic exploitation of traditional performance forms (dance, song, mime, mask, storytelling, and so on), seeing it as imperative to rescue and where necessary reinvigorate those forms that are, by their very nature, both popular and the ancient precolonial possession of the people. There is also a very sophisticated incorporation of avant-garde and intellectual theatre influences from Europe, especially France, and in common with Anglophone theatre a passionate and articulate critique of both colonialism and neo colonialism.

Angola and Mozambique

Angola and Mozambique came late to independence (1975), and fierce civil wars inevitably inhibited the development of theatre, while censorship frustrated it beforehand. In Mozambique, Lindo Lhongo's 1971 play *Osnoivosouconferênciadramáticasobre o Lobolo* fell afoul of the authorities for both its theme and its Pan-African outlook. However, as in Zimbabwe, theatre was used by the various political groups both before and after independence as a means of education and propaganda. In Mozambique, for instance, Frelimo (the Mozambique Liberation Front) had the Grupo Cénico das Forças Populares de Libertação, which in 1975 staged, among others, *Chibalo* by Marcos Francisco Tembe, a didactic play about the evils of colonialism.

To a considerable extent, that style of theatre, with a strong and confident message about the ruling ideology of the state, was to continue well into independence. Such theatre as existed was often imported, but an experimental theatre group, Mutumbela Gogo, was established in 1986 and encouraged indigenous playwriting. Companhia de Teatro Gungo, formed in 1992 by the playwright-director Gilberto Mendes, produced a number of plays on contemporary themes, including his *E tudo a águalevou* (2001), based on a traditional tale but dealing with present-day corruption. A number of other theatre groups often worked with a repertoire of translated European or South African plays but also, as with Grupo de Teatro M'beu, drew on indigenous traditional materials. That pattern was very much duplicated in Angola. Because of continued fighting in the country, theatre was largely confined to the capital city, Luanda. Various groups grew out of the establishment of the National Theatre and Dance School in 1976 and began to explore local and traditional themes. A number of playwrights made significant if sometimes politically loyal contributions, including Pepetela (Artur Pestana), best known as a novelist who wrote *A corda* (1978) and *A revolta da casa doídolos* (1979). José Mena Abrantes, returning from exile in 1974, was probably the major writer-director in Angola, with his plays *Ana, Zé e ops escravos* (first performed 1986), a play about slavery with a historical setting, *Nandyala ou a Tirania dos Monstros* (1992) from an Angolan folktale, and a further historical play *Sequeira, Luís Lopes; ou, o mulato dos prodígios* (1993). Although Portuguese is the main language of Angolan drama, indigenous languages were increasingly used alongside it.

This brief overview of modern African theatre inevitably mentions only a fraction of the playwrights, directors, companies, and theatre artists that made the theatre of that continent so powerful. Theatre for the most part retained its traditional sense of function and purpose, arising from the traditional role of festival, ritual, storytelling, and masquerade in African societies. It was engaged fully with the vital issues of politics, development, and human rights that dominated the postcolonial world. Theatre artists often worked, and still work, in situations that censored and oppressed them, but they survive because of their passionate belief in the power of theatre to shape a modern world that also celebrates the cultural strength of the past. Against this, much contemporary Western theatre paled by comparison.

2.5 TECHNICAL WORDS/ KEY WORDS

History: The study of past events, particularly human affairs.

Postcolonial literature: postcolonial literature is a broad term that encompasses literatures by people from the erstwhile colonial world, as well as from the various minority diasporas that live in the west.

Community: a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.

Communal/national identity: shared by all members of a community; for common use.

Resistance: the refusal to accept or comply with something.

Inevitable: certain to happen; unavoidable.

Theatre: a building or outdoor area in which plays and other dramatic performances are given.

2.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Write an essay on reclamation of the African past in the works of Chinua Achebe?
2. Write a note on African theatre?
3. Why theatre was in the hands of white settlers in Kenya? Explain.

2.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Achebe, Chinua (1958) Things Fall Apart. London: Heinemann. (1965). London: Heinemann.
2. Ashcroft, 8; G Griffiths and H. Tiffin (1989). The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures. New York: Routledge. (1995). The Postcolonial Studies Reader. London: Routledge.
3. Coetzee, J.M (1986). Foe. London: Seeker and Warburg. (1987). "Two Interviews by Tony Morphet 1983 and 1987." Triquorter/y. No 62, 454-464. Defoe, Daniel (1719/ 1994). Robinson Crusoe. London: Penguin.

Dr. K. Narasimha Rao

LESSON-3

THEME OF EXILE IN CARIBBEAN LITERATURE, USE OF MYTH AND LANDSCAPE

OBJECTIVES

The aim of the lesson is themes of innocence, exile and return to the motherland, resistance and endurance, engagement and alienation, self-determination and domination. The main objective of the lesson is *Caribbean Literature*. It provides a powerful new tool for postcolonial studies, and to Caribbean literature's importance in the context of all literature.

STRUCTURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Caribbean literature is the literature of the various territories of the Caribbean region. Literature in English from the former British West Indies may be referred to as Anglo-Caribbean or, in historical contexts, as West Indian literature. Most of these territories have become independent nations since the 1960s, though some retain colonial ties to the United Kingdom. They share, apart from the English language, a number of political, cultural, and social ties which make it useful to consider their literary output in a single category. The more wide-ranging term "Caribbean literature" generally refers to the literature of all Caribbean territories regardless of language whether written in English, Spanish, French, Hindustani, or Dutch, or one of numerous creoles.

The literature of Caribbean is exceptional, both in language and subject. Through themes of innocence, exile and return to motherland, resistance and endurance, engagement and alienation, self-determination, Caribbean literature provides a powerful platform for Post-Colonial studies and to Caribbean literatures in importance the context of all literature.

Caribbean lands and seas have been depicted as a paradise on earth by foreign artists and writers. Scholars and writers in Postcolonial Studies have researched and published on this cultural phenomenon of an empty island, and the racist implications of a fantasy void of local people and their cultures. Caribbean classic novels such as Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea (1966) have inspired films, stories, and poems by other artists who seek to decolonize the relationship of people and landscapes.

Caribbean novelists imbue island landscape with bustling life of the locals and migrants. The migration of Caribbean workers to the Panama Canal is often used as a narrative foundation. Maryse Condé's novel *Tree of Life* (1992) discusses the involvement of family ties and how people seek to improve their lot in life by working to build the Panama Canal. Another contemporary classic about migrant cultures is Ramabai Espinet's novel *The*

Swinging Bridge (2003), which explores trauma of displacement, Indian indentureship, and the phenomena of invisibility relating to women.

Caribbean stories and poems are ripe with references to storms, hurricanes, and natural disasters.Derek Walcott's wrote "The Sea is History," and dramatized the impact of tropical storms and hurricanes on the locals.

Caribbean writing deploys agricultural symbolism to represent the complexities of colonial rule and the intrinsic values of the lands. Native fruits and vegetables appear in colonized and decolonizing discourse. Derek Walcott describes the complications of colonialism using local fruit metaphors, such as star apples, in his poetry to connote the complexity of acidity and the sweetness. Giannina Braschi's postcolonial work United States of Banana imagines a political and economic deal between China and Puerto Rico as the exchange of a bowl of rice for a bowl of beans, and a Lychee for a Quenepa.

3.2 SUMMARY

Caribbean literature**,** literary works of the Caribbean area written in Spanish, French, or English. The literature of the Caribbean has no indigenous tradition. The pre-Columbian American Indians left few rock carvings or inscriptions (petroglyphs), and their oral traditions did not survive 16th-century Spanish colonization. The West Africans who replaced them were also without a written tradition, so for about 400 years Caribbean literature was an offshoot and imitation of the models of the colonial powers—Spain, France, Great Britain, and the Netherlands. Caribbean writers, however, were not unaware of their environment. The letters and speeches of Toussaint-Louverture, the Haitian general and liberator, indicate that from at least the end of the 18th century the Caribbean was conscious of its cultural identity. It was not until the 1920s, however, that the challenge of a distinctive literary form was accepted. Then, as part of Spanish-American Modernism, Spanish and French Caribbean writers began to break away from European ideals and to identify themselves with their fellow West Indians, most of whom were black.

The leaders of this movement, mainly poets, were Luis Palés Matos (Puerto Rico), Jacques Roumain (Haiti), Nicolás Guillén (Cuba), Léon Damas (French Guiana), and Aimé Césaire (Martinique). Jean Price-Mars, a Haitian ethnologist, in *Ainsiparlal'oncle* (1928; "Thus Spoke the Uncle"), declared that his purpose was to "restore to the Haitian people the dignity of their folklore." The achievement of this negritude, finely expressed in Césaire's poem *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1939; *Return to My Native Land*), was the construction into poetic forms of the rhythmic and tonal elements of the islands' rituals and speech patterns, using Symbolist and Surrealist techniques.

The British Caribbean, developing its national literature after 1945, made its own contribution in the folk dialect novel: Vic Reid's *New Day* (1949), Samuel Selvon's *A Brighter Sun* (1952) and *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953), and V.S. Naipaul's *Mystic Masseur* (1957) and *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), among others; and in the poetry of Louise Bennett (*Jamaica Labrish,* 1966).

Paradoxically, anglophone Caribbean development was formally conservative, working toward an "open" rather than an autochthonous, or indigenous, expression in the work of C.L.R. James (Trinidad) and the poetry of Derek Walcott (St. Lucia). In the novels of Wilson Harris (Guyana), the Symbolist and Surrealist techniques of the

Modernist movement reappear; and the poetry of Edward Brathwaite (*Rights of Passage* [1967], *Masks* [1968], *Islands* [1969]) attempts to reassert the place of Africa in the Caribbean.

Alienation and exile are two common themes in literature, this is due to the fact that it can elicit many deep emotions. These two important themes havebeen used by many Caribbean writers, this is because they either experienced having to leave their native country for political motives, or because they felt a dissatisfaction with their society and deliberately chose to live elsewhere. This comparative essay would draw to its readers the necessary attention to the distinctive experience of alienation and exile by looking at the ways in which Caribbean poets Derek Walcott and Edward Kamau Brathwaite responded to it. Selected examples from their poetry will also be discussed to argue that as a specific way of experiencing departure and migration, alienation and exile inspires specific strategies of artistic mediation and innovation.

The combination of a desire for emplacement and an openness to metropolitan influences that characterizes the situation of alienation and exile results in a distinctive strategy within Caribbean poetry that can be described as experimental self-positioning.

The literature of exile encompasses bitter, impassioned indictments of unjust, inhumane regimes, but also includes wrenching melancholy for lost homes, lost families, and a lost sense of belonging. The pervasive feeling of rootlessness, of never being quite at home echoes across centuries of exile writing.

The literature of exile encompasses bitter, impassioned indictments of unjust, inhumane regimes, but also includes wrenching melancholy for lost homes, lost families, and a lost sense of belonging. The pervasive feeling of rootlessness, of never being quite at home echoes across centuries of exile writing.

The literature of the Caribbean is exceptional, both in language and subject. More than a million and a half Africans, along with many Indians and South Asians, were brought to the Caribbean between the 15th and 19th centuries. Today, their descendants are active in literature and the arts, producing literature with strong and direct ties to traditional African expressions. This literary connection, combined with the tales of survival, exile, resistance, endurance, and emigration to other parts of the Americas, makes for a body of work that is essential for the study of the Caribbean and the Black Diaspora and indeed central for our understanding of the New World.

In the 20th century no one has gone to Naipaul's lengths to cultivable such an emphatic link between the literary theme of exile and his personal literary, nor has anyone so consistently played off that connection in the body of his or her work. Naipaul is generally considered as the most comprehensively uprooted of twentieth century writers and the most bereft of national affiliations. He is regarded as one of the greatest writers of the theme of exile. Naipaul's moralistic writing can be seen as a process of identity recovery undergoing a series of transformations: he denies or negates his Caribbean homeland, adopts a stage of mimicry in England searches for his cultural roots in India, and finally reconstructs his identity out of his multi-cultural particularity and uniqueness. His writing career comes in four stages:

1) alienation
2) colonial predicament

3) cultural heritage in India and
4) writing for self-definition.

By accepting his homelessness and statelessness he recreates a new identity in exile. He makes a voice not only for himself but also for other marginalized people.

V.S. Naipaul is one of the finest writers of the post- colonial era. Chief among the views on him is the recognition that at his finest, in books as varied as A House for Mr. Biswas, The Loss of EI Dorado and The Enigma of Arrival, Naipaul commands a unique style. Even Dereck Walcolt, a frequent critic of his ideas, hails him as the finest writer of the English sentence. Nor can one fail to admire Naipaul's faithfulness to exacting standards of productivity. Many readers would concur that Biswas, a tragicomic novel of epic scope delivered at age twenty-nine, remains his most remarkable work. Nothing since has equalled the inventiveness and emotional generosity of that homage to this father's misfortunes in the straightened circumstances of colonial Trinidad.

Naipaul is generally considered as the most comprehensively uprooted of twentieth century writers and the most bereft of national affiliations. He is regarded as one of the greatest writers of the theme of exile. In Britain and the United States, where his influence has been strongest, critics commonly focus on the pathos of his circumstances and embrace him simultaneously coming from nowhere and everywhere. One commentator points out that he is so implacable that home can never ultimately be more than the books he writes or, perhaps more precisely the out of writing them. "Such depictions of Naipaul", notes Rob Nixon in his London calling: V.S. Naipaul post- colonial, Mandarin, "as an extravagantly, even uniquely displayed literary figure uphold the image of him as embodying a melancholy modernity that can be readily generalized as "alienated": haunted by a global homeless that is inseparably geographical, existential, and literary".

Naipaul has been successful in fashioning and sustaining an autobiographical persona who is accepted at face value as a permanent exile, a refuge, a homeless citizen of the world and an international writer. In the 20th century no one has gone to Naipaul's lengths to cultivable such an emphatic link between the literary theme of exile and his personal literary, nor has anyone so consistently played off that connection in the body of his or her work.

Almost all the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean were exterminated European colonists. Contemporary Caribbeans are descended from introduced populations. The displacement of Naipaul and other such writers to England (mostly in the 1950's) can be read as a response, several generations later, to the extraordinary violence of that ancestral exile that entailed suffering the middle passage, or in the case of Naipaul's forefathers, crossing the Kalapani (black water) as they were shipped out from India to Trinidad as indentured labourers. So, by leaving for England, West Indies writers effectively retraced the second leg of the Triangular trade.

Even writers less dismissive of the Caribbean Derek Walcott, George Lamming for instance have considered displacement to the metropolitan as the legitimate even inevitable direction in which an aspirant author would make. Most of the West Indies authors who ended up in England have written in one form or another about a double sense of displacement a sense of removal from Trinidad, Barbados, Guyana, or Jamaica as superimposed on the earlier uprooting of their captive forbears. "The writer's alertness to their personal upheavals" notes, Rob Nixon, "as symbolically connected to ancestral

movements is often accompanied by a sense of trans-regional affiliations: to the West Indies, England and either Africa or India."

M.S. Nagarajan describes Naipaul in "The Hindu" "eternally as outsider an Indian in the West Indies, a West Indian in England, and as described by many a critic, a nomadic intellectual in the nondescript third world". In short, he is a writer without roots. It was said of Walt Whitman's that all his life time he was writing one book, Leaves of Grass. And so, it is with Naipaul. Though one his works, he has been discussing themes of histories, and the most painful dilemmas of the post-colonial societies.

The Nobel Committee singles out Naipaul's 1987 book, The Engima of Arrival as his masterpiece. Driven by a voice that values precision over passion, this largely autobiographical novel is a summary of Naipaul's themes. The narrator, inspired by, a surrealist painting dreams up a book about "a sunlit sea journey ending in a dangerous classical city" with a hero whose "feeling of adventure would give way to panic". (95) As Engima's essayistic sentences unroll, the narrator converts this imagined tale to this biography and his anxieties, any by the end he is reworking the book had imagined. The story has become more personal: the journey, the writer's journey, the writer defined by his writing discoveries, his ways of seeing. Thus, the story of Naipaul's life – is an eloquence given to exile.

The themes of homelessness, alienation and dislocation occur in all the novels of Naipaul. Naipaul went through a series of life stages between homelessness, alienation and dislocation occur in all the novels of Naipaul and in his nonfiction. In his early fiction, the Trinidad trilogy including Miguel Street, The Mystic Masseur and The Suffrage of Elvira, the author wields irony in order to manifest the corruption and failure of Trinidad. He cannot bear the stifling atmosphere and must find a position in the world for himself. In A House For Mr Biswas and The Mimic Men, Naipaul demonstrates the colonial predicament and their struggle for a place in the world stemming from their feeling of alienation, isolation, homelessness rootlessness and placelessness. He even lays bare the more complicated problems of dislocation faced by the exile in A Bend in the River and In a Free State.

The Mimic Men is a fictional autobiography. The narrator, Ranjit Kripal Singh (known as Ralph Singh) is rootless and homeless. The entire novel describes the rootless and ship-wrecked life of Ralph Singh. He is a failed Caribbean politician living in exile in London, lamenting the failure of his life. This constant sense of failure is a regular pattern in the novels of VS Naipaul.

Naipaul's moralistic writing can be seen as a process of identity recovery undergoing a series of transformations: he denies or negates his Caribbean homeland, adopts a stage of mimicry in England searches for his cultural roots in India, and finally reconstructs his identity out of his multi-cultural particularity and uniqueness. His writing career comes in four stages:

1) alienation
2) colonial predicament
3) cultural heritage in India and
4) writing for self-definition.

By accepting his homelessness and statelessness he recreates a new identity in exile. He makes a voice not only for himself but also for other marginalized people. Identity, for Naipaul, is not given, but constructed and contingent. Half a Life records Naipaul's exiled life and manifests the ruptures among subjectivity, geography, and language toward multicultural and fluid identity.

Exile has been a major theme in post-colonial literature and no other writer has depicted it more successfully than V.S. Naipaul.

Myth in Things Fall Apart Myth is part of the culture of most African nations. A myth is a story which is believed to be true and has its origin in the far distant past history of a people.Alagoa (1979:9) says myth it as historical information transmitted orally by processes peculiar to each community. Jaja (2012) sees myth as man-made stories that play explanatory functions in the African understanding of society. That is, myth helps us to comprehend the society that we live in; the story (i.e) is told as they shape our existence. As human civilization moves on, new myths are being created to explain the present; no wonder Anyanwu (2000) opines that man is a myth-making animal. Myths in Africa are found to be mysterious and illogical and they are so because they are part of the way of life of a people (Jaja, 2000). Some of the myths that would be discussed in Things Fall Apart may sound out of the world but they remain part of what shapes the people's existence. Myth teaches man by regulating the way of his living in a devotional engagement with the whole of man's existence. Abamuka (1994:45) says that:

Myth tells of the super-human experiences of the community; myth exposes the fact that man's misfortunes on earth as well as his hardships are attributed to the divine commands and moral codes of the deities as appoint inhis life. Some of the moral codes of the deities found expressions in animals and plants which make some fables that are conveyed in African cosmogony to be termed mythical. No wonder, Jaja (2012) said that "myth is not an intellectual explanation of an artistic imagery but living chronicles in the minds of Africans. In Myth, one would find stories of origin, explanatory stories and didactics stories. In Things Fall Apart the following myth would be discussed ecocritically, the mosquito myth, locust myth, the Osu myth and the myth of the earth and sky. The mosquito myth is discussed as thus: Mosquitoes had ask Ear to marry himWhereupon Ear fell in the floor laughing in uncontrollable laughter. How much longer would you live; you are already a skeleton". Mosquitoes went away humiliated and anytime he passed her way he told Ear that he was still alive. The Ear, a synecdoche for a human being is portrayed as being alive and mosquitoes as a non-human life of our natural habitat have a sort of relationship with the former and when the mosquitoes asked for the hands of the Ear in marriage, the former declined. Since then, the later has always told the former anytime it passes that he is alive. This only explains that there used to be a relationship between the non-human and human within the African cosmology and there is no barrier between the two of them. One can argue that the mosquitoes that now spread malaria do so as a revenge on man because ear refused his proposal. Man has to create all manner of defense mechanism to prevent mosquitoes announcing that he is living through the use of insecticide, mosquitos" nets and all other shields. As funny as the story may appear, it only reinforces that there was a harmony between the non-human life and the humans. Conceivably, if the Ear has acceded to the request of the mosquitoes, the enmities that exist between man and mosquitoes would not have arisen. The mosquitoes reminding the Ear can further means that the mosquitoes is a metaphor for anti-colonial struggle while the Ear stands for the force of imperialism. The struggle against colonialism by Africans (from the European eye): may not live long or it

may die a natural death. But the struggle for self-government continues as it is revealed by the constant reminder being orchestrated by the mosquitoes; until, the eventual liberation of sub-Saharan Africa from the shackles of oppression The locust myth is told in the third year of Ikemefun's arrival into Okonkwo's household and in the eve of his tragic death, a locust swarm descends on the Umuofians. The story narrates thus; The elders said the locust came once in a generation reappeared every year for seven years and appeared for another lifetime in a distant land, where they are guarded by a race of stunted men. And when after another lifetime these men opened the caves again and the locusts came to Umuofia. According to the myth, the locust may appear for a generation but when it appears it may come for the next seven years. Locust stands for celebration and joy and their coming is ushered in with gladness and fun fare. The locust being a non-human organism and constitutes an integral part of the environment and is a harbinger of joy, harmony and talk in the Umuofia society.

Reasons their presence elicits such celebration is because their presence is one in a life time celebration and for the Umoufians they are appetizing meal. Although, the locust has a phenomenal record of wide destruction but with the Umuofian they usher in dances and celebrations and a desired precious meal to be eaten.

The protagonist of the novel, Okonkwo was later described sitting with his son, Nwoye and Ikemefuna, crunching them happily and drinking palm wine copiously. Enjoying what nature has to offer at that time of the season. The locust therefore becomes nature gifts to mankind. The arrival of the locust contrasts the arrival of the Europeans. Soon after the invasion of the locust is the coming of the European with Christianity that later led to the conversion of many into their faith. Natural events therefore bear significance in understanding the events in human history, revealing that the European has come to disrupt the harmony with environment. The Osu myth has an age long place among the Igbos Wren(1981:28) said Osu is a person dedicated to a god. The person naturally becomes a taboo forever and his children after him. The Osus are also revealed in Things Fall Apart as one of the early converts that came to the church (Things Fall, p.111) Basden (1966:296) said that their origin may be unknown but they are regarded as one of the historical traditions of the Igbos in Nigeria. They lived in the forest in Things Fall Apart and these forests are sacred and often dedicated to the gods. Forests to them are not a place of death but that which preserves and nurtures them to fulfill the purpose why they exist. Osu stands for that is united with the forest. The Osus‟ ended up among the 1st that benefited from western education (Things Fall, p.33). The rustic environment can therefore be said to be a place that nurtures for eventual educational achievement. The myth that explains the quarrel between the Earth and the sky was said by Nwoye's Mother. Achebe describes Nwoye as a young boy that is always in love with the story that the mother always told him. But his father, Okonkwo sees a weakness in his son Nwoye because of his love for his mother and a quiet semblance for what his father stood for which he hated. One of such motherly stories was told by the mother as thus: He remembered the story she often told of the quarrel between Earth and Sky ago, and how sky withheld rain for seven years. Until crops withered and the dead could not be buried because of hoes broke on the strong Earth. At least vulture was sent to plead with sky and, and to soften his heart with a song of the suffering of the sons of man. Whenever Nwoye's mother sang his song he (Nwoye) felt carried away to the distant land in the sky where earth emissary song for mercy. At last, the sky was moved with pity, and he gave vulture rain wrapped in leaves of coco-yam. But as he flew home his long talon pierced the leaves and the rain fell as it had never fallen before. And so heavily did it rain on vulture that he did not perform to deliver the message but flew to a distant land from where he has espied a fire. And when he got there, he found it has a man making a sacrifice. He warmed himself in the fire

and ate the entrails (Things fall, 38) The above myth has huge significance to ecocritical feelings. Zolfagharkani and Shadpour (2013; 210) say that through such narratives "children learned about their original culture and the close relationship between nature and humans these stories thought humanity and morality with variant symbols in nature and proved that respecting nature is the corollary of these factors". The story above also shows that nature in African environment communicates and if there is any culture that disagree it is their inability to listen to them. The vulture is a messenger. No wonder he is the emissary sent to mediate between earth and sky on behalf of man that cannot farm any longer because the earth is hard to plough due to lack of rain. The vulture is addressed as „he" meaning that he is giving a masculine attribute to show its importance. The vulture though failed in the mission. In failure, well beaten by the rain, it finds its direction to the location of man making sacrificing with fire; a fire that the vulture seriously needed because of the draining rain and the man never pursue the vulture, all these but show that the non-human life of the natural habitat and man has a close relationship. The essence of the fire is warmness. It provides warmness for the vulture and man in the midst of cold thereby revealing the bond between human and the fauna.

The myths in Things Fall Apart (1958) are such that show that Africans have a culture that recognizes the place of the natural environments including the flora and fauna and they are part of the daily life of the African man. Both live in harmony and tend to communicate to each other. The need to refer to place of this harmony is a call to remembrance of what African environment used to be before the colonial invasions which at the same time form a link with the central idea on why the novel was written. Achebe has said the reason why Things Fall Apart (1958) was written is because there is a need to respond to Comrad's Heart of Darkeness distortion of African environment and its people. Zolfagharkani and Shadpour (2013; 213) responding to this had said that Achebe's Things Fall Apart (1958) expresses the true African culture by disseminating morality and humanity through its connection with nature. Consequently, the colonizers attempted to wipe out this culture in order to enslave Africans but they resisted the colonizers by protecting their original culture. Things fall Apart is only a microscopic observation of what is happening elsewhere in Africa that the myth of the people has a strong bond with the on-built environment. Myth has we have seen derived its strength from nature. Achebe has successfully revealed this through this work; no wonder the Things Fall Apart remains a master piece as far as African literature is concerned.

The two novels have received a great deal of criticism from many African and non-African reviewers. As an illustration, many critics consider Kateb Yacine's novel entitled Nedjma as a founding novel of Maghrebian Francophone Literature that was born within the French colonial period. This realistic work is characterized by its thematic richness. Being very much influenced by the other modern writers such as William Faulkner and James Joyce, Kateb in his Nedjma uses a very complex and particular narrative technique. In this vein, Charle Bonn writes: Un tellecteur ne peutêtre que déconcerté par un roman où les descriptions sontrares, où les récitssont multiples et enchevêtrés, tout comme les points de vuenarratifs, où les chronologies ne semblent pas respectées, oùcertainspassagessontrépétés.

The French critic explores the internal structure of the book Nedjma and refers to thedifficulty of understanding the complex design of the novel. The critic sees Kateb as aproducer of different myths which had a major task in showing the outstanding tribal historyof the Algerian ancestors. Kateb Yacine, as many other authors, was fascinated by hispeople's oral literature; it was the springboard from which he got inspiration for his literaryand dramatic works. Kateb considers the adoption of myths as a positive acceptance of

aprecious prehistoric reality. In this regard, Chiali Fatima Zohra points out: C'estainsiqu'à travers Nedjma, on assiste à uneréécrituresyncrétiquedeplusieursmythesgrecs, maghrébins et arabo-musulmans. De par leur mise enscène, l 'Histoireestpassablementoubliée. Les dates et les événementss 'yrapportantn'ontqu'unevaleur indicative. Seule la mémoire du mythedemeure, fonctionnantcommeune machine à remonter le temps; l'écriturel'utilisecomme mode de construction fait de gommage et de réécriture.

Following nearly the same idea Vladimir, Siline states: "Les mythesontétéper çuscommeVéritéet commeunecréation duPeuple, et ilssontdevenusobjetd' admiration et devénération"

The critic asserts that myths and legends are concepts and beliefs about the early history of a race. So, myths are used in the purpose of deepening the readersunderstanding of one's history. They reunite man to the human circumstance and expose theconditions and problems, social and personal, that people face in life. In this respect, Kateb'stwo other reviewers namely, Julien and Camelin declare: De fait Nedjmaconstruit un mythe, et, ce qui estétonnant, c'est que le détourpar les mythespermet à l'écrivain non seulement de déchiffrerl'Histoire, maisde faire jaillirune parole enmouvement, orientéeversunesociété libre, l'Algérieindépendante.

The reviewers write that, as a mythical work, the novel is a collection depicting a womanas a symbol of the Algerian nation and as a fatal woman who causes the failure of all thosewho approach her. The feminine character, whose name is put as the title of the novel, plays acentral role as a very attractive and influential woman whose descriptions occupy important passages in the novel. For his part, Ismail Abdoun throughout his analysis of the key scenesin the novel, he asserts: "une femme fatale qui divisesesprétendants et les pousseàs'entretuer pour elle."6 As far as A Grain of Wheat is concerned, critics have also considered Ngugi as anessential voice in African literature. He has been called the voice of the Kenyan people bycertain commentators while others have considered his novels as being among the most overestimated and of highest quality to come from Africa. His early novels including TheRiver Between, A Grain of Wheat, and Petals of Blood, can be viewed as important documents in the history of postcolonial writing. Besides, his promotion of myths, many literary critics refer to Ngugi's use of oral tradition in order to preserve his cultural heritage. Carol M. Sicherman, for instance, writes that the phrase, as we hear, like Ngugi's so it is said, testifies both to the strong Gikuyu awareness of their own history in the Mau Mau period and to the power of myth to affect events.7 Following the quotation, we come to the idea that Ngugi uses the myths proper to his own country in order to reconstitute a history aggressed by the invaders. He pushes for a national awareness of the history of Kenya through his appeal to myths. Furthermore, in his novel A Grain of Wheat, Ngugi centers his writing on the myth of the Christian religion which was brought to Kenya for imperial purposes. This ideological religion first causes the alienation and mistaken the beliefs of the Kenyan community through its justification of colonization. However, Ngugi contextualizes this Biblical myth and appropriates it to counterclaim the colonial and religious discourse; he uses his text as a medium for the liberation of his countrymen from British imperial rule. In this context, Mrijike Van Vuuren writes: His [Ngugi] use of Biblical myth is vital to his vision of the spiritual regeneration of a people. In his re-contextualization of scriptural material, he shows the Bible to be a site of contesting interpretations, which of course it has always been. It seems, however, that in dusting off the colonial dirt from the gospel and replanting it, Ngugi has chosen to overlook the spiritual and transcendent, and has simply appropriated the text for another political agenda.8 Furthermore, another critic claimed: "Ngũgĩ uses this epic model and reshapes it to construct his mythical narration of the nation:

the narrator-storyteller presents the story of the movement as a succession of battles waged by heroic leaders against the colonizers".9 It derives from the above criticism that Ngugi chooses a particular way of narrating the events in Kenya and bring inspiration to nourish his imagination from the mythic archives of his country. The myth is an inseparable part of the culture of any country. India is essentially a culturally rich country. Every village of India has its own story of origin though it may or may not be true. Myth form an important part of every human particularly of those who are away from scientific knowledge.

Raja Rao has used various myths in *Kanthapura* . Rao choses a number of myths from the famous Indian Holy books like the *Mahabharata* , and by using this, the author makes its narrative very simple to understand for an Indian reader. Rao uses the myths of Goddess Kenchamma, Lord Rama, Lord Krishna etc.

First of all, Raja Rao presents goddess Kenchamma as a mythical character. According to the villagers, Kenchamma provides them food, gives them rain, and protect their life. The villagers, in a mood of celebration, sing her songs like:

"Kenchamma, Kenchamma…
Mother of the earth and blood of life,
Harvest-queen, rain- crowned
Kenchamma, Kenchamma
Goddess benign and bounteous".

Each and every ceremony like Marriage, funeral, sickness, death, harvesting etc. are looked over by the Goddess Kenchamma. It is also believed that if there is any disease spread over anyone, the women prays Goddess Kenchamma and the diseases are vanished. Further he says:-

She called ages, ages ago, a demon that had come to ask our sons as food and our young women as wives. Kenchamma came from heavens. she fought for so many nights that the blood was submerged into the earth. This is the reason why the Kenchamma Hill is red from all sides.

Secondly Lord Krishna is presented as a mythical character. The narrator compares Gandhi with Krishna and the Britishers with Kansha. Then, Lord Rama is also presented as a mythical character in the novel. According to the grandmother, Swaraj is Sita, Mahatma is Ram and Nehru is brother Bharat. The narrator considers Gandhi as the God in invisible avtar and the young Moorthy as the visible avtar. In this way, the structure of *Kanthapura* is Puranic and mythical characters are juxtaposed with present time.

The novel starts with simple narration about one of the villages in South India, later it evolves to entire India. Raja Rao blends the various myths with that of Gandhi's Freedom Movements very harmoniously. To show the genuineness of his novel, He used the Hindu epic myth. Rao uses these myths in order to achieve his goal. It is not only the myths but his intellectual power and his ability to utilize the Indian words makes the novel popular.

3.3 TECHNICAL WORDS/ KEY WORDS

Exile: the state of being barred from one's native country, typically for political or punitive reasons.

Caribbean: the region consisting of the Caribbean Sea, its islands (including the West Indies), and the surrounding coasts.
Myth: a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events.

3.4 SELF- ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Write an essay on Theme of exile in the works of Chinua Achebe's Things fall apart?
2. Write an essay on Myth in the works of VS Naipaul?
3. Write an essay on Caribbean landscape?
4. VS Naipaul is the finest writer in the post colonial era. Discuss.

3.5 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. *A History of Literature in the Caribbean v. I and II*, ed. A. James Arnold. Philadelphia/Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2001.
2. *Writers of the Caribbean and Central America v. I and II*, by M. J. Fenwick. New York/London: Garland Publishing, 1992.
3. *Caribbean Literature: a bibliography*, by Marian Goslinga. Lanham, MD/London: Scarecrow Press:1998.
4. *Fifty Caribbean Writers*, ed. Daryl Cumber Dance. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986.
5. *Anglophone Caribbean Poetry, 1970-2001: an Annotated Bibliography*, by Emily Allen Westport Williams. CT: Greenwood Press, 2002.
6. *Diccionário de AutoresLatinoamericanos*, by Cesar Aria. Buenos Aires: Emece, 2001.
7. Nagaraj, MS, *Home and Exile*. "The Hindu, May 5, 2002.
8. Naipaul, V.S, *A House for Mr Biswas*. London: Picador, 2001.
9. Nixon Rob, *London Calling:V.S. Naipaul, Post-colonial Mandarin*, London, Bloomsbury, 2003.

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LESSON 4
ORAL IDIOM AND NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

OBJECTIVES

The aim of the lesson is to acquaint the oral idioms and narrative techniques are used in the works of colonial and post-colonial literatures. The main objective of the lesson is that to know the power of oral literature in the beginning and narrative techniques are effectively used in the African wrings and Indian writings.

STRUCTURE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

African culture is characterized by its richness and diversity that are reflected in its literature. African proverbs and idioms as a part of this richness create a discursive approach that fashions the African fiction and shapes its particularity. In this sense, African fiction in English as a conveyer of African culture via the foreign language forms a hybrid discourse that harmonizes between native and English language. For that reason, the main objective of this paper is to investigate the use of African proverbs and idioms in English as features of English indigenization in Chinua Achebe's Anthills of The Savannah. The latter depicts the post-colonial African society that is governed by a military rule. To accomplish the research work's aim, the two researchers adopt a sociolinguistic perspective with a descriptive method in order to analyze the selected novel. In doing that, the present paper reveals the significance of African proverbs and idioms in English in creating a new authentic discourse that is shaped by a new variety of English.

Raja Rao, along with Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan, is one of the three pillars of Indo-Anglian Fiction. Kanthapura (1938) is Rao’s first novel which is now considered a classic in Indian English fiction. In the present novel, Rao experiments with third person narrative through the eyes of an old woman named Achakka. Instead of using western style, he uses the ancient Puranic method of story-telling which, according to him, is true to Indian atmosphere and which gives an Indian flavor to the novel. Also, Rao tries to show the difference of language used by an educated man and an uneducated man. Further, the novelist explores the various superstitions of Indian culture. Throughout the novel, Rao uses some popular Indian words and phrases which are typical to Indian culture and by which he tries to Indianize English language.

A literary work can be analyzed through various angles and narrative technique is one of the important angles to judge a work of art. As literature is all about experimentation with different literary words and styles, a writer experiments with various innovative narrative techniques in order to make his work effective. In this light, Raja Rao’s Kanthapura is a

triumph of narrative art. In this novel, the writer uses some popular Indian myth and superstitions to give an Indian flavor to the novel.

Instead of using western style, Rao uses the ancient Puranic method of story-telling which, according to him, is true to Indian atmosphere and which gives an Indian flavor to the novel. Rao does not follow the Western concept of chapter division in the novel and *Kanthapura* is narrated as a continuous tale. Kanthapura is third person narrative through the eyes of an old woman named Achakka. Rao tells the story in oral tradition of storytelling without any break. While describing the geographical details of Kanthapura village, it appears as if the author is talking to the readers.

"Our village- I do not think that you have ever been heard about Kanthapura. It is one of the province of Kara. It has High Ghats and mountains, that face the cool Arabian seas, up the Malabar coast is it, up Mangalore and Puttur and many a center of cardamom and coffee, rise and sugarcane.

Raja Rao uses long sentences in order to show the continuous flow of thoughts of the Indian people. This kind of narration is used in many of Rao's other stories also.

4.2 SUMMARY

Oral tradition, or oral lore, is a form of human communication wherein knowledge, art, ideas and cultural material is received, preserved, and transmitted orally from one generation to another. The transmission is through speech or song and may include folktales, ballads, chants, prose or poetry.

The oral traditions and expressions domain encompasses an enormous variety of spoken forms including proverbs, riddles, tales, nursery rhymes, legends, myths, epic songs and poems, charms, prayers, chants, songs, dramatic performances and more.

Oral traditions can be categorized into different types, including legends, myths, folktales, and memorates.

An *idiom* (ID-ee-uhm) is an expression with a figurative or metaphorical meaning that differs from its literal meaning. Put another way, idioms don't mean exactly what they say. The phrase *turn over a new leaf* has nothing to do with flipping leaves; it means starting over, adopting a new attitude or behaviour.

Idioms tend to be specific to a region, culture, or language. Understanding idioms from another country often requires familiarity with that culture. You can translate a French idiom to English, but literal translation can't convey the figurative expression. *La moutardelui monte au nez* is a common French idiom that means "mustard goes up his nose"—which doesn't mean much to an American. An equivalent English idiom would be *blow a fuse,* which means to lose your temper.

The word *idiom* stems from the Latin *idioma*, meaning "a peculiarity in language," and the Greek *idiōma*, meaning "peculiar phraseology."

Examples of Idioms

Idioms are as a subset of colloquialism, which is an informal or conversational style of language that characterizes verbal speech. They are fixed phrases made of up two or more words. Idioms have very exact phrasing to achieve the intended effect; changed or modified idioms lose their inherent meaning.

There are thousands of idioms in the English language. These are some of the most common, used in context.

- "Researchers had to jump through hoops to earn the grant."
- "Corner coffee shops are a dime a dozen."
- "The old man was fit as a fiddle."
- "The test was a piece of cake."
- "People with lactose intolerance might eat dairy once in a blue moon."
- "He eyed the stack of files, worried he'd bitten off more than he could chew."
- "The two girls got along like a house on fire."
- "'Break a leg!'" she said before the group took the stage."

A single concept can often be expressed with several idioms. Consider the phrases below, which are all idioms for death, and their different connotations:

- Kick the bucket
- Bite the dust
- Pull the plug
- Bought the farm
- The ultimate sacrifice
- Food for worms
- Beyond the veil
- Pushing up daisies
- Passed away

Why Writers Use Idioms

Idioms are a powerful type of figurative language. As such, there are many reasons why writers include them in their prose or dialogue. For example:

- Express an idea or concept: Idioms can make something complex or abstract easily accessible with a few choice words. For instance, if someone can't be fooled by a dishonest character's manipulations, they might say, "I've got your number" or "I see right through you."
- Establish character and setting: Idioms are often specific to their culture, meaning writers can use them to quickly establish an authentic setting. These figures of speech can establish characterization in much the same way. For example, if a character says *down yonder*, they're probably from the South.
- Convey a point of view: Because there are often several idioms to describe a single common idea, each with its own connotation, writers can use them to convey a specific attitude. Saying someone *kicked the bucket* is a slightly irreverent and even humorous way of saying the person has died. On the other hand, saying that person *passed away* is more delicate and respectful.

- Engage readers more fully: Idioms' metaphorical or figurative meanings require readers to shift from literal to abstract thought. This keeps their attention focused on the text as they attempt to decipher what is being said. Idioms can evoke specific visual imagery, and they're often humorous—both attributes that help readers envision a scene and relate to a narrative.

Idioms and Other Literary Devices
Idioms vs. Colloquialisms

Colloquial language is conversational language, an informal style of speech used in casual contexts. This linguistic style is generally relaxed and less bound by the strictures of formal speech or writing. While all idioms are colloquialisms, the reverse is not true.

Idioms are figurative phrases comprised of two or more words. Colloquialisms, however, can be figurative or literal, one word or many. Writers often use colloquial language to approximate natural, realistic dialogue and develop setting and characterization. *Y'all*, *hoagies*, and *conniption* are examples of common American colloquialisms.

Idioms vs. Euphemisms

Euphemisms are idiomatic expressions used to discuss offensive, blunt, or delicate subject matter in a polite or respectful manner. People use euphemisms to amuse, avoid embarrassment or negativity, and downplay severity. Where writers often use idioms to enrich imagery, express an idea, or approximate everyday speech, they use euphemisms to acceptably speak about taboos and difficult topics.

A corporation might use the euphemism *downsizing* when referring to employee layoffs or budget cuts. Adults often say *the birds and the bees* to avoid saying *sex* in front of impressionable children. In fact, *passed away*, *kicked the bucket*, *the ultimate sacrifice*, and all the aforementioned death-related idioms common euphemisms meant to ease the blunt reality of death and dying.

Examples in Literature

1. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*

Chaucer frames his *Tales* as a storytelling contest between a group of travelers on a pilgrimage to Canterbury. This selection comes from "The Merchant's Tale," when protagonist January finally chooses his bride:

He at the last appointed him on one,
And let all others from his heartegon,
And chose her of his own authority;
For love is blind all day, and may not see.

Writers from Plato to Shakespeare have used *love is blind* to describe the tendency to ignore a loved one's imperfections. "The Merchant's Tale" is a tale of duplicity, as January's infatuation with his bride keeps him from acknowledging her infidelity. Though Shakespeare's (regular) use of the idiom is perhaps more famous, this example marks its

first appearance in the English language (*The Canterbury Tales* was published in 1476, more than 80 years before Shakespeare's birth).

2. Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

This Harlem Renaissance classic begins with protagonist Janie Crawford recounting her life story to her friend Pheoby:

Pheoby, we been kissin'-friends for twenty years, so Ah depend on your for a good thought. And Ah'm talking to you from dat standpoint.

Kissin'-friends is an idiomatic expression for "best friends." Here, it implies that Janie and Pheoby share a deep and intimate friendship, one built on mutual trust and respect.

3. Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*

This novel chronicles Ebenezer Scrooge's encounters with the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come. Before any of that, Scrooge is visited by the ghost of his long-dead business partner, Jacob Marley. The narrator explains Scrooge's disbelief:

Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a doornail.

The narrator's use of *dead as a doornail* accomplishes two things. It evokes the image of a metal nail—gray and lifeless—to confirm that Jacob Marley is truly dead, and it establishes Scrooge's personality as rigid, cold, and cynical. Scrooge denies Marley's presence despite it literally being right before his eyes because it challenges his conception of death and reality.

4. Shakespeare, Multiple Works

Shakespeare coined many a word and turn of phrase—including the following famous expressions.

Romeo and Juliet
MERCUTIO: Nay, if our wits run the **wild-goose chase**, I am done, for thou hast more of the wild-goose in one of thy wits than, I am sure, I have in my whole five.

A wild goose chase is a pointless, fruitless activity. In Shakespeare's day, this idiom does not literally reference geese. Instead, it is inspired by a sport in which a line of horseback riders tried to follow a leader—looking very much like geese in flight.

The Taming of the Shrew

PETRUCHIO: This is a way to **kill a wife with kindness**, and thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humor.

Killing someone with kindness means being as nice as possible to someone, despite their rude or insulting behavior. The metaphorical killer hopes to elicit a certain response or make the antagonistic figure feel awkward or uncomfortable.
Othello

IAGO: O, beware, my lord, of jealousy! It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock the meat it feeds on.
Jealousy is often personified as the green-eyed monster, calling to mind the image of a mean and ferocious beast that often attacks out of insecurity or fear.

Julius Caesar

CASCA: Nay, an I tell you that, Ill ne'er look you i' the face again: but those that understood him smiled at one another and shook their heads; but, for mine own part, it was Greek to me.

If something's *all Greek* to you,that means you can't understand it. This idiom is commonly used to describe new or foreign ideas.

Henry V

PISTOL: The king's a bawcock, and a heart of gold, a lad of life, an imp of fame, of parents good, of fist most valiant.

Someone with a heart of gold has a very kind and good-natured disposition.
Narrative techniques in writing are the literary methods of using plot, setting, theme, style, and characters to create details that can be visualized by the reader.

Definition of Narrative Technique

Narratives are works that provide an account of connected events. To put it simply, a narrative is a story. There are many types of literature that are considered narratives, including novels, dramas, fables, folk tales, short stories, and poetry. In addition to literature, narratives are found in cinema, music, and theatre.

Narrative techniques provide deeper meaning for the reader and help the reader use imagination to visualize situations. Narrative literary techniques are also known as literary devices. Before we look too closely at narrative techniques, it's important to understand that **literary elements** in narratives include such things as the setting, plot, theme, style or structure, characters, and perspective, or voice of the story, since literary techniques are best understood in the context of one of these elements.

Types of Narrative Techniques

There are many literary techniques, but for this lesson, we will examine literary techniques relevant to style, plot, and narrative perspective, or point of view. Common techniques relevant to **style**, or the language chosen to tell a story, include metaphors, similes, personification, imagery, hyperbole, and alliteration.

Common techniques relevant to **plot**, which is the sequence of events that make up a narrative, include backstory, flashback, flash-forward, and foreshadowing. Common techniques relevant to **narrative perspective**, or who is telling the story, include first person, second person, third person, and third-person omniscient.

Examples of Narrative Techniques in Style

The style a writer uses is seen in the diction, or the language used. Figurative language is a common element in narrative writing.

Metaphors and similes are expressions used to compare two things in an effort to help the reader have a better understanding of what the writer is attempting to convey. The difference between a simile and a metaphor is the **simile** uses words like 'as' or 'than' in the comparison, while the **metaphor** does not utilize these words.

Consider the metaphor: 'It's raining men.' Obviously, this does not mean it is literally raining men, since that is impossible. It simply means that there are a lot of men present. Here you can see an example of a simile: 'It was raining like cats and dogs.' Again, this does not literally mean cats and dogs are coming from the sky; that is impossible. This is an expression that helps the reader understand the rain is very powerful and forceful.

Imagery creates visuals for the reader that appeal to our senses and usually involves figurative language: 'The bar was a dark, gloomy eyesore.' This statement appeals to our senses to help us visualize and feel the negative aspects of this location.

Personification is seen when an inanimate object is given human or animal-like qualities, like: 'The stars danced in the sky.' We know stars cannot dance. This statement is an attempt to help the reader have a better picture of how the stars appeared to move in a dancing fashion.

Hyperbole is an over-exaggeration to make a point. You might have heard someone say: 'My purse weighs a ton.' We know this is not meant to be in the literal sense but is meant to help the reader understand the excessive weight of the purse.

Alliteration is seen when the writer uses the same letters together in a sentence. Here is a classic example: 'Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.' Some writers use alliteration to help readers remember phrases or concepts, while some writers simply use this technique because it is 'catchy' and appealing to readers.

Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* is straight forward narrative, and he sometimes uses flashback technique in order to give stylistic effect to the narrative. Achakka narrates the story of her past life to her grand-children. She tells the story in a very confusing manner due to her oldness. While narrating the story, she was not able to remember the name of famous Indian Gods, and finds herself confused to distinguish between Brahma and Shiva and Vishnu.

Kanthapura is written with three stand points: political, religious and social as Narasimhaiah observes that, "There are at least three stands of experience in the Kanthapura - the political, the religious and the social". As for as the religious stand point is considered, Kenchamma is a superpower goddess to the people of Kanthapura village. From the political

stand point, Rao presents the prevailing condition of India before Independence, especially the Gandhian dis-obedient movement. From the social point, the author exposes the hierarchy system where Brahmins were the most privileged group and they were considered the most upper class in the village.

The people of Kanthapura were ignorant, poor and superstitious but they have a strong faith in religion. They have a deep faith in Goodness 'Kenchamaa'. She is believed to be in the center of the village. It is strongly believed that marriage, sickness, death, ploughing, harvesting, arrest, release all are watched by Kenchamma. Either, you are suffered from small pox or influence by any other disease, you just need to make vow to the Goodness Kenchamma, the next morning, you walked and you find the disease has left you. There is also a temple of Kanthapurishwari in the village and the people sing before the Goddess as:

Kenchamma, Kenchamma
Goddess benign, and bounteous,
Mother of earth, blood off life,
Harvest- queen-rain, crowned,
Kenchamma, Kenchamma
Goddess benign and bounteous

As one goes to the social background of the people, it is found that the caste system is divided in four parts as Brahmin, Parihar, Potter, Weaver. The Brahmins are considered as the upper class of the society. But the condition of Dalits, Parihar, and women is very bad in the village. They have a very little space in the village. There was a caste system of vivid communities. These Dalits, Parihar and women are suppressed due to this caste system.

Another important aspect of Raja Rao's narrative style is his appropriate use of language. He moulds the language according to the situation. In *Kanthapura* , Rao has tried to present the language of each and every person. He exposes that an educated man used a different language than that of an uneducated man. As the narrator of the novel is an old lady and while talking about the Goddess Kenchmma, she speaks as a typical old lady:

If the rain comes not, one needs to fall the feet and asks 'Kenchamma, you should be kind with us. Our area is at its peak and you should provide water to us. Tell us, Kenchamma, why do you seek to make our stomachs bum?

Further, Moorthy is young and educated man in village and while talking about the Gandhian thoughts and ideas, he uses the language of an educated man. Rao also shows that the women used totally different language from man. Their only concern is about house-hold matters and they usually talk about their clothing like which dress one should wear in Harikatha. In order to give Indian touch to the novel, the narrator normally addresses the listener as brother, sister, mother, father, uncle, aunty, older brother, older sister etc.

Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" begins as a story about life in the Igbo tribe in Nigeria. Later, white missionaries come to Igbo society to try to convert the tribe to Christianity, and the Igbo face off against each other over whether to fight the missionaries.

The narrative techniques used in the novel help to paint a vivid picture of Igbo life and to fight against the corrupting influence of colonization.Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" begins as a story about life in the Igbo tribe in Nigeria. Later, white missionaries come

to Igbo society to try to convert the tribe to Christianity, and the Igbo face off against each other over whether to fight the missionaries. The narrative techniques used in the novel help to paint a vivid picture of Igbo life and to fight against the corrupting influence of colonization. The novel is written in the third-person omniscient point of view. It can share the thoughts of any character, though it often focuses on just the main characters, including Okonkwo, Ikemefuna, Nwoye and Ekwefi. This style of narration helps to provide more insights into the Igbo people, their values and their social customs. It also helps to paint them as more three-dimensional characters, instead of the simple stereotypes that the missionaries see. It also shows them as a diverse cast of characters instead of a single, homogenous tribe.

4.3 TECHNICAL WORDS/ KEY WORDS

Myths: a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events.

Puranas: It is a vast genre of Indian literature about a wide range of topics, particularly about legends and other traditional lore. The Puranas are known for the intricate layers of symbolism depicted within their stories.

Harikatha: It is a composite art form composed of storytelling, poetry, music, drama, dance, and philosophy most prevalent in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Karnataka and ancient Tamil Nadu. Any Hindu religious theme may be the subject for the Harikatha.

Superstitions: Excessively credulous belief in and reverence for the supernatural.

Religion: The belief in and worship of a superhuman power or powers, especially a God or gods.

Gandhian Philosophy: Gandhian Philosophy is the religious and social ideas adopted and developed by Mahatma Gandhi. First, from 1893 to 1914, when he lived in.

4.4 SELF- ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Write an essay on narrative techniques?
2. Write a short note on types of narrative techniques?
3. Explain oral stories in the works of colonial and post-colonial Writings?
4. Write about Raja Rao's style in Kanthapura?

4.5 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Colonialism and post colonialism. Ania Loomaba- Routledge-2016
2. Colonial and post-colonial literature- Migrant Metaphors- Oxford University Press-2014
3. Prem Podder& David Johnson "A Historical Companion to Post Colonial Literature in English" 2005

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LESSON 5
RAJA RAO
THE GREAT INDIAN AMERICAN WRITER

OBJECTIVES

The aim of the lesson is to introduce Raja Rao to students as a writer of fiction whose contribution to Indian writing in English is much valued. After reading of the lesson, you acquaint briefly about two of his major contemporaries, Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan, and their works. A brief life-sketch gives you the necessary background knowledge of Raja Rao and his writings. Besides, you get to know about his philosophical bent of mind and views on literarycommunication

STRUCTURE

5.1 RAJA RAO'S LIFE AND WORKS

Raja Rao (1908 – 2006) was an Indian-American writer. His writings were composed of English language. He was one of the older Indian writers in English whose works like Kanthapura have been readily accepted and gained much popular among the readers.

Born to well-known Brahmin family, Raja Rao was born on 8th November, 1908 in Hasan, Mysore. He was the eldest child among his siblings. His father was a teacher at Nizam College teaching Kannada. The death of his mother at an early age of four and his grandfather left a great impression in his growing years. Raja Rao‘s first wife was Camille Mouldy in 1931.He later married for the second time Katherine Jones, an American stage actress. He later married for the third time to Susan, who was a student whom he met at the University of Texasin the 1970s.

Raja Rao began his formal education at Muslim schools, the Madarsa-e-Aliya at Hyderabad and the famous Aligarh Muslim University where he mastered French. He completed his matriculation in 1927 and graduated in subjects both English and History from the University of Madras. He then won the Asiatic Scholarship of the Government of Hyderabad to study abroad in 1929. Raja Rao enrolled himself at the University of Montpellier, France learning all about French language and literature. He then fully explored the Indian influence on Irishliterature at the Sorbonne in Paris.

Raja Rao served as a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Texas, Austin from 1966 to 1983. He taught courses like Marxism to Gandhism, Mahayana Buddhism, Indianphilosophy: The Upanishads, Indian philosophy: The Metaphysical Basics of the Male and Female Principle. Raja Rao breathed his last on 8th July,2006 at Texas at the age of ninety- seven.

5.2 LITERARY CAREER

The last of the 'big three' is Raja Rao. Close contemporary with Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan. Raja Rao has a very high sense of the dignity of this vocation as a writer. He looks to his work in the spirit of dedication. For him literature is Sadhana not a profession but a vocation. He was deeply influenced by sages Sri Atmananda to whom he dedicates "The Serpent and The Rope". Raja Rao, unlike Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan, has not been a prolific novelist, having written just four novels beginning with Kanthapura (1938) which is perhaps the finest evocation of the Gandhian age in Indian English Fiction.

Raja Rao edited with Iqbal Singh an anthology of modern Indian thought from Ram Mohan Roy to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru titled Changing India. In 1943-44 he co-edited a journal, Tomorrow with his friend, Ahmed Ali.

He was associated with Chetana which is a cultural society for the propagation of Indian thought and values. In 1931-32 Raja Rao had contributed four articles in Kannada for a journal, Jaya Kannada. His active participation in the Indian nationalist movement is reflected in his first two works such as Kanthapura (1938) and The Cow of the Barricades (1947).

In 1988 he published a biography on Mahatma Gandhi titled Great Indian Way: A Life of Mahatma Gandhi. His work was The Serpent and the Rope which dramatizes the relationships between Indian and the western culture. Apart from the above mentioned some of his other works include Cat and Shakespeare (1965), The Policeman and the Rose (1978), The Chess-master and His Moves 91988), On the Ganga Ghat (1989).

Returning to India in 1939, he edited *Changing India* with Iqbal Singh, an anthology of modern Indian thought from Ram Mohan Roy to Jawaharlal Nehru. He participated in the Quit India Movement of 1942. In 1943–1944 he co-edited a journal from Bombay called *Tomorrow* with Ahmad Ali. He was a prime mover in the formation of cultural organisation *Sri Vidya Samiti*, devoted to reviving the values of ancient Indian civilisation.

Rao's involvement in the nationalist movement is reflected in his first two books. The novel *Kanthapura* (1938) was an account of the impact of Gandhi's teaching on nonviolent resistance against the British. Rao borrows the style and structure from Indian vernacular tales and folk-epics. He returned to the theme of Gandhism in the short story collection *The Cow of the Barricades* (1947). *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) was written after a long silence, and dramatised the relationships between Indian and Western culture.

The serpent in the title refers to illusion and the rope to reality. *Cat and Shakespeare* (1965) was a metaphysical comedy that answered philosophical questions posed in the earlier novels. He had great respect for women, and once said, "Women is the Earth, air, ether, sound, women is the microcosm of the mind".

5.3 HIS SELECTED WORKS

Fiction: Novels

- *Kanthapura* (1938), Orient Paperbacks.
- *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), Penguin India.
- *The Cat and Shakespeare: A Tale of India* (1965) Penguin India.
- *Comrade Kirillov* (1976), Orient Paperbacks.
- *The Chessmaster and His Moves*(1988), Orient Paperbacks.

Fiction: Short story collections

- *The Cow of the Barricades* (1947)
- *The Policeman and the Rose* (1978)
- *On the Ganga Ghat* (1989), Orient Paperbacks (Vision Books)

Non-fiction

- *Changing India: An Anthology* (1939)
- *Tomorrow* (1943–44)
- *Whither India?* (1948)
- *The Meaning of India,* essays (1996), Penguin India
- *The Great Indian Way: A Life of Mahatma Gandhi,* biography (1998), Orient Paperbacks.

Anthologies

- *The Best of Raja Rao* (1998)
- *5 Indian Masters* (Raja Rao, Rabindranath Tagore, Premchand, Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, Khushwant Singh) (2003).
- *Indian Ethos and Western Encounter in Raja Rao's Fiction* - Editor : Dr. Madhulika Singh - Published by Rajmangal Publishers.

5.4 AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

1964: Sahitya Akademi Award

1969: Padma Bhushan, India‘s third highest civilian award1988: Neustadt International Prize for Literature

2007: Padma Vibhushan, India‘s second highest civilian award

5.5 HIS DEATH

Raja Rao, an internationally renowned novelist who was among the first major Indian writers to cajole the English language into conveying the distinctive cadences of his native country, died July 8 at his home in Austin, Texas. He was 97. At his death, Raja Rao was emeritus professor of philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin, where he began teaching 40 years ago.

5.6 SUMMARY

Raja Rao was one of the most prominent writers in 20th-century India, known for his novels and short stories. The critic Ivar Ivask said his ‒greatest achievement [was] the

perfection of the metaphysical novel.

He began publishing his first stories in magazines and journals in 1931, with his first novel, *Kanthapura*, coming out in 1938. When he returned to India the next year, he became involved in the nationalist movement. He labored alongside Jawarhal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, and sought his guru, Sri Atmananda, whom he met in Trivandrum, Kerala.

Indian writer of novels and short stories, whose works are deeply rooted in Brahmanism and Hinduism. Raja Rao's semi-autobiographical novel, *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), is a story of a search for spiritual truth in Europe and India. It established him as one of the finest Indian stylists. "Writing is my dharma," he once said. Most of his life, Rao lived outside India,but it was always at the heart of his thought.

I hear you saying that liberation is possible and that Socratic wisdom is identical with your guru's.
No, Raja, I must start from what I am.
I am those monsters which visit my dreams and reveal to me my hidden essence. (Czeslaw Milosz in 'To Raja Rao,' 1969)

Raja Rao was born on November 8, 1908 in Hassan, in the state of Mysore in south India, into a well-known Brahman family. His native language was Kannada, but his post-graduate education was in France, and all his publications in book form were in English. Some of his first efforts as a writer were in Kannada.

Rao's father, H.V. Krishnaswamy, taught Kannada at Nizam's College (Hyderabad). He was a anglicised Indian; he died in 1940. Rao's mother, Gauramma, died in 1912.

Rao was educated at Muslim schools. After graduating from Madrasa-i-Aliya (Hyderabad) as the only Brahmin student, he studied English at the Aligarh Muslim University and took a degree from the Nizam College. Upon winning in 1929 the Asiatic Scholarship of the government, Rao left India for Europe, where he remained for a decade.

He studied at the universities of Montpellier and the Sorbonne under Professor Louis Cazamian, doing research in Christian theology and history, particularly searching the link between India and the thought of the Cathars. At Montpellier he met Camille Mouly, a French academic; they married in 1931. Camille became the most important person in his life. She translated some of his short stories. Rao depicted the breakdown of their marriage in *The Serpent and the Rope*.

While in France, Rao was appointed to the editorial board of *Le Mercure de France* (Paris). His first stories, which show the influence of Kafka, Malraux, and the Surrealists, Rao published in French and English. Between 1931 and 1933 he contributed articles written in Kannada for the periodical *Jaya Karnataka* (Dharwar): 'Pilgrimage to Europe' (1931), 'Europe and Ourselves' (1931), and Romain Rolland, the Great Sage' (1933).

Like the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe, writing in English, Rao was concerned with the colonial language. In the foreword to *Kanthapura* (1938), published in London, he admitted the difficulties in using "a language that is not one's owned the spirit that is one's own," and conveying "the various shades and omissions of certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language."

Along with such writers as Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan, Rao stood in the forefrontof the emerging Indian English literature. When his marriage disintegrated in 1939, Rao returned to India and began his first period of residence in an *ashram*. During WW II, he travelled widely in India in search of his spiritual heritage, edited with Ahmed Ali the literary magazine *Tomorrow* and met in Kerala his guru, Krishna Menon, better known as Sri Atmananda Guru. Menon had been a police officer before finding his true vocation. At every turn of his life, Rao had his picture on the wall.

In 1942 Rao spent six months in Mahatma Gandhi's *ashram* at Sevagram, in Maharashtra. With a socialist group Rao took part in underground activities against the British rule. When Rao met Jawaharlal Nehru in the Black Forest in Germany, he brought three Evian bottles for his wife. Nehru said to him: "We've had enough of Rama and Krishna. Not that I do not admire these great figures of our traditions, but there's work to be done.

And not clasp hands before idols while misery and slavery beleaguer us." (*The Meaning of India* by Raja Rao, 1996, p. 37)

Rao's involvement in the nationalist movement is reflected in his first two books. The novel *Kanthapura* (1938), published by E. Arnold & Co., was an account of the impact of Gandhi's teaching on non-violent resistance against the British. The story is seen from the perspective of a small Mysore village in South India. Rao borrows the style and structure from Indian vernacular tales and folk-epic. The narrator is an old woman. She tells how the community obtains from daily life, with its millennia-old worship of the local deity, the strength to stand against the British Raj.

In the character of the young Moorthy, who comes back from the city, Rao portrays an idealist and supporter of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*, who wants to cross the traditional barriers of caste. The younger generation has city ways, they read city books, and they even call themselves Gandhi-men. Dore, as the old woman calls the "university graduate," has given up his "boots andhat and suit and had taken to dhoti and khadi, and it was said he had even given up his city habit of smoking."

Both the English writer E.M. Forster and Rao had the same publisher. Foster, whose masterwork *A Passage to India* (1924) criticized British imperialism, is said to have praised *Kanthapura* as "the finest novel to come out of India in recent years." ('Raja Rao: A Philosophical Novelist' by Mallikarjun Patil, in *The Fiction of Raja Rao: Critical Studies*, edited by Mittapalli Rajeshwar, Pier Paolo Piciucco, 2001, p. 4) However, Rao's India is more than a British colony, but goes deeply into the philosophical and spiritual aspects of life. In *The Serpent and the Rope* Rao wrote, "India is not a country, like France, or like England; India is an idea, a metaphysic." (Ibid., London: J. Murray, 1960, p. 389)

Kanthapura is the first novel of Raja Rao and in many ways his most perfect and satisfying work. It was written in France thousands of miles away from India and yet it gives a most graphic, vivid and realistic account of the Gandhian freedom struggle in the 1930s and its impact on the masses of India. The time of action is 1930 and the scene of action is Kanthapura,a typical South Indian village on the slopes of the Western Ghats. Moorthy, the central figure, is a young man educated in the city. He is a staunch Gandhi man and the Gandhian Civil Disobedience movement comes to this remote secluded village when Moorthy comes from the city with the message of the Mahatma. He goes from door to door even in the Pariah quarter of the village and explains to the villagers the significance of

Mahatma Gandhi's struggle for independence. He inspires them to take to charka - spinning and weaving their own cloth. Soon the Congress Committee is formed in Kanthapura.

Publicity material is brought from the city and freely circulated in the village. A volunteer corps is formed and the volunteers are trained and educated as so that they may remain non - violent in the face of government repression. In this task of organizing the freedom struggle in Kanthapura, he is helped by Ratna, a young lady, of progressive and enlightened views and Patel Range Gowda, the Sardar Patel of the village. The Red - man's Government, on its part, takes prompt steps to counter the moves of the Gandhi - men and to contain the movement. Policeman, Bade Khan, is posted in the village and he is actively helped and supported by Bhatta, the Brahmin. Bhatta enlists the support of a Swami in the city, who seems to be a powerful religious authority and wields much influence on the ignorant people of the village. He threatens to excommunicate all those who fraternize with the Pariahs.

Moorthy is actually ex - communicated and a few deserts him but on the whole, the people remain undaunted and firm in their support to the Gandhi movement. Reports regarding the Dandi march of the Mahatma to break the Salt Law and the enthusiasm it had evoked throughout the country, reach the village and do much to boost the public morale.

Soon there are satyagra has and picketing. The villagers under the leadership of Moorthy offer Satyagraha outside the toddy plantation. There is police lathi - charge and many are wounded and hurt seriously. A large number of people are arrested and sent to jail.

This is followed by the picketing of the toddy booth outside the Skeffington Coffee Estate.

Government repression is even more ruthless this time. Even women, children and old men are not spared. The suffering of the fellow - villagers touches the heart of the workers of the Skeffington Coffee Estate and they too join their suffering brethren. The atmosphere resounds with shouts of "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai". Even larger numbers are arrested. Moorthy is also arrested and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. In his absence Ratna looks after the Congress - work in the village. Women are organized and trained. Then comes the no - tax campaign. The people are directed not to pay land revenue to the unjust Red men.

They should remain peaceful and non- violent even if their fields, crops, cattle and houses are auctioned and occupied. They remain non - violent in the beginning but soon violence breaks out. Government is ruthless in its repression. There are merciless lathi - charges and even shootings. The atmosphere resounds with shrieking and crying as well as with shouts of "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai". The villagers put up a brave resistance but ultimately they are compelled to flee. Their morale is broken. They have to leave Kanthapura, trudge along for miles over unknown territory and finally find shelter in a remote village. They have been defeated but in their very defeat lay their victory. Their brave resistance has given a jolt to the government and as such jolts were being administered all over the country, the British government was bound to be shaken and overthrown in the course of time. It was so over - thrown in 1947; and the British were forced to withdraw.

The heroic struggle of the people of Kanthapura is thus a milestone in India's march towards independence.

Raja Rao returned to the theme of Gandhism in the short story collection *The Cow of the Barricades* (1947). Rao also edited Nehru's *Soviet Russia: Some Random Sketches and Impressions*. (1949). After India gained independence, Rao travelled throughout the world, making his first visit to the Unites States in 1950. He also spent some more time living in an ashram. In 1965 he married a stage actress, Katherine Jones; the marriage also ended in divorce. From 1963 Rao lectured on Indian philosophy at the University of Texas, Austin.

After retiring as professor emeritus, Rao continued living Austin. In November 1986 he married Susan Vaught. They lived in a modest apartment on Pearl Street. Rao ate only vegetarian food, with the exception of some desserts.

Raja Rao received in 1988 the prestigious Neustadt International Prize for Literature.

Several Neustadt Laureates have been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, among them Gabriel García Márquez, Czeslaw Milosz, and Octavio Paz. Milosz's poem dedicated to Raja Rao was composed in 1969 in Berkeley, where they had a long discussion. It was one of the few pieces Milosz wrote in English. In 1997 Rao was given India's highest literary award, the Fellowship of the Sahitya Akademi. He was unable to travel to India to receive it.

In Rao's old age, his longish, once black hair had turned silver. Rao was short, he had fine features and he spoke with soft voice.

In his introduction to Rao's retelling of Gandhi's life, *Great Indian Way: A Life of Mahatma Gandhi* (1998), Makarand R. Paranjake said that "Raja Rao belongs very much to this pauranic tradition. He has performed his duty as a writer as faithfully and sincerely as our ancient poets, who have told the stories of gods and demons, heroes and villains, apsaras and princesses, sages and mendicants with such zealous relish." Rao called the work "an experiment in honesty". Abandoning historians' commitment to the factual, Rao intertwined prose and poetry. "The Pauranic style, therefore, is the only style an Indian can use fact against custom, history against time, geography against space," Rao said in the 'Preface'.

In 2000, with his approval, the Samvad Undia Foundation, a nonprofit charitable trust, created the ‑Raja Rao Award for Literature‖ in order to ‑recognize writers and scholars who have made an outstanding contribution to the Literature and Culture of the South Asian Diaspora.

The Serpent and the Rope was written after a long silence during which Rao lived India. There he renewed a connection with his roots in the modern rendering of the Mahabharata legend of Satayavan and Savithri. The work also dramatized the relationships between Indian and Western culture. Ramaswamy, a young Brahmin studying in France, is married to a French college teacher, Madeleine, who sees her husband above all as a guru. As Ramaswamy struggles with commitments imposed on him by his Hindu family, his wife becomes a Buddhist in her spiritual quest and renounces worldly desires. She leaves her husband to find his own true self. The serpent in the title refers to the illusion and the rope to the reality. Ramaswamy evolved into Sivarama Sastri in The Chess master and His Moves (1988).

Raja Rao's The Serpent and the Rope (1960) is the greatest of Indian English novels. Thisnovel, which took ten years in shaping itself, is a highly complex and many-sided novel.

Being at once the tragic story of a marriage of minds which drift apart: the spiritual autobiography of a learned, sensitive and imaginative modern Indian intellectual, as also a saga of this quest of self- knowledge and self-fulfilment. The hero "Ramaswami, is a young man of great literary cultures. He knows many languages, vastly read and widely travelled man. Being a product of many cultures, Rama's mind is a seething whirlpool of cultural currents and cross-currents. Unlike the simple story teller in Kanthapura, who knew only Indian myths and legends, Rama is familiar with myths and legends of different civilizations and he can discern parallels between them and forge a link between the past and the present by comprehending the essential oneness of history. Raja Rao has used the myths and legends to highlight the situation of characters or the relationship between them and to substantiate or concretize the abstract thought of the hero, Ramaswamy. The title "The serpent and the Rope" is symbolical and philosophical as it illustrates the doctrine that just as the rope is often wrongly taken to be the serpent, the limited self is often regarded the individual soul, which is only an aspect of God. One realises that the 'serpent' is really only a rope, when one who knows points this out similarly upon being initiated by the Guru; one realises that Jiva (soul) is one with Siva.

The Serpent and the Rope is truly philosophical novel in that in it the philosophy is not in the story - the philosophy is the story. Raja Rao's fiction obviously lacks the social dimension of its two major contemporaries. Not for him the burring humanitarian zeal of neither Anand, nor Narayan's sure grasp of the living description of the daily business of living. But only his two novels have given him the same fictional chord of their contemporaries.

Cat and Shakespeare (1965) is a metaphysical comedy that answered philosophical questions posed in the earlier novels. In the book the Hindu notion of karma is symbolized by a cat. The hero discovers in his attempts to receive divine grace, that there is no dichotomy between himself and God. *Comrade Kirillov* (1976) was written early in Rao's career and was first published in a French translation. It satirized communism as an ideological misunderstanding of man's ultimate aims, and argued that all foreign creeds gradually become Indianized.

The Chess master and His Moves is peopled by characters from various cultures seeking their identities. Like Nabokov, Rao used the metaphor of the chess game to illuminate philosophical and psychological questions. In the story Sivarama Sastri, an Indian mathematician in Paris, meets Proust, and recounts his love affairs and friendships. The magnum opus was the first part of a projected trilogy.

Raja Rao wrote: "I am no scholar. I am a "creative" writer. I love to play with ideas. It is like a chess game with horses, elephants, chamberlains and the Kings which might fight with one another. The game is not for winning. It is for *rasa* – delight." ('Introduction,' in *The Meaning of India* by Raja Rao, 1996, p.7) Raja Rao died of heart failure on July 8, 2006, at his home in Austin, Texas. Born and brought up in a devout Brahmin family, Raja Rao was never showing the high-headedness in his writings. He wrote in a way which might well be termed as amicable because his fictions were always looking for the solutions of the problems which were prevalent at the time. Kanthapura was looking a way to unite the nation. The Cat and Shakespeare looks deep into the daily life of a common Indian and tries to reach somewhere where one can sit relax and see below. His nonfictional works also were prepared for certain purposes and you can find that once you read them.

Raja Rao had a chaotic personal life and he married thrice. It is a surprise to many of hisadmirers that all his wives were non-Indian! He spent his last days in the USA and died in 2006.

5.7 TECHNICAL WORDS/KEY WORDS

1. **Hinduism:** a major religious and cultural tradition of South Asia, which developed from Vedic religion.

2. **Brahmanism:** the complex sacrificial religion that emerged in post-Vedic India (*c.* 900 BC) under the influence of the dominant priesthood (Brahmans), an early stage in the development of Hinduism.

3. **Gandhism:** Gandhism is a body of ideas that describes the inspiration, vision, and the life work of M.K. Gandhi.

4. **Sevagram:** Sevagram (meaning "A town for/of service") is a town in the state of Maharashtra, India. It was the place of Mahatma Gandhi's ashram and his residence from 1936 to his death in 1948.

5. **Anglicize:** to make or become English in form or character

6. **Non-violence:** the use of peaceful means, not force, to bring about political or social change.

5.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Write an essay on Raja Rao‘s literary contribution to the Indian fiction?
2. Write essay on Raja Rao‘s style in his novels?
3. Write a note on Raja Rao‘s biography?
4. What is the Raja Rao‘s art of narrative technique?

5.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. 'Entering the literary work' by Raja Rao, in *Name Me a Word: Indian Writers Reflect on Writing*, edited by Meena Alexander (2018)
2. *Freedom in Indian English Fiction: Raja Rao to Arundhati Roy* by K.B. Bindu(2016)
3. *Raja Rao: an Introduction* by Letizia Alterno (2011)
4. *The Rose and the Lotus, Partnership Studies in the Works of Raja Rao* by Stefano Mercanti (2010)
5. *The Feminine Mirrored: Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, Bhabani Bhattacharya* by SandhyaSharma (2002)
6. *The Fiction of Raja Rao,* ed. by Rajeshwar Mittapalli and Pier Paolo Piciucco (2001)
7. *Socio Cultural Aspects of Life in the Selected Novels of Raja Rao* by A. Sudhakar Rao (2000)
8. *Critical Study of Novels of Arun Joshi, Raja Rao and Sudhin N. Ghose* by T.J. Abraham(1999)

9. *Myths of the Nation* by Rumina Sethi (1999); *Word as Mantra: The Art of Raja Rao,*edited by Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr (1998)
10. *The Novels of Raja Rao* by E. Dey (1992)
11. 'Raja Rao,' in World Authors 1950-1970, edited by John Wakeman (1975)
12. *Raja Rao* by M.K. Naik (1972)
13. *Raja Rao* by C.D. Narasimhaiah (1973)
14. *Indian Writing in English* by K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar (1962)
15. *The meaning of India* by Raja Rao, 1996.

DR. K. NARASIMHA RAO

LESSON 6
THE ROLE OF RAJA RAO IN THE HISTORY OF INDIAN FICTION

OBJECTIVES

The aim of the lesson is to introduce the brief history of the Indian English Novel and the role of one of the Indian trinity Raja Rao‘s literary contributions to the Indian English fiction.

The main objective of the lesson is to understand the history of Indian English fiction, it can be very much aligned to the advent and supreme reign of the British Raj upon India.

STRUCTURE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Raja Rao, (born November 8, 1908, Hassan, Mysore [now Karnataka], India died July 8, 2006, Austin, Texas, U.S.), author who was among the most-significant Indian novelistswriting in English during the middle decades of the 20th century.

Descended from a distinguished Brahman family in southern India, Rao studied English at Nizam College, Hyderabad, and then at the University of Madras, where he received a bachelor‘s degree in 1929. He left India for France to study literature and history at the University of Montpellier and the Sorbonne. Also while in France he married Camille Mouly, in 1931. He returned to India in 1933 the same year that, in Europe and the United States, some his earliest short stories were published and spent the next decade there moving among ashrams. He also participated in the movement for Indian independence and engaged in underground activities against the British. Roa returned to France in 1948 and subsequently alternated for a time between India and Europe. He first visited the United States in1950, and in 1966 he became a professor of philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin, though he continued to travel widely. He retired and was named professor emeritus in 1980. His first marriage having ended in 1949, he married twice more, in 1965 (to Catherine Jones) and 1986 (to Susan Vaught).

Rao wrote a few of his early short stories in Kannada while studying in France; he also wrote in French and English. He went on to write his major works in English. His short stories ofthe 1930s were collected in *The Cow of the Barricades, and Other Stories* (1947).

Like those stories, his first novel, *Kanthapura* (1938), is in a largely realist vein. It describes a village and its residents in southern India. Through its narrator, one of the village‘s older women, the novel explores the effects of India‘s independence movement.

Kanthapura is Rao‘s best-known novel, particularly outside India.

His subsequent novels took an increasingly broad focus, and by 1988 one critic hazarded that Rao‘s –greatest achievement is the perfection of the metaphysical novel.

Rao‘s second novel, *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), is an autobiographical account of the narrator, a young intellectual Brahman, and his wife seeking spiritual truth in India, France, and England. The novel takes Rao‘s first marriage and its disintegration as its subject. More broadly, it investigates the intersections of Eastern and Western cultural traditions, a subject reinforced by the novel‘s style, which brings together many literary forms and texts from across those traditions. *The Serpent and the Rope* drew wide praise and is considered by many critics to be hismasterpiece.

Rao‘s allegorical novel *The Cat and Shakespeare: A Tale of India* (1965), set in India, continues the themes examined in *The Serpent and the Rope* and shows Rao‘s work becoming increasingly abstract. *Comrade Kirillov*, a short novel written prior to *The Serpent and the Rope* but published in English in 1976, considers communism through its portrait of the title character. *The Policeman and the Rose* (1978) collected several of his previously published shortstories. Rao‘s last novel, *The Chess master and His Moves* (1988), is peopled by characters from various cultures seeking their identities; it drew varying responses from reviewers. Connected stories appear in *On the Ganga Ghat* (1989). Rao‘s nonfiction includes *The Meaning of India* (1996), a collection of essays and speeches, and *The Great Indian Way* (1998), a biographyof Mohandas Gandhi.

Rao received several of India‘s highest honours: the Padma Bhushan, in 1969; a fellowship in the Sahitya Akademi, India‘s national academy of letters, in 1997; and the Padma Vibhushan, awarded posthumously in 2007. He also won the Neustadt Prize in 1988.

Raja Rao (1908-2006) is one of the triumvirates of the pioneering Indian novelists in English. His contribution to the growth of the English Novel in India is enormous. Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan are known as "The Big Three", an apithet coined by the noted English critic William Walse. Speaking of The Big Three, Walse Writes, "It is these three writers who defined the area in which the Indian novel was to operate. They established its assumptions; they sketched its main themes, freed the first models of its characters, and elaborated its peculiar logic. Each of them used an easy, natural idiom which was un effected by the opacity of a British inheritance. Their language has been freed of the foggy taste of Britain and transferred of to a wholly new setting of brutal heat and brilliant light."

Kanthapura was RajaRao's first novel in English. It was published in 1938. His other famous novels are The Serpent and the Rope (1960), Cat and Shakespeare (1965), Comgrade Kirilone (1976 etc.

The success of any literary artist lies not only in his ideas but also in his expression.

The style reveals the nature and the intention of the writer. In other words, literature is all about experimentation with different styles. It is righty said that 'style is man' means man is recognize by his style. In literature by reading the text of any writer we can assume his character and his intellectual power. Style reveals the author himself. Style differs from person to person. So it's necessary to notice and analyze the literary technique used by writer.

In the preface of Kanthapura Raja Rao observes that "the telling has not been easy, he had to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit is one's own." He uses it in Kanthapura and all other novel; he has tried to give expression to the thought and the feeling, the culture and ideology of Indians in English.

6.2 SUMMARY

The history of Indian English novel can be very much aligned to the advent and supreme reign of the British Raj upon India, resting for a good 200 years. Such a prolonged and momentous Raj establishment by an 'alien' Empire, did have it both adverse and beneficial factors. Leaving out the ruthless colonisation, Britishers did leave their share of wondrous virtues in the literary, architectural and political sides. However, the literary and artistic sides perhaps had overshadowed all the other routined existence, with Indian literature and English education never remaining the same again. English as a basic and fundamental language was very much introduced in the dozens, with the class and then the mass joining in to be amalgamated with the erudite and good-hearted British populace. It was also precisely during this time that the illustrious Indian litterateurs, in a zealous attempt to show their vengeance against such English oppression, had penned out series of English works of art, only to be accepted forever by the global literary scenario, in the years to come.

With many regional geniuses joining hands in such an endeavor, the history of English novel in India, present itself as a solemn enterprise, surpassing all other literary genres.

The history of the Indian English novel can thus honestly be dubbed as the story of a 'metamorphosing India'. There did exist a time when education was an infrequent opportunity and speaking English was really not necessary by natives out crying against British. The stories however were already in the location, hidden in the myths, in the folklore and the umpteen languages and cultures that chaffered, conversed, laughed and cried all over the subcontinent. India has, since time immemorial, always served as a land of stories, the strict segregation between ritual and reality being quite a thin line.

The history of the Indian English novel had though begun to emerge from these benevolent English gentlemen themselves, precisely in the fiery talks of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio. This very timeless strand was held strongly soon after by the spiritual prose of Rabindranath Tagore and the anti-violence declarations preached by Mahatma Gandhi. With the bursting in of 'colonialism' genre in Indian literature, novel writing never did remain the same. Under men like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan, the historical journey of the Indian English novel had begun to take its gigantic strides into the world of post-colonialism and a concept of the daring Indian novelists had emerged. In "Coolie" by Mulk Raj Anand, the social discrepancy and gross inequality in India is very much laid down stripped from any social constraints. In R.K. Narayan's much-admired visionary village Malgudi, the invisible men and women of the country's ever-multiplying population, come to life and in a heart-rending manner, re-enact life with all its contrarinesses and arbitrarinesses.

In 'Kanthapura' by Raja Rao, Gandhism truly comes alive in a quaint laid-back village down south. The Indian ness of novel writing in English, which was once viewed as a taboo and things of scorn due to English stronghold, was no longer needed to be depicted by outsiders; par excellence writers had come to light and with what consequences! People like Tagore or R.K. Narayan have proved this in shining glory time and again.

The perspectives from within ensured more clarity and served a social documentative purpose as well. The early history of English novels in India was not just patriotic depictions of Indianness, but also a rather fanatical and the cynical attempts at being unequalled.

Niradh C. Chaudhuri, one of the most stellar instances belonging to this genre, had viewed India withoutthe Crown in a dubious and incredulous manner. He had in fact tossed away the 'fiery patriotism' and spiritualism that were 'Brand India' and grieved the absence of colonial rule.

As Indian Independence drew near and the country grew out from her obsession with freedom and re- examined her own vein of imperialism during the Emergency, the Indian language of expression began to alter in a rapid manner.

Presently, however with the Indian diaspora being a much depending force in the publishing world, history of Indian English novel speaks a different global tongue, unrestrained to any particular culture or heritage - the perfect language of the 'displaced intellectual'.

This displaced intellectual class, explicated as the 'Indian Diaspora' had become victorious enough to raise the curtain on the unlikely mythical realities that were integral part of domestic conversations in the villages. The history of the Indian English novel was once more standing at the crossroads in the line of post-colonialism, with literature in India awaiting its second-best metamorphosis. Men like Salman Rushdie have enamored critics with his mottled amalgamation of history and language as well. He had indeed served as that mouthpiece, who had opened the doors to an overabundance of writers.

Amitav Ghosh plays brilliantly in postcolonial realities and Vikram Seth coalesces poetry and prose with an aura of Victorian magnificence. While Rohinton Mistry tries to painstakingly decode the Parsi world, Pico Iyer fluently and naturally charts the map in his writings.

Women novelists have loved to explore the world of the much-trodden lore again and again, condemning exploitation and trying to make sense of the rapidly changing pace of the 'new India'. History of Indian English novels however, does not only end here, with Kamala Das scouting women's quandary in India and the world and others like Shashi Deshpande portraying characters who blame their self-satisfaction for their pitiable state of affairs.

Arundhati Roy begins her story without actually a beginning and does not really end it also, whereas Jhumpa Lahiri's well-crafted tales trudge at a perfect pace.

Indian English novel and its eventful historical journey had begun with a bang when Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature and by the time V.S. Naipaul had earned the same, the Indian English novel owned a far-flung reach. Now more than ever, English novels in India are triggering off debates concerning colossal advances, plagiarisation and film rights. 'Hinglish masala' (a lingo of Hindi and English in the current Indian scenario)and a dash of spiritual pragmatism are only the tip of the iceberg.

Raja Rao was one of the founding pillars of Indian writing in English who tried to incorporate Indian metaphysics and philosophy into his fictional work. The last of the 'big three' is Raja Rao. Close contemporary with Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan. Raja Rao

has a very high sense of the dignity of this vocation as a writer. He looks to his work in the spirit of dedication. For him literature is Sadhana not a profession but a vocation. He was deeply influenced by sages Sri Atmananda to whom he dedicates "The Serpent and The Rope". Raja Rao, unlike Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan, has not been a prolific novelist, having written just four novels beginning with Kanthapura (1938) which is perhaps the finest evocation of the Gandhian age in Indian English Fiction.

In Kanthapura, the story was told from the witness - narrator paint of view by an old illiterate village grandmother, a minor character in the novel, who, like a chorus in tag reek tragedy, reflected on the circumstances which she witnessed. In this novel Raja Rao relates the story of a south Indian village - Kanthapura from which it derives its title - as it recalled to Mahatma Gandhi's call of non-co-operation.

It gives a graphics and moving description of the National movement in the twenties when thousands of villages all over India responded in much the same way. In fact, the initial reaction of Kanthapura to Gandhian thought is one of bored apathy. But young moorthy, the Gandhian, who knows that the master key to the Indian mind is religion, puts the new Gandhian wine into the age-old bottle of traditional story. The struggle is even harder for the simple.

Illiterate village women who don't understand why and from where it all and know that theMahatma Gandhi is right in his work.

Raja Rao's The Serpent and the Rope (1960) is the greatest of Indian English novels. Thisnovel, which took ten years in shaping itself, is a highly complex and many-sided novel.

Being at once the tragic story of a marriage of minds which drift apart: the spiritual autobiography of a learned, sensitive and imaginative modern Indian intellectual, as also a saga of this quest of self-knowledge and self-fulfilment. The hero "Ramaswami, is a young man of great literary cultures. He knows many languages, vastly read and widely travelled man. Being a product of manycultures, Rama's mind is a seething whirlpool of cultural currents and cross-currents. Unlike thesimple story teller in Kanthapura, who knew only Indian myths and legends, Rama is familiar with myths and legends of different civilizations and he can discern parallels between them and forge a link between the past and the present by comprehending the essential oneness of history. Raja Rao has used the myths and legends to highlight the situation of characters or therelationship between them and to substantiate or concretize the abstract thought of the hero, Ramaswamy. The title "The serpent and the Rope" is symbolical and philosophical as itillustrates the doctrine that just as the rope is often wrongly taken to be the serpent, the limitedself is often regarded the individual soul, which is only an aspect of God. One realises that the'serpent' is really only a rope, when one who knows points this out similarly upon being initiatedby the Guru; one realises that Jiva (soul) is one with Siva.

The Serpent and the Rope is truly philosophical novel in that in it the philosophy is not in the story - the philosophy is the story. Raja Rao's fiction obviously lacks the social dimension of its two major contemporaries. Not for him the burring humanitarian zeal of neither Anand, nor Narayan's sure grasp of the living description of the daily business of living. But only his two novels have given him the same fictional chord of their contemporaries.

Raja Rao's Mythical Technique

Raja Rao's use of Mythical Technique In Kanthapura, Raja Rao has made effective use ofthe mythical technique used with such success by English writers like T. S. Eliot and James Joyce. The use of the mythical technique means that the past is juxtaposed with the present andin this way the past may serve as a criticism of the present or it may be used to heighten and glorify the present. Raja Rao has used this very technique to glorify the present and to impart to the novel the dignity and status of an epic or Purana. By the use of the mythical technique, the novelist has enriched the texture of his novel and imparted to it a rare expansiveness, elevation and dignity. Just as in a myth some of the chief characters are Gods and other beings larger in power than humanity, in this tale, Moorthy is presented as a figure much above the common run of men. He is a dedicated and selfless soul, who is idealized to the extent of being regarded as a local Mahatma. And of course, there is the real Mahatma Gandhi also, always in the background, though he is nowhere physically present. The village women think of him as the big mountain and of Moorthy as the small mountain.

Past and present are freely mixed up and Gods and Goddesses and heroes and heroines of epics freely jostle with contemporary personalities. Mahatma Gandhi is Rama, the red foreigner or the brown inspector of police who flourishes a lathi and is but a soldier in ten - headed Ravana's army of occupation and oppression. Nay more: the Satyagrahi in prison is the divine Krishna himself in Kansa's prison.

The use of the mythical technique is seen at its best in the strange kind of Harikathas recited by Jayaramachar, the Harikatha man. In his Harikatha, the past and the present are juxtaposed and contemporary events and personalities are constantly linked - up with Puranic Gods and epic - heroes and heroines. One of the Harikathas he recites is about the birth of Gandhi. The use of the mythical technique makes Gandhi, the invisible God and Moorthy, the invisible avatar. The reign of the Red - men become Asuric rule and it is resisted by the Devas, the Satyagrahis. Jayaramachar jumbles with splendid unconcern traditional mythology and contemporaneous politics: Shiva is three - eyed and Swaraj too is three - eyed: self - purification, Hindu - Muslim unity and Khaddar. Gandhi is Shiva himself in human shape: he is engaged in slaying the serpent of foreign rule as the boy Krishna killed the serpent Kaliya. Bhajans and Harikathas mix religion and politics freely and often purposefully, the reading of the Gita and hand - spinning are elevated into a daily ritual, like Pooja. This juxtaposition of the past and the present, of men and Gods, is kept up throughout the novel upto the very end. Mahatma Gandhi's trip to England to attend the Second Round Table Conference is invested with Puranic significance. It is the use of the mythical technique that makes Kanthapura a unique novel almosta new species of fiction. In this way, it becomes Gandhian or Gandhi - epic.

6.3 TECHNICAL WORDS

1. **Metaphysics:** the branch of philosophy that deals with the first principles of things,including abstract concepts such as being, knowing, identity, time, and space.
2. **Philosophy:** the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, especially when considered as an academic discipline.
3. **Non-cooperation:** failure or refusal to cooperate, especially as a form of protest.
4. **Zeal:** great energy or enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause or an objective.
5. **Colonialism:** he policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.

6.4 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Write an essay on Raja Rao‘s role in the Indian English novel?
2. What is the theme of Serpent and the Rope?
3. Write an essay on Raja Rao‘s mythical technique in his novels?

6.5 SUGGESTIVE READINGS

1. *Critical Study of Novels of Arun Joshi, Raja Rao and Sudhin N. Ghose* by T.J. Abraham (1999)
2. *Myths of the Nation* by Rumina Sethi (1999); *Word as Mantra: The Art of Raja Rao*, edited by Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr (1998)
3. *The Novels of Raja Rao* by E. Dey (1992)
4. 'Raja Rao,' in World Authors 1950-1970, edited by John Wakeman (1975)
5. *Raja Rao* by C.D. Narasimhaiah (1973)
6. *Indian Writing in English* by K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar (1962)
7. *The meaning of India* by Raja Rao, 1996,

DR. K. NARASIMHA RAO

LESSON 7
KANTHAPURA

OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Novel Kanthapura‘ is Gandhian ideals of loving one's enemies, non-violence and abolition of untouchability. The main objective of the novel is to define Gandhian struggle for independence against the British reached to a characteristic South Indian village Kanthapura.

STRUCTURE

7.1 BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF RAJA RAO

Raja Rao was born to a historically influential Brahmin family in the South Indian state of Mysore (now Karnataka), where *Kanthapura* is also set. Rao‘s father taught Kannada (the local language that the book‘s characters presumably speak) and his mother died when Rao was four years old. Rao was the only Hindu student at his Muslim public school before he went to study English at the University of Madras and graduated in 1929, the same year he originally finished writing *Kanthapura*. He soon moved to France, where he studied French history and literature, and spent the next thirty years living between there and India.

During the 1940s, he was active in the Indian independence movement. Rao moved to the United States in 1966, where he taught philosophy at the University of Texas until his retirement in 1986. He married three times: to the French teacher Camille Mouly in 1931, to the American actress Katherine Jones in 1965, and to the American Susan Vaught in 1986.

From the 1960s onward, he won a number of prominent literary prizes, including the Indian Padma Bhushan in 1969 and the Neustadt International Prize for Literature in 1988.

7.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF KANTHAPURA

Kanthapura is set during the early days of the Indian independence movement that ultimately liberated the nation from British colonial rule in 1947. This movement arguably lasted for the entire duration of British colonialism in South Asia, but the campaign of organized nonviolent resistance headed by Mohandas Gandhi and his Indian National Congress began in the 1920s after a British general ordered his troops to shoot thousands of peaceful protestors in the northern city of Amritsar. After deciding that it would be immoral to cooperate with the British government, Gandhi launched the Non-Cooperation Movement in an attempt to achieve Swaraj (self-rule) for India by encouraging Indians to refuse foreign

goods (especially British liquor and clothing), resign their posts in British schools and government jobs, and refuse to fight for the British in World War II. Gandhi famously served two years in prison, went on numerous hunger strikes (including one to demand nonviolence among his own supporters after a group of Gandhists burned down a police station), and protested a new British tax on salt by marching nearly 400 kilometers to the ocean and making his own salt. He also gave women a prominent role in the independence movement.

Ultimately, although the British imprisoned more than 100,000 Indians on political grounds, Gandhi's explicit demands for independence in the 1940s (called the Quit India Movement) succeeded in 1947, although Gandhi opposed the ultimate decision to partition South Asia into Indian and Muslim states. He was assassinated by a Hindu nationalist shortly after India won independence, in 1948, and over two million people attended his funeral.

7.3 THE CHARACTERS LIST IN THE NOVEL 'KANTHAPURA' MOORTHY

Moorthy is a young Brahmin, described as a "noble cow, quiet, generous, serene, deferent, and brahmanic" who has returned to his village of Kanthapura. He is heavily inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's nationalist movement to liberate India.

Bhatta is a wealthy landowner in Kanthapura. He exploits the villagers and has nothing to do with the Gandhian philosophy.

Patel Range Gowda
Officially, Patel Range Gowda is the Primary Executive Officer of Kanthapura village. However, he acts as the mayor of the entire village.

Rangamma
Rangamma is a "deferent, soft-voiced, gentle-gestured" (30) but strong woman who can read and write. She is a childless widow, but is well respected because of her resolution and high aspirations.

Bade Khan
Bade Khan is a heavyset, bearded Muslim policeman who has recently arrived in Kanthapura. He finds lodging in Skeffington Coffee Estate.

Kamalamma
Kamalamma is the sister of Rangamma. She stands in stark contrast to the values exhibited by Rangamma. She rejects her sister's conversion to the Gandhian lifestyle.

Ratna
Ratna is the fifteen-year-old daughter of Kamalamma. However, she has more in common with her Aunt Rangamma. She, too, is inspired by the Gandhian philosophy.

Narsamma
She is Moorthy's elderly mother, who loves her son very much but is extremely distressed to think about the trouble he is bringing to the village—especially excommunication. She eventually dies due to her distress.

Narrator
The narrator is an old widow with only sons, one of them being Seenu. We do not learn

much about her as an individual, as she always speaks collectively.

Waterfall Venkamma
She is a spiteful, gossipy, and constantly aggrieved woman in the village.

Ramakrishnayya
He is the learned, elderly father of Rangamma. One evening, he trips and loses consciousness, then dies.

Jayaramacher
He is a *Harikatha*-man Moorthy brings to the village for the *Ganesh-jayanthi.* Instead of telling them about Rama or Krishna, he tells the villagers of Mahatma Gandhi. This causes a bit of trouble and he is not invited back.

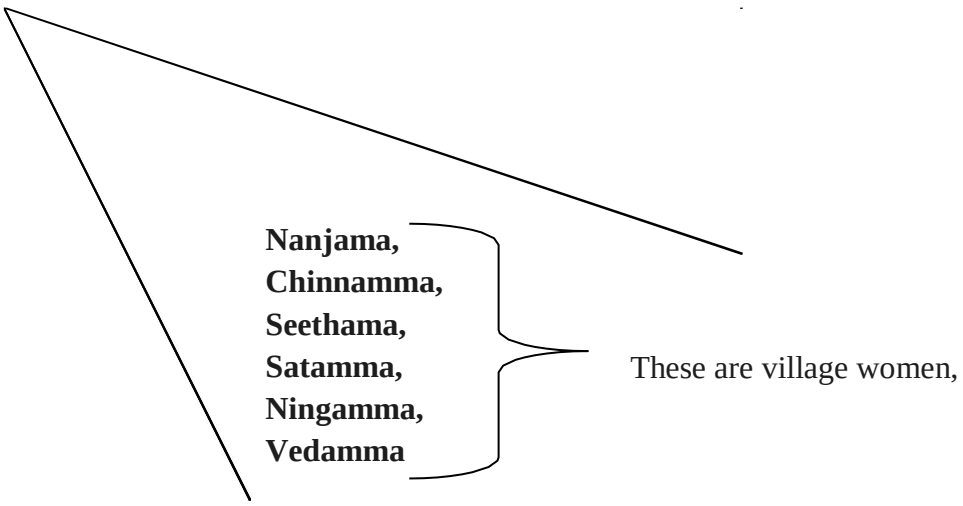
Mr. Skeffington (Nephew)
The successor to control of the Skeffington Coffee Estate, he does not beat coolies like his uncle did, but takes Indian women for his own pleasures and punishes their husbands/fathers when they do not go easily.

Mr. Skeffington (Uncle)
The British owner and founder of the Estate, he is cruel to those who work for him.

Seenu
One of the narrator's sons, he becomes a Ghandi-man and works with Moorthy, teaching the Pariahs and helping with the Congress committee. He is arrested and is still in jail at the endof the novel.

Siddayya
A coolie at the Skeffington Coffee Estate, he has been there a long time and tries to letthe new coolies know what they should expect here.

Rachanna
One of the most prominent Pariah men in the text, he is killed in the uprising.



Vasudev
A Ghandi-man and comrade of Moorthy's, he helps organize the Pariahs at the Skeffington Estate.

Rangappa
He is the Temple brahmin, who is against the Gandhist movement in the village.

Seenappa
He is an advocate who loses his wife and who Bhatta sets up with Venkamma's daughterin order to win her loyalty against Moorthy and Gandhism.

Sankar
The secretary of the Karwar Congress committee, he tries to help Moorthy fight his charge, but agrees to help run the meetings in his stead.

Ranganna
He is a Brahmin who opens his private temple to the Pariahs. He is arrested when he gives a speech at the Congress criticizing the Swami and the British government.

Seetharamu
He is an advocate who lives in the city and will not remarry because he loved his wife so much. He provides the villagers with updates as to what is going on with Moorthy. At one point, he is thrown in prison himself, and has horrible stories to tell of its conditions.

Radhamma
She is a village woman who gives birth during the uprising.

Puttamma
She is a village woman who is raped during the uprising.

7.4 PLOT AND STRUCTURE OF KANTHAPURA

Kanthapura is a novel in the Indian tradition and it is not to be judged by western standards. The plot of the story is episodic. There are numerous digressions and there is muchthat is superfluous. The old narrator is garrulous and gossipy and brings in much that is heterogeneous and irrelevant into the compass of her tale. It has a well - formed and well - organized structure, a coherent and well - knitplot.

The plot of the novel is made up of a main plot and a sub - plot. The main plot deals with the impact of the Gandhi - movement on a remote South Indian village, called Kanthapura, a village which is a microcosm of the macrocosm, for what happens in this remote village was happening all over India in those stirring decades. The sub - plot deals with the happenings on the Skeffington Coffee Estate in the neighborhood and throws a flood of light on the exploitationof the brutality of the Englishmen and the various ways in which they exploited the people and later in the novel, the coolies of the coffee - plantation join the Satyagrahis from Kanthapura in their Satyagraha outside the toddy booth.

The plot has a beginning, middle and an end. It begins with an account of a small South Indian village called Kanthapura, its locale, its crops, its poverty and the ignorant and superstitious nature of the people. Though it is a small village, it is divided into a number of

quarters - the Brahmin Quarter, the Potters Quarters - the Sudra Quarter and the Pariah Quarter. The society is caste - ridden and it has its own local legends. Kenchamma is the Presiding goddess and a detailed account is given of the legends connected with the benign goddess. Then follows an account of its people and a number of characters, destined to play significant roles in the action are introduced, petty rivalries and jealousies of the village society come to surface.

There is a development of action with the arrival of Moorthy from the city, a staunch Gandhi man. He is an educated man who has a true Brahmin's heightened awareness of his social and spiritual obligations and sets out to fulfill them and he is best equipped for his task thanks to the fertilizing impact of this life - making influences. It is interesting to note that before there is ever any mention of Mahatma Gandhi or Swaraj in the novel there is tremendous religious activity. Starting from an invocation to Kenchamma, goddess benign, to the end of the novel, religion seems to sustain the spirits of the people of Kanthapura. The action begins with the unearthing of a half - sunken lingam by Moorthy and its consecration.

The boys of Kanthapura had a grand feast to celebrate the occasion. And one thing led to another. Soon they observed Sankara Jayanti, Sankara Vijaya etc and this became the nucleus of social regeneration in Kanthapura in the true tradition of India where social reformers have invariably been profoundly religious men. When Moorthy threw out a hint that somebody will offer a dinner for each day of the month, there was spontaneous response from everyone and this is not stated by the novelist but comes home to us through the characters themselves.

Political propaganda is carried on in the guise of religion. The Harikatha - man, Jayramachar, tells strange Harikathas, in which there is a curious mingling of religion and politics. Gandhi is likened to Ramand the Red - man to Ravana and the freedom struggle becomes a fight between the two incarnations of good and evil for the sake of Bharat Mata or Sita. The use of the mythical technique is kept up to the very end.

The action develops through conflict. Moorthy forms the Kanthapura Congress Committee, maintains contact with the city Congress, brings in newspapers and keeps the people informed of the stirring events taking place elsewhere. In this way, though Mahatma Gandhi does never appear on the scene, his presence is constantly felt. He goes about from door to door; carrying the message of Charkha and Swadeshi. He is a Brahmin but a true Gandhite. He goes even to the Pariah Quarter with the message of the Mahatma Gandhi. A Women's Volunteer corpsis also organized. Efforts are thus made to bring about political, social and economic resurgence simultaneously. The Government, too, is not idle and soon he has to meet with stiff opposition. Policeman Bade Khan arrives on the scene finds shelter on the Skeffington Coffee Estate and soon is in league with Bhatta, the first Brahmin and Waterfall Venkamma. Contacts are also maintained with the Swami in the city, who wields considerable influence and whose threat of ex- communication sends Moorthy's mother to death.

Battle lines are sharply drawn and the atmosphere is tense. Before the battle actually begins, there is a detailed account given of the goings on the Skeffington Coffee Estate. Into the calm valley of Himavathy there comes not merely Congress politics but there is an exodus of population - poor and half - starved people - from below the Ghats from Andhra Pradesh and from Tamil Nadu and armies of coolies march past to work in the Skeffington Estate owned by the Redman. Life on the Red - man's estate with its brutalities

and humiliations is, speaking in a limited way, like the sub - plot of a tragedy. It is part of the general tragedy depicted in the restof the book; with this difference, though, that while their suffering brought the victims a chastening, ennobling feeling now and then and left them with perhaps a distant hope, if any, suffering on the estate was soul - destroying and absolutely devoid of compensations.

As soon as the call comes from the city Congress, the Kanthapurians, lead by Moorthy, march to picket the toddy plantations, with shouts of 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai' and 'Inquilab Zindabad'. There is a cruel lathi - charge even women and children are beaten up and in large numbers are arrested. Next follows the Satyagraha outside the Toddy Booth near the gate of the Skeffington Estate. The workers come to drink; the Satyagra his lie down in the path as lathi blows after blows are showered on them. The entire atmosphere resounds with shouts of 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai'. And then the unexpected happens, the coolies' side with the Satyagra his, refusing to march over their bodies, lie down by them and are brutally beaten up by the police. The two plots, thus, fuse and mingle and become a single whole.

Those were thrilling, sensational times and the novelist has succeeded in conveying to the readers those thrills and sensations, exactly and precisely.

There are countless arrests and Moorthy is also arrested. He is tried and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. In his absence, Ratna takes up the work of the Congress and becomes the leader of the movement and then comes the no - tax campaign. Government repression and police brutality reach a climax. Workers from Bombay arrive, their crops are reaped and taken away and their houses burnt and destroyed. Women are dishonored and even children and old men are mercilessly beaten up. They are compelled to flee to their native place and are obliged to seek shelter in distant Kashipur where they are welcomed as, "The Pilgrims of Mahatma Gandhi". Kanthapura has been laid waste, the people have suffered terribly but they experience a sense of fulfillment. The denouement while stressing tragic waste and desolationalso leaves the victims much chastened and ennobled.

7.5 SUMMARY

Kanthapura recounts the rise of a Gandhian nationalist movement in a small South Indianvillage of the same name. The story is narrated by Achakka, an elder brahmin woman with an encyclopedic knowledge about everyone in her village; she tells the story in the meandering, nonlinear style of a sthala-purana, a traditional ‒legendary history‖ of a village, its people, and its gods.

Achakka begins her tale by situating Kanthapura in its immediate landscape, the Western Ghats mountain range in southwest India that has recently become a center of the British colonialspice trade. The village‘s patron deity is the goddess Kenchamma, who fought a demon onthe Kenchamma Hill above Kanthapura ages ago and has protected the villagers ever since. Achakka introduces the village‘s numerous residents of all caste. She introduces the educated and well-off brahmins, including the wealthy orphan Dorè, who proclaims to be a Gandhian afterattending a term of university in the city, and the much more beloved Moorthy, who refuses to marry into one wealthy family after another. Then she introduces the potters and weavers, who are largely turning to agriculture, and finally the pariahs, who live in decrepit huts at the edge of town. But caste does not always translate to wealth. The loincloth-wearing brahmin Bhatta and the shrewd but honest patel and sudra Range Gowda are the village‘s two most powerful figures. eday, Moorthy finds a linga

(small idol depicting the Lord Siva) in Achakka‘s backyard and the brahmins begins convening prayers for it; soon thereafter, Moorthy begins collecting money from everyone in the village to have a Harikatha-man named Jayaramachar perform his religious discourse about Mahatma Gandhi‘s promise to save India from foreign domination. This creates a commotion, especially as Moorthy begins to convert other villagers to Gandhi‘s cause and a Muslim policeman named Bade Khan moves into town. Patel Range Gowda will not give Khan a place to stay, so he goes to the nearby Skeffington Coffee Estate, where the presiding Sahib offers him a hut among the workers. Meanwhile, Moorthy convinces various villagers to start spinning their own wool and weaving their own khadi cloth, since Gandhi believes that foreign goods impoverish India and sees weaving as a form of spiritual practice.

But Bhatta despises Gandhism, for his business runs on high-interest loans to small farmers who sell their rice to city-people. He decries the modernization of India and the erosion of the caste system, so he proposes establishing a brahmin party to fight Moorthy‘s spreading Gandhism and wins the support of many villagers, most notably the rambling Waterfall Venkamma, the priest Temple Rangappa and his wife Lakshamma, Moorthy‘s own mother Narsamma, and his own wife Chinnamma. Moorthy, who has a vision of Gandhi giving a discourse and decides to dedicate his life to the Mahatma‘s work, wins over the wealthy widow Rangamma, at whose large house he stockpiles spinning-wheels and books about nonviolent resistance. The powerful Swami in Mysore promises to excommunicate anyone who ―pollutes‖ the traditional system by interacting with people from different castes, and when Narsamma finds out that her son Moorthy will likely be first, she is distraught and refuses to associate with him. But he does not budge and, when the Swami excommunicates his entire family after Moorthy is seen carrying a corpse, Narsamma dies on the banks of the nearby River Himavathy and Moorthy moves into Rangamma‘s house.

The narrative cuts to the Skeffington Estate, where the maistri convinces coolie workers from impoverished villages around India to come do backbreaking work in horrible conditions at the estate. Their wages are low and the Sahib finds every available means to keep them indentured at the Estate for life, from beating them to raising the prices on daily goods to stealing their wages to, most insidiously, encouraging them to spend their money drinking at the nearby toddy stand. Nobody has managed to leave for ten years, even as a new Sahib has taken over who is kinder than the first (except to the women, Achakka notes, whom he systematically raped until he became embroiled in a legal battle for murdering a father who refused to give up his daughter). But Moorthy‘s Gandhians, with the help of the brahmin clerk Vasudev, begin teaching the coolies to read and write and recruiting them to join the protest movement. Badè Khan breaks up one of these lessons, which only strengthens Moorthy‘s resolve, and soon a coolie named Rachanna moves off the estate and into Kanthapura. During the commotion some of the coolie women grabbed the Khan‘s beard, and Moorthy takes personal responsibility for this attack, which runs counter to the Mahatma‘s doctrine of nonviolence. He fasts for three days, meditating continuously in the village temple and receiving visions of Siva and Hari as Rangamma, the wise elder brahmin Ramakrishnayya, and the widowed pariah girl Ratna care for him. He grows stronger, responding to threats from Waterfall Venkamma and Bhatta with love and resolving to launch what he calls the ―don‘t-touch-the-Government campaign.

Moorthy approaches Patel Range Gowda with his plan, and the powerful town representative and landowner quickly resolves to follow the Mahatma. Together, they convene a Village Congress, which promises to serve as a local branch of Gandhi‘s Congress

of All India. Moorthy visits the house of the former coolie Rachanna, who is now living as a pariah in the village, but finds himself anxious at the thought of going inside or drinking the milk Rachanna‘s wife Rachi offers him, since he grew up as a brahmin and has never actually been so close to a pariah. He does so nonetheless and soon convinces a congregation of confused pariah women to spin cloth and join the movement. But when he returns home, Rangamma makes him enter through the back and drink Ganges water to purify himself.

Bhatta soon realizes that he can lead Venkamma to set fire where we want‖ if he can find her daughter a husband, so he arranges a marriage with his favorite lawyer, the middle-aged widow Advocate Seenappa. Shortly thereafter, during the holy festival of Kartik, the police come to Rangamma‘s house and arrest Moorthy. Rachanna cries out, Mahatma Gandhi ki jai! (or, Glory to Mahatma Gandhi!), a battle cry that the Gandhians employ when the police attack them through the rest of the book. The police begin beating and arresting the rest of the villagers,taking 17 in total and releasing all but Moorthy.

In jail, Moorthy refuses the help of lawyers and spiritual leaders until Advocate Sankar, the Congress Committee Secretary in nearby Karwar city, tells him that the national movement needs him released. Moorthy falls at Sankar‘s feet and the lawyer holds an enormous meeting forhis benefit, although a nameless old man (whom the Swami has paid off) speaks in defense of theBritish government and the Beloved Sovereign‖ Queen Victoria.

The Police Inspector comes to the meeting and arrests another of its leaders, Advocate Ranganna, and news spreads fast in Kanthapura by means of a newspaper Rangamma has begun to publish. The villagers read it voraciously, with even the illiterate insisting that others read it to them, and they debate when and whether Moorthy will be released.

Rangamma and the Gandhian Nanjamma go to Karwar to visit Advocate Sankar, who is notorious for being an honest and socially-conscious man. Rangamma decides to stay for awhile, and meanwhile the colonial government fires Rangè Gowda, installing another patel for the village in his place. Moorthy is sentenced to three months‘ imprisonment, and the wise elder Rama krishnayya dies after stumbling into a pillar during heavy rains the following day. During his cremation, the Himavathy River overflows and swallows his ashes.

The villagers decide that the widowed girl Ratna should replace Rama krishnayya to lead the village‘s readings from Hindu scriptures, and after Rangamma‘s return she begins to interpretthe texts Ratna reads as calls for the end of British rule in India. The women resolve to form theirown Volunteer group, and Rangamma begins to lead them in group meditation and drills to practice nonviolent resistance to beatings from the police. On an auspicious day soon thereafter, the villagers perform a ceremony honoring the Goddess Kenchamma before planting their fields, and Venkamma decides to move her daughter‘s wedding to the same day as Moorthy‘s homecoming from prison so that villagers will be forced to choose their allegiance. On the day he is supposed to arrive, the villagers wait to receive him but he does not come, until they realizethat the police have secretly escorted him back into Rangamma‘s house and go there to greet him, shouting Gandhian slogans and nearly starting another clash with the police.

Moorthy again takes the helm of the village‘s Gandhian movement, reminding the others about their obligation to speak Truth, reject caste hierarchy, and spin wool each morning. The villagers follow the news of Gandhi‘s protest of the British salt tax, in which he

marches to the sea and makes his own salt, and they bathe in the holy Himavathy River at the precise moment Gandhi reaches the ocean and the police start arresting his followers *en masse*. Moorthy and Rangamma continue to lead the others in practice drills, waiting for orders from the national Gandhian Congress, but soon discover that the Mahatma has been arrested and decide to officially launch the don‘t-touch - the -Government campaign by protesting toddy stands, refusing to pay taxes or abide by the colonial government‘s orders, and setting up a parallel government for their village that keeps Range Gowda as Patel.

Two days later, 139 Kanthapura villagers march to the toddy grove near the Skeffington Coffee Estate and Moorthy refuses to honor the Police Inspector‘s orders to back down. The Gandhians climb into the grove and begin tearing branches off the trees as the police beat them down with lathis and arrest three villagers: the pariah Rachanna and the potters Lingayya and Siddayya. They corral the rest of the protestors into trucks, which drive them off in different directions and drop them by the side of the road in various parts of the Western Ghats. The protestors march back toward Kanthapura, encountering cart-men whosupport Gandhi‘s movement and offer to take them home for free as well as people in the nearby village of Santhapura who decide to join their Satyagraha movement.

The next week, the villagers repeat their protest, encountering various people from the region who proclaim their oppression under British rule and ask Moorthy to help them. When they reach the toddy grove, the Police Inspector marches the coolies off the Skeffington Estateto Boranna‘s toddy stand, but the Gandhians convince the coolies to join the protest instead of drinking. The police are more violent this time, and they seriously injure Rangamma, Ratna, and Moorthy before dumping the rest on the side of the road, as before. But when they return to Kanthapura, the Gandhians discover that many of the coolies and Gandhi sympathizers from the region have decided to join them, and their movement continues to grow as they launch various other protests, get 24 toddy stands in the area to shut down, and closely follow the accelerating national protest movement.

Besides the few brahmins who still oppose the Gandhi movement, the villagers refuse to cooperate with the government, which infuriates the police and leads them to more and more aggressive tactics. The police barricade every exit out of town, secretly arrest numerous protestors (including the movement‘s two main leaders, Moorthy and Rangamma) in the middle of the night, and begin assaulting female villagers. One officer nearly rapes Ratna, but Achakka and some of the other women Volunteers find her just in time and decide that she will be the new leader of the protest movement. This group of women, whose perspective the narrative follows closely from this point onward, hide out in the temple and watch Bhatta‘s house burn down. But a policeman sees them and locks them inside overnight, until the pariah Rachi lets them out.

Three days later, the villagers undertake their fourth and most consequential protest against the police. Rich Europeans come to Kanthapura as the government begins auctioning off the villagers‘ land, and they bring coolies from the city to begin working the fields.

Gandhians from around the region, including Advocate Sankar, flood into the town to help the protest effort. Achakka and the other women begin questioning their loyalty to Gandhi, wondering whether nonviolent resistance will truly save their livelihoods, but soon the march is underway and the police are more vicious than ever before. One of the protestors raises the Gandhian revolutionary flag and the police begin firing against the protestors, massacring them even as they proclaim their commitment to nonviolence. The

women hide out in sugarcane fields as they watch their neighbors and party-members get slaughtered, and as they begin to flee Kanthapura, Rachi decides to burn the village down.

Rachi makes a bonfire and sets the village alight before all the women continue marchingas far as they can from Kanthapura, across the mountains and into the jungle, where peoplehonor them as ―pilgrims of the Mahatma‖ and offer them a new home in the village of Kashipura. In the year since Kanthapura's destruction, Achakka explains, the villagers have scattered and moved on with their lives, and Moorthy has been released from prison, although hegave up on Gandhi, who started to compromise with the British, and decided to join Jawaharlal Nehru's movement for the equal distribution of wealth.

Rangamma is still in jail, and the only person who has returned to Kanthapura is Rangè Gowda, who tells Achakka that the village has been sold away to city-people from Bombay.

7.6 TECHNICAL TERMS

Sthala-Purana: Vernacular South Indian texts or oral traditions telling the traditional stories of particular localities, villages, and temples. Rao describes Kanthapura as a sthala-purana, which he defines as a ―legendary history.‖

Dhoti: A kind of knee-length, cloth pant traditionally worn by Hindu men. In the 1920s, Gandhi decided to start wearing dhoti instead of Western clothing in order to identify himself with the Indian poor.

Khadi: Refers to hand-woven Indian cloth. Gandhi encouraged his supporters to wear khadi and boycott British-made cloth.

Caste: A traditional Hindu system of social stratification that traditionally divides people into separate communities of brahmins (priests and teachers), kshatriyas (governors, administrators, and warriors), vaishyas (merchants, artists, and farmers), and shudras (manual laborers).

Brahmin: The traditionally highest and most powerful caste, composed of priests and teachers.

Shudra: low caste of manual laborers. Also called sudra.

Pariah / Outcaste: People who live beneath the caste system and are therefore considered unworthy of interaction with people from other castes.

Untouchables: A more common and non-regionally specific term for outcastes like Kanthapura's pariahs.

Linga: A small idol that abstractly represents the Hindu god Siva.

Sankara-Vijayas: Important biographies of Adi Shankara.

Bhajan: Refers to any song performance with religious themes.

Harikatha: A South Indian genre of storytelling with religious themes that combines

poetry, philosophy, song, dance and theatre.

Pandit: A Hindu religious leader.
Red-men: A colloquial term for British colonists.

Coolies: A term for indentured servants, generally in British colonies but especially from India, who worked on plantations.

Maharaja: An originally Sanskrit word for a great ruler or king. Over time, it became arelatively common title denoting honor.

Lathi: A police baton.

Gayathri Mantra: An important Sanskrit chant from the Rig Veda, which many Hindus and some Buddhists recite during daily prayers.

Hari: An important Hindu term with various meanings in different contexts and languages. It often refers to the god Vishnu and the notion of absolute, unified being.

Panchayat: A five-person village council traditionally composed of village elders. Gandhi wanted India to be governed based on a decentralized system of panchayats, which the Kanthapura villagers Congress exemplifies.

Kartik: Refers to the seventh month of the Hindu calendar, as well as the holy festival of lights held on the fifteenth day of that month.

Dharma: An important term in Indian religions with various contextual meanings that generally refers to proper religious practice, or acting in accordance with the flow of the universe.

Dharma Sastras: A collection of numerous ancient Hindu texts about dharma, written in Sanskrit.

Mohomedan: Archaic term for Muslims, now broadly considered offensive.

Satyagraha: The Gandhian practice of nonviolent resistance. It literally translates as holding onto truth‖ and its practitioners are called satyagrahis.

Swaraj: Literally– self-rule, swaraj refers to the concept of Indian independence from foreign government.

Patel: A village chief and large landholder.

Krishna: The Hindu god of love and compassion.

Siva: One of the most important Hindu gods, Siva (or Shiva) is the destroyer, responsible for death and transformation. Whereas many gods are only worshipped in particular areas, Siva is worshipped across India.

Rani Lakshmi Bai: A North Indian queen who was a central leader of the 1857 Indian

Rebellion. She is a source of inspiration for the Gandhian Volunteer women.

Toddy: Also known as palm wine, an alcoholic beverage made from the sap of toddy palm trees.

7.8 SELF- ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. How are women played vital role in the novel Kanthapura?
2. Sketch the character of Ratna in the novel Kanthapura?
3. Who is Achakka and what is her role in Kanthapura?
4. Describe the character of Moorthy in Kangthapura.
5. Examine critically Raja Rao‘s Kanthapura as a novel of Gandhian idealogy.
6. Discuss sub alternity in Raja Rao‘s Kanthapura.

7.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

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3. Raja Rao : (1989) *Kanthapura*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
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PROF. G. CHENNA REDDY

LESSON 8
STHALAPURANA

OBJECTIVES

The aim of the lesson is to illustrate Raja Rao‘s Kanthapura as Stalapurana. The main objective of the lesson is Kanthapura is a regional novel in the Indian fiction.

STRUCTURE

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Raja Rao as one of the ‒Big Three‖ of the Indo-Anglian fiction, the other two being Mulkraj Anand and R.K.Narayan. In spite of his extremely meagre literary output Raja Rao occupies an esteemable position in this literary trinity. Roughly a contemporary with the two other literary stalwarts he is affiliated with them only in terms of time and choice of themes but he completely differs from them in terms of his fictional art or very impressive prose style. He is not, like Anand, a politically committed writer, and he is very different from Narayan in being poetic, metaphysical and Lawrencian. Again where Anand sticks to social realism, excluding religion and Indian philosophy as irrelevant to the struggle for economic and political power by the under privileged, Raja Rao constantly discusses the nationalist struggle and its revolutionary implications in terms of Hindu mythology, religion and culture. (H.M.Williams) In respect of narrative art Raja Rao differs not only from the two celebrated novelists who are usuallybracketed with him but also from almost every other Indo-Anglian novelist, so to say.

Raja Rao made a significant contribution to Indo-Anglian fiction by setting a new literary tradition for it. India‘s freedom struggle has been a stock-in-trade to the writers of modern Indian languages, but Raja Rao was the first writer of remarkable talent who exploited this field in English without any reservations so much so that his *Kanthapura* is regarded in various respects as a Gandhi-puranaor a Gandhian epic. It is a notable example of the embodiment of Rao‘s peculiarly Indian sensibility in English creative writing. The Indianness ofthe work is well marked in its theme as well as in the novelist‘s handling of it.

Excepting its medium the work strikes the reader as a typical narrative coming from an old grandmother. As Narasimhaiah observes, *Kanthapura* is a breathless tale fascinatingly told in the age- old Indian tradition of story-telling. It is a striking fact that for the first time an Indian novelist writing in English has handled the novel in such a way as to make it a means of enlarging the frontiers of human consciousness. It is a story like those an old grandmother

might tale from her rich repertoire. It is this which has rendered the novelists task more difficult because he is required to assimilate and harmonise things which are seemingly contradictory. Perhaps the Indian metaphysical notion of the oneness of all life, and life‘s phenomena has come to his aid here.

Raja Rao‘s conception of the narration of his *Kanthapura* is thoroughly Indian and he approaches the story as a *sthala-purana* or the epic of a place. The word puranas literally means ‒ancient, old‖, and it is a vast genre of Indian literature about a wide range of topics, particularly myths, legends and other traditional lore composed primarily in Sanskrit, but also in regional languages. Several of these texts are named after major Hindu deities such as Vishnu, Shiva and Devi. The puranic genre of literature is found both in Hinduism and Jainism.Puranas are the life-blood of Hindu society. They have been called the fifth Veda.

They are a fine blend of religious teachings, narration, description, digression and philosophical reflection. Exaggeration is the key-note of most of the accounts of the happenings and miracles in them. Some of these are not authentic either. They have tarnished the image of Hindu religion. Excepting the last characteristic *Kanthapura* has all puranic characteristics. It is an example of peculiarly Indian art-form, *sthala-purana* i.e. the legendary history of a place or a place-piece.It tells of the legendary history of a South Indian hamlet caught in the maelstrom of the freedom struggle of the nineteen thirties a tale told by an old grandmother. Thus, the novelists integrate myth with history and fact with fiction.

8.2 SUMMARY

Chief among the great trio of Indian English fiction Raja Rao is remembered mainly for his employment on Hindu mythology, religion and culture in his novel. He comes of very old South Indian Brahmin family in 1909. Raja Rao was a child of Gandhian Age who looked upon the Mahatma as mythical hero such as Rama or Lord Krishna. He was an ardent follower of Gandhian principles and hence when he took up writing his novels and short stories, always reflected his inner conviction in the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi. Added to, this was a great lovefor the rich past of traditional India and its spiritual heritage. There are metaphysical speculations in his novels of which he himself tells E.M Forster in 1945 then he had abandoned literature for good and gone over to metaphysical.

Raja Rao is not a professional writer. He writes slowly; revises meditatively. Naturally there are long intervals between his works. Raja Rao‘s earliest novel was Kanthapura (1938) an Indian epic or Purana in English language. The novel echoes the spirit of Gandhi‘s impact on a remote south Indian village and is recorded in the chatty language of a village grandmother. For her, Gandhi is Rama, the red foreigners or the brown inspector Police is soldier in ten-headed Ravana‘s army. The novel has often been called Gandhi purana because of its avowal of Gandhian politics.

Kanthapura was followed by twenty years of prolonged silence after which came Raja Roy‘s second novel The Serpent and the Rope. It has been called the spiritual autobiography of the novelist. It appeared in 1960 and critics who called Kanthapura as Raja Rao‘s Ramayana called this book as Mahabarata. The novel records the journey of an Indian Lord Ramaswamy through the trouble of life both in India and abroad and culminates in his search for the Guru. He travels to France and married Medeleine, has a child who dies within one year of birth, separated from his wife and returns to India. He realizes that the serpent‖ is Maya, the reality is the rope but the Guru with lantern is required to reveal this.

Next came The Cat and Shakespeare in 1965 which is best be called a philosophical comedy. The sub-title o the novel is A Tale of Modern India. The background of the novel is provided by the famine of 1942.The narration is a curious mixture of fantasy and realism.

This was followed by Comrade Kirilliov (1976), a spiritual autobiography. Rao's most recent novel is The Chase master and His Moves (1988). The novel deals with a tale of doomed love between Shibaram Shastri an Indian mathematician and a married woman.

Raja Rao's credit also rest in his collection of short stories. He wrote three short stories collections. The Cow and The Barricades (1947), The Policeman and the Rose and Other Stories (1978) and On The Ganga Ghat (1993). These stories dealt with the same theme as his novels and have received a high critical acclaim. Besides, Raja Rao also wrote some non- fictional prose such as The Meaning of India, a collection of seventeen essays and a biography of Mahatma Gandhi entitled The Grater Indian Way (1998).

Raja Rao was a writer with a metaphysical bent who imbibed into English language the idiom, the rhythm and love of his vernacular (i.e Kannada).He was a great spiritual thinker and his work depicts a unique blending of the spiritual, the regional and political ideals. He was also a worshipper of the feminine principle. Santa Rama Rao considered Raja Rao as perhaps the most brilliant and certainly the most interesting writer of modern India‖.

As Raja Rao himself implies in the Preface to the novel, it is a sthalapurana. The narrator is an aged village woman. So the story takes on some characteristics of a folk tale. In the first chapter itself there is rather an elaborate story about the legend of Kenchamma, the presiding deity and protectress of the Kanthapurians. She is a great and generous Goddess.

The narrator then explains some of the exploits of the goddess. Many years ago, the village of Kanthapura was troubled by a demon who came seeking the young sons of the people of Kanthapura as his food and their young daughters as his mistresses. It was the sage Tripura who appeased the goddess by making a great penance and begged her intervention. Then the bounteous deity descended upon the earth and killed the demon. After that she had stood the people of Kanthapura in good stead whenever any great difficulty faced them. One could pray to her for help whenever one faced trouble and the prayer was always granted. They had only to make a vow of walking on the holy fire on the day of annual fire, and their children recovered from even such diseases as small-pox and cholera. The Kanthapurians always prayed to Kenchamma to protect them through famine and disease, death and despair. They vowed to make a sacred offering to her of their first rice and first fruit. They danced before her throughout the harvest night and sing hosannas to her with great reverence.

kenchamma, Goddess benign and bounteous, Motherof earth, blood of life, Harvest queen, rain – crowned, Kenchamma, kenchamma, Goddess benign and bounteous.

The theme of the novel may be summed up as Gandhi and our Village, but the style of narration makes the book more a Gandhi purana than a piece of fiction. (Iyenger) Though Gandhi is absent from the plot of the novel as a character his invisible presence is felt throughout the entire novel. Gandhi is the invisible God, Moorthy is the visible avatar.

Gandhi is here treated not only as a living leader and a holy man, but as a legendary figure, an incarnation of God, an *avatar* like Rama and Krishna. Gandhi in the novel has been

much idolized and deified like that of Rama in the *Ramayana.* Like Rama Gandhi is the *avatar*of the Almighty. The Britishers have been compared to Ravana. Like Ravana they came to despoil our political freedom. Gandhi‘s visit to England to attend the Round Table Conference has been invested with puranic significance.

They say the Mahatma will go to the Red-man‘s country, and he will get us Swaraj and we shall all be happy. And Rama will come back from exile, and Sita will be with him, for Ravana will be slain and Sita freed, and he will come back with Sita on his right in a chariot of the air, and brother Bharata will go to meet them with the worshipped sandals of the Master on his head. And as they enter Ayodhya there will be a rain of flowers. Like Bharata we worship the sandals of the Brother saint.

Again Gandhi is also compared with Raja Harishchandra. As Rao puts it, like Harishchandra before he finished his vow, and the Britishers will leave India and we shall be free, and we shall pay less taxes and there will be no policemen.

The fight between the Britishers and the Indians has been represented in terms of the fight between asuras (evil forces) and suras (good forces) is a recurrent motif in Hindu mythology. The Skeffington Coffee Estate is a micro-world dominated by the asuras who are devoid of mercy, kindness, humanity and humaneness. The *asuric* British police there unleash a reign of terror in the name of estate management. Gandhiji launches with his Satyagrahies his campaign against the British officials to safeguard Satyagrahies from the exploitation and injustice of the estate officers. The British soldiers who had resort to atrocities upon the Satyagrahies have been compared to the soldiers of the army of the ten headed demon, Ravana and Satyagrahies who were mercilessly thrashed, arrested and imprisoned have been compared to Lord Krishna himself in Kansa‘s prison.

The use of the mythical technique in the novel is seen at its best in the strange kind of *Harikatha* recited by Jayramacharan, the Harikatha-man in the novel. In the novel Jayramachar, the Harikatha-man from the city tells the story of the birth of Gandhi in the manner of the Puranic tales of the birth of gods and goddesses. The sage Valmiki, as the Harikatha-man says, meets Brahma and relates to him sinister news about the earth on which his favourite land of Bharata lies. Aliens from across the seas have come to trample on India`s ancient wisdom and spit on virtue itself. They have made India a land of darkness and poverty. Valmiki therefore prays that Brahma may send an avatar to ameliorate the lot of the land of ancient wisdom. Brahma is greatly moved to hear this and promises to send Siva himself to the earth as an avatar who would deliver his beloved daughter India from her wretchedness and misery. Then Siva took birth in a human form in a family in Gujrat. Soon after his birth the four walls of the room began to shine brilliantly. When the child was still in his cradle, he began to lisp the language of wisdom. He began to fight against the enemies of the country right from childhood, just as Lord Krishna killed Kali when he was still a child.

When he grew to boyhood, men and women began to follow him, just as the Gopi followed Krishna the flute-player. Gandhi went from village to village to slay the serpent of foreign rule. He taught people to fight for independence but with non- violence, and he taught them to love all men and to regard them as equal, without distinction of caste and creed. His message was to avoid passions and seek Truth. He asked people to spin and weave every day, for Mother India was in tattered weeds and badly needed clothes to cover her sores. By bying Indian cloth they will provide money to feed and clothe thousands of poor sons of Mother India. The Mahatma, the katha-man said, was a saint, and even his enemies fell at his feet. At

the end of the novel the myth is again taken up by Rangamma and her companions when they learn that Mahatma is going to England to get Swaraj: He will bring us Swaraj, the Mahatma.

And we shall be happy. And Ram will come back from exile, and Sita will be with him, for Ravana will be slain and Sita freed.

Thus *Kanthapura* is a brilliant attempt by Raja Rao to probe the very depths to which India‘s nationalistic urge penetrated, showing how even in the remote villages the new upsurge fused completely with traditional religious faith, thus rediscovering the Indian soul in thepeculiarly Indian art-form *sthala-purana,and mythicising the contemporaneity thereby.*

8.3 RAJA RAO'S INFLUENCE AS REGIONAL NOVELIST

So far as ***Kanthapura*** is concerned, regionalism unfolds a set of characters, who are lowly and they are to be raised from their lowly position to a higher one by volunteer leaders like Moorthy. Unlike Maria Edge worth, Raja Rao does not wield much influence as a writer of regional novel and it is too early to say whether or not his influence shall go deep into the future regionalism of the country. Raja Rao, however, has put the seal of realism on his Kanthapura.

8.4 THE NEW STHALA - PURANA

Not only has the novelist given us an account of the legendry history of Kanthapura, he has also created a new Sthala - Purana for the region. This has been done by mythicising the heroism of the local hearts and heads in the cause of their mother land. Some of the chief characters are gods, other beings larger in power than humanity. Moorthy is presented as a figure much above the common run of men. A dedicated, selfless soul, he is idealised to the extent or being regarded as a local Mahatma. And, of course, there is the real Mahatma also, always in the background though nowhere physically present. The village women think of him as the Sahyadri Mountain big and blue, and Moorthy as the small mountain.

8.5 THE REASONS OF BEING KANTHAPURA, A STHALA - PURANA

Every village in India, Raja Rao tells us, has a Sthala - Purana. In this novel he has given us the Sthala - Purana of a South Indian village. Kanthapura is a Sthala - Purana because here he tells us about the physical features of the place and manners, customs, habits and traditions of the people. He draws a picture of their past and present, their myths and legends, their ideals and beliefs. He shows us how the message of the Gandhian non - violent fight for independence reached Kanthapura and how it ended all the differences in that caste ridden village and imbued them with the spirit to fight and died for Gandhiji's social, political, economic and religious ideals. Thus, the local colour is very strong in Kanthapura. The characters in it breathe the soil which nurtured them. The soil has a peculiar kind of environment and atmosphere. The people inthe village came into the vortex of the ferment of the India - wide politics and are re - awakened from their centuries old stupor. The characters, with the heritage of their traditions, conversation, little rivalries of their individual groups or group carry with them the scent or aroma of their livings. The background of the novel is consisted of the regionalism of the geographical kind. The places have served their purpose already and are of no use now.

8.6 TECHNICAL WORDS/KEY WORDS

Stalapurana: Kanthapura is a Sthala - Purana because here he tells us about the physical features of the place and manners, customs, habits and traditions of the people.

Myth: a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events.

Satyagraha: Satyagraha is sometimes used to refer to the whole principle of nonviolence, whereit is essentially the same as ahimsa, and sometimes used in a "marked" meaning to refer specifically to direct action that is largely obstructive, for example in the form of civil disobedience.

Asuras: Evil forces

Suras : Good forces

8.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Write an essay on the importance of Stalapurna in Kanthapura?
2. What are the main reasons of being Kanthapura as Sthalapurana?
3. Discuss Kanthapura is a regional novel.
4. What is Raja Rao‘s style of writing in Indian fiction?

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LESSON 9
INTRODUCTION, SUMMARY OF THINGS FALL APART

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the lesson is to help the learners to understand

- The literary contribution of Chinua Achebe
- The background of the novel Things Fall Apart
- The story line of the novel Things Fall Apart
- The pre and post colonial condition in Nigeria
- Significance of igbo culture

STRUCTURE

9.1 INTRODUCTION ABOUT ACHINU ACHEBE

Chinua Achebe is a Nigerian novelist, poet, short story writer, and critic. He is the founding father of modern African literature. He was born on 16th November 1930 in Ogidi, Colonial Nigerian. He attended the University of Ibadam where his fierce criticism against the Western Literature had developed. He discontinued his brief career at Nigerian Broadcasting Service to become a writer. His wrote and published his first novel, *Things Fall Apart* in 1958. He became a worldwide sensation. Since then he dedicated his illustrious literary efforts to develop authentic African and Post colonial expression in English literature.

He was awarded The Man Booker-prize. Nadine Gordimer, the renowned South African Writer hailed Achebe as "the Father of Modern African Literature." He died on 21 March 2013 in Boston, United State.

9.2 OTHER NOVELS OF CHINUA ACHEBE

9.2.1 No Longer at Ease:

This is Achebe's second novel. It was first published in 1960. The cultural dilemma of an African living in western conditions is the main theme of the novel. The central character is an Igbo, named Obi Okonkwo. This work is believed to be part of the 'African Triology.'

No Longer at Ease is preceded by *Things Fall Apart* and followed by *Arrow of God*. Obi Konkwo is the grandson of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*.

9.2.2 Arrow of God:

This is the third novel of Achebe. This novel is published in 1964.The title is adopted from an Igbo proverb which means everthing is "will of God." The plot constitutes Ezeulu, the chief priest's confrontation with Christian missionaries in colonial Nigeria. This is the first African novel to win Jock Compbell/New Statesmen.

9.2.3 A Man of the People:

This 1966 novel is satire on a military coup in Nigeria. The novel is the conflict between Odili, young and educated and his chief Nanga, his former who enters a career in politics in an unnamed fictional 20the century Africa.

9.2.4 Anthills of Savannah:

This is the fifth novel of Ahcebe. It is the finalist for the 1987 Booker Prize for Fiction. This novel reflects on the condition in Nigeria after the political coup/military coup. The story is revealed through the narrative of Chirs Oroko, Bactrice Okoh and Ikem

9.3 INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE NOVEL

THINGS FALL APART:

Thing Fall Apart is the debut novel of Chinua Achebe. The novel was first published in 1958 and immediately got world acclaim. With this novel Achebe turned the world

towards Nigeria and African. It paved way to the growth of post-colonial literature. It is first novel of African Trilogy. The novel is in three parts and twenty five chapters. The title of the novel is adopted form W.B.Yeats's famous poem "The Second Coming." Achebe quotes the relevant line from the poem on the opening pages of his novel,

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things Fall Apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

The novel should not be mistaken as an exotic piece. It is a historical and anthropological document.

9.4 SUMMARY OF THINGS FALL APART

9.4.1 Okonkwo's awesome Physic:

Things Fall Apart begins in the media res that are in the middle of the things. At the beginning of the novel, the protagonist of the novel Okonkow is seen in his youth in Igbo villages. He is a wealthy and respected warrior of the Umuofia clan. Umuofia is a lower Nigerian tribe. Umuofia tribe population is spread across consortium of nine villages.

Okonkwo lives in Iguedo, one of the nine villages. Okonkwo is a tall and huge person. He has bushy eyebrows and wide nose. These physical qualities give him a severe look. But Okonkwo has slight stammer. When he is in great anger he cannot pronounce words properly.

So, angry Okonkwo prefers to pounce on other person with blows rather than struggle with his stammer. Eighteen year old young Okonkwo has made his village proud by defeating the unconquered Amalinze, the cat in a wrestling contest. Since then he has become very popular throughout the nine villages.

Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As young man of eighteen he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat. He was called the Cat because his back would never touch the earth. It was this man that Oknokwo threw in a fight which the old men agreed was one of the fiercest since the founder of the town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights.

9.4.2 OKonkwo's determination to be the contrary to his father:

Unoka is Okonkwo's father. He was a passive aesthetic loving person. He was gentle hearted person who was good in playing flute, telling proverbs and hosting people. But he could not earn food to his family.

He never won a title during his life time. He took loans to reap food. But he was not prudent and hardworking. So, he failed to yield crop year after year. He took debts from his neighbor Okoye and many other villagers. He could not repay any of the debts. He died in heavy debt. He died of "shameful illness." According to Umuofia culture when a person dies with that illness his body is thrown in forbidden forest. So, Unoka was not given proper burial and thrown in forbidden forest after his death. The humiliation the family had to suffer

due to Unoka's passive and gentle personality sting the heart of Okonkwo so hard. He has determined to be everything what his father is not and hated everything what is like his father. He has passionately tired to become great and important in his society and with his hard work and calculative decisions he becomes the most important person in his community.

9.4.3 Okonkwo – A self-Made Man:

Okonkwo has built is fortune alone as a sharecropper. He has begun by borrowing 400 seed-yams from his father's friend, Nwakibie. He withstand many bad weathers with his brilliant forecasts. Now he owns many properties and has three wives.

9.4.4 Okonkwo and Ikemefuna's bond:

One night the town crier rings the gong and requests the villagers to gather at market the next day morning. In the morning all the people in the village gather at the market place.

Ogbuefi Ezeugo, the orator announces that the wife of an Umuofia tribesman was murdered by an Mbaino. Okonkwo,being the fiercest fighter, is asked to lead the delegation to settle this murder issue. Next day Okonkwo goes to Mbaino. Surprisingly, Mbaino agrees to the terms of Umuofia. A virgin to Ogbuefi Udo as a wife is given by Mbaino. A fifteen year old boy is also given. The Umuofia clan elders do not understand what to do with fifteen year old Ikemefuna. So, they leave him under the care of Okonkwo.

Oknokwo takes Ikemefuna to his first wife's hut. Ikemefuna is homesick and scared in the beginning. Oknokwo's first wife treats his like her son. Nwoye is Oknokwo's only son.

He develops a close bond with Ikemefuna. All other children of Okonkwo grow very fond of Ikemefuna. He knows many stories, possesses many skills like making bamboo flutes, setting traps etc. Okonkwo is very happy as he finds in Ikemefuna a real male companion to his son. He is also grows fond of Ikemefuan which he never expresses. Ikemefuna begins to address Oknkwo as father.

9.4.5 The Week of Peace:

In Umuofia culture the week before planting is observed in the honour of Ani, the earth Goddess. During the week of peace it is a Nso-ani to beat a.. Nso-ani means transgression of sacred week. Okonkow commits nso-ani. During sacred week of peace Okonkwo comes to the hut of Ojiugo. He notices Ojiugo is absent in the hut and she does not prepare food. She leaves her hut to braid her hair. Okonkwo beats his third wife for her negligence. Beating a woman in the week of peace is a transgression. Okonkwo realizes his sin and goes to priest to repeant. Priest asks him to sacrifice a nanny goat, a hen, and pay a fine of thousand cowries. Okonkwo fulfills the orders of the priest.

9.4.6 After the Week of Peace:

After the week of peace, the villagers clean their farming lands and offer prayers to Ani before planting. Nwoye and Ikemefuna help Okonkwo to prepare the seed-yam.

Okonkwo hates any sign of laziness and gentleness. He pushes both boys to work harder than their age. He wants them to become tough and able. So, deals them with

harshness and criticism. Oknokwo is very happy in his heart seeing the bond between Nwoye and Ikemefuna.

A feast is held in the week of peace to Ani. Okonkwo hates feasts as he feels that they are times of indleness. He goes to hunting. Okonkwo is not good in hunting and shooting gun. Seeing the indifference of Oknokwo to enjoy feast, his second wife Ekwefi mutters that "guns that never shot." Hearing this, Oknkwo's anger goes to the highest point. He beats Ekwefi and commits transgression once again.

The annual wrestling match is conducted on the day after the feast. This event is special to Ekwefi because Okonkwo won her heart when he defeat Cat in one these annual wrestling matches. The attraction was mutual. Okonkwo was too poor to pay her bride price.

One day Ekwefi ran away from her husband to live with Okonkwo. Now, the couple has a daughter – Ezinma. She is Okonkwo's dearest child. But he never openly shows his affection. He also has a daughter Obiageli with his first wife and another daughter Nkechi, with his third wife, Ojiugo. His daughters often bring meals to his hut and serve him food.

This year the wsrestle match is conducted on ilo- the village common green place. The wrestling competitions begin with fight between fifteen to sixteen age group boys. In this category,Okonkwo's friend Obierika's son – Maduka wins the match. The final round is fought by the leaders of the two teams namely Okafo and Ikezue. Okafo wins the close fight.

During these events, Ekwefi speaks to Chielo. Chielo is the priestess of Agbala, the oracle of the Hills and Caves.

9.4.7 Ikemefuna's Influence on Nwoye:

It has been three years since Ikemefuna started to live with Okonkwo family. He becomes an inspiring person to Nwoye. Ikemefuna kindled fire in Nwoye. Okonkwo loves this new masculinity in his son. Okonkwo wants his son Nwoye to be tough prosperous man to lead his family after his death. Often Okonkwo invites both the boys to his obi to listen to masculine stories. He shares his foo-foo, pounded yam with his sons Ikemefuna and Nwoye.

9.4.8 Killing of Ikemefuna:

Suddenly, locusts descend on Umuofia. They come once a generation. When they come they come every year for consecutive seven years. The villagers collect them because they are tasty to eat. One day Ogbeufi Ezeudu visits Okonkwo. He come to tell Okonkwo that the oracle has decreed the death of Ikemefuna. He advices Okonkwo to not to be part of the ritual of death as he boy loves him as a father. But Okonkwo takes part in the ritual because gentle emotions he associates with feminity and being tough and stoic is masculinity. He lies to Ikemefuna that they are going to return him to his home. Nwoye is heart-broken. While walking to the place of sacrifice, Ikemefuna dreams about meeting his mother. After long hours of walking Ikemefuna notices that somebody is about to hit him with a matchet and cries for Okonkwo's help calling 'Father'. Konkwo does not want to look weak and he himself beheads Ikemefuna with his matchet.

9.4.9 Disillusionment in Nwoye and Depression of Okonkwo:

When Oknkwo returns from the sacrifice, looking at him Nwoye intuitively knows that Okonkwo has killed Ikemefuna. Understanding this, something breaks him for the second time. He has this experience when he heard an infant crying form the Evil Forest. In their culture twins or children with disabilities are thrown alive into the evil forest. After the Ikemefuna's sacrifice, Okonkwo falls in depression. In his depression he wishes that Ezinma was a boy. He visits his friend Obierika's place for diversion. Oberika requests him to stay for her daughter's suitor arrival to settle bride price. During this stay, Okonkwo and Obierika debate about Okonkwo's participation in the sacrifice.

9.4.10 Ezinma's Illness and Ogbanje:

On an early morning Ekwefi awakes Okonkwo and tells him that Ezinma is in dying condtion. Okonkwo goes to collect medicine. Ekwefi had nine children before she has Ezinma. All the nine children died in infancy. Okagbue Uyanwa, the medicine man has found her iyiuwa and solved the illness.

9.4.11 Okonkwo's accidental killing:

After Obierika's daughter marriage, the great elder of the clan Ezeudu dies. The funeral is attended by all the clan people. The ceremonies are going on. Egwugwu cult is also present. In the honour of Ezeudu, cannons are shot and rifles are fired into sky. In the firing ceremony Okonkwo's gun explodes, a piece of iron from his shoots into the heart of one of Ezeudu'son and kills him. Though it is an accident and a female crime, it is an abomination.

Okonkwo is to be exiled for seven years. Okonkwo obliges the punishment and shifts his yam seeds to Obierika barn. Before dawn, his family shift to his mother's home in Mbanta. Next morning the villagers destroy Okonkwo' huts and killed his animals.

9.4.12 Second Innings of Okonkwo:

Uchendu, Okonkwo's maternal uncle warmly welcomes the latter's family. Uchendu is a kind and generous man. The kinsmen of Okonkwo's kinsmen donate some land and modest quantity of seed yam. Konkwo and his wives are no longer young. He is in his middle age. He is working hard. But it no longer gives him pleasure. Okonkwo wanted to be the lord of Umuofia at this stage of his life. But this unforeseen setback pushes him into despair. His uncle notices this. On the second day of Uchendu's son's marriage, he addresses the family members and motivates Okonkwo. He reminds Okonkwo that many men have suffered worst fate than he. He asks his nephew to gather his courage to take care of his family.

9.4.13 The powerful presence of white colonizer:

Obierika visits Okonkwo during the second year of exile. Along with bags of cowries Obierika brings bad news too. He says Okonkwo that white men destroyed Abame village.

The destruction started when a white man came to Abame on iron horse that is bicycle. The villagers consulted the oracle about this new visitor. The oracle said the white man is a threat and he will be followed by many white men. So the villagers killed the white man. After weeks, a group of white men came and discovered their friend's bicycle in

Abame. Later the group surrounded the Abame market and destroyed it. After hearing this, Uchendu asks Obierika what the white man said to the villagers. Obierieka says he said nothing or he said something which the villagers did not understand. On hearing this Uchendu says that the villagers are foolish to kill a man who said nothing.

9.4.14 Second Visit of Obierika:

Two years later Obierika come to pay his visit to Okonkwo. Now, he reports to Okonkwo that the circumstances have changed in Umuofia.

Christian Missionaries are converting the natives into Christianity. Obierika goes to Okonkwo this time to tell him that his son Nwoye has embraced Christianity. When Obierika confronted Nwoye about Okonkwo, the latter curtly replies that Okonkwo was no longer his father.

9.4.15 Christianity and Nwoye:

Okonkwo is not influenced by the Missionary theology. The missionaries start to sing songs which move the wounded heart of Nwoye. He finds the answers to the spiritual questions in him. His scares after the death of Ikemefuna and the death of twin children are being healed by the words in the songs of missionaries. He has become a follower. Amikwu, Okonkwo's cousin sees in the market Nwoye among the Christians. He immedietly informs Okonkwo. When Nwoye returns home Okonkwo attacks Nwoye. Uchendu stops Okonkwo and his son leaves the place without uttering a single word. Nwoye joins the missionary school to learn reading and writing.

9.4.16 Church in Evil Forest:

The missionaries ask the elders of Mbanto to allot them a plot of land to build an independent church. The elders allotted them plot in Evil Forest. In the native culture every village has an evil forest to bury the undesireable deaths and powerful fetishes of medicine people. The Mbanto elders have given the plot believing that the Christian missionaries' people die in no time after being tormented by the malevolent energies in the forest. When the missionary people stay alive, a small group of Mbanto people begin to believe in the preaching of the missionaries. They have come to believe that the powerful priest of church command the magical foreces in the forest. So the number of converts starts to grow. Mr. Kiaga becomes the first African convert and is given the charge of the Mbanto church. Nneka becomes the first woman convert. She had twins in her four previous pregnancies. As per native culture twins are thrown into evil forest. This time she runs away from her family and seeks the protection of the church.

9.4.17 The Tough Resistance against Christianity:

Unhealthy confrontation between the clansmen and the Christians are increasing. Once three converts stand in the middle the village and call all the Igbo Gods false. They condemn the idols and want them to be burnt. Enraged clansmen beat the three converts. The rumours that Christina churches are followed by Christian government spread insecurities among the clansmen. The church on the other hand is reforming the local culture by accepting the twin babies. A controversy rises when the Mr. Kiaga welcomes the outcastes, Osu. Soon, Osu becomes the most faithful followers of the new faith. Okoli one of the Osu

converts kills a python which is sacred to native people. As the days pass the Christian sympathizers in Mbanto are increasing. The elders of the clan meet to etch an action plan to stop this encroachment of foreign religion. Okonkwo councils war against the church. The clan elders are not ready for war. In the following years, Okoli mysteriously falls ill and dies. Then clan people believe that the gods are watching them.

9.4.18 End of Seven Years of Exile:

The seven years of Okonkwo's exile come to an end. He returns to his village Umuoifa. He arranged a feast of gratitude to his mother's clan. The elders speak on this occasion and express their anxiety over the new religion and how it threatens Igbo way of life. Okonkwo wants to declare his return in grand way by conducting the marriages of his two beautiful daughters, Ezinma and Obiageli.

9.4.19 Hanging of Aneto:

Things in Umuofia have changed a lot. Church influence has grown even on Umuofia. Okonkwo learns from Obierika that the church has weakened the kinship ties. Okonkwo sees the church with suspicious eye. Then they come to know the story of Aneto. When Aneto expresses his dissatisfaction over the court's ruling on the land dispute because it is against the customs, he is hanged by the government.

9.4.20 Reverend James Smith:

A Reverend James Smith replaces Mr. Brown. Unlike Mr. Brown, Mr. Smith is a strict and intolerant man. Under his directions the converts are relieved to be free from the tolerant policies of Mr. Brown. Enoch, one convert disrespects Igbo tradition by removing the mask of egwugwu during annual festival. This action is equal to killing an ancestor. Next day Egwugwu burn Enoch's compound. They march to church to burn it too. But Smith stands his ground. They tell him to move aside. But he forbids them to touch the church. The translator misinterprets the statement. Anyway Egwugwu ignores his orders and burn the church.

9.4.21 Imprisonment of Umuofia leaders and Okonkwo:

After burning the church, Umuofia village is ready to face the lash out from white authority. So, they arm themselves with guns and matchets. The District Commissioner invites them to peaceful talks. Okonkwo and others go with matchets. When the commissioner says it is just a friendly conversation, they put down their arms. As they put their arms down police surround them and imprison them. They are physically abused and insulted for a few days. Their bail is set at the fine of two hundred bags of cowries. All the families in the village collect and buy the bail.

9.4.22 Oknonkwo's killing of District Commissioner Messenger:

The prisoners return to their homes with brooding looks after their release. Enzima and Obeirika take food to Okonkwo. They notice wipes on their back. Okonkwo attends the village meeting with a premeditated course of action. He slept little. He wears his warrior dress to wage war on White authority. The meeting is packed with men from all the nine Villages. The speakers are expressing their views. Some feel they have to spill their blood to

encounter the violence of Whiteman. As the speeches are going on five messengers from District Commissioner come there. The leader of the messenger group commands the gathering to end their meeting. As the words come out of the mouth of the messenger, Okonkwo kills him with two strokes of mathcet. Okonkwo expects the villager rise up in rage and kill the other messengers. To his dismay the villagers allow the other messengers to escape. And one in crowd asks why Okonkwo killed the messenger.

9.4.23 The Suicide of Okonkwo:

The district Commissioner arrives at Okonkwo's compound to arrest Okonwo. He is welcomed by Obierika and other men. He asks them to show him Okonkwo. Obierika says Okonkwo is not in the house. The commissioner repeates the question and Obierika repeats the answer. Finally Obierika leads the commissioner to the bush where Okonkwo's body is hanging to a tree. Obierika blames the commissioner for the suicide of Okonkwo. He praises the greatness of Okonwo. Suicide is a sin in Igbo culture. So, none of the clansmen touch the body of Okonkwo though they love Okonkwo. The commissioner summons strangers to bring down the body and bury his body. Obierika unlike his usual domineer, exhibits flash of temper towards the commissioner and ask him leave. The commissioner respects Obierika' words and leaves the place. But the commissioner feels happy to learn new things about African culture.

9.4.24 *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Nigeria*:

The novel concludes by informing that Commissioner decides to include Okonkwo's death in his book *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Nigeria*.

9.5 GLOSSARY

Agadi-nwayi	-	An old woman
Agbala	-	The Oracle the prophet of the Igbo
Albino	-	A person whose skin, hair, and eyes white in colour because of genetic factors. British
Amadiora	-	The god of thunder and lightning
Ani	-	The earth goddess
Calabash	-	The dried, hollow shell of a gourd, used as a bowl, cup, and so on
Callow	-	Young and Immature
Chi	-	Personal Deity
Coco-Yam	-	The edible, spherical-shaped tuber of the taro plant grown in the tropics and eaten like potatoes or ground into flour.
Chukwu	-	The leading god in the Igbo hierarchy of gods
Kotma	-	Court Mesengers
Cowries	-	Shell of the cowrie used as currency in parts of Africa and South Asia.
Efulefu	-	Worthless men in the eyes of the community
Egwugwu		Leaders of the clan who wear masks during certain rituals and speak on behalf of the spirits

Eke, Oye, Afo, and Nkwo	-	The Igbo week has four days
Ekwe	-	A drum
Iba	-	Fever, probably related to malaria
Ibo	-	A member of a people of southeastern Nigeria; known for their art and their skills as traders
Idemili	-	This title, named after the river god Idemili, is the third-level title of honor in Umuofia
Ikenga	-	A carved wooden figure kept by every man in his shrine to symbolize the strength of a man's right hand
Ilo	-	The village gathering place and playing field; an area for large celebrations and special events
iron horse	-	The bicycle
Isa-ifi	-	The ceremony in which the bride is judged to have been faithful to her groom
Ochu	-	Female Crime
Iyi-uwa	-	A special stone linking an ogbanje child and the spirit world
Jesu Kristi	-	Jesus Christ
Jigida	-	Strings of hundreds of tiny beads worn snugly around the waist
Kola	-	The seed of the cola, an African tree. The seed contains caffeine
Mbaino	-	This community name means four settlements
Ndichie	-	Elders
Nna-ayi	-	Our father, a greeting of respect
Nso-ani	-	A sin against the earth goddess, Ani
Nza	-	A small but aggressive bird
Obi	-	A hut within a compound
Ogbanje	-	A child possessed by an evil spirit that leaves the child's body upon death only to enter into the mother's womb to be reborn again within the next child's body.
Ogbuefi	-	A person with a high title
Ogene	-	A gong
Ogwu	-	Medicine, magic
Osu	-	A class of people in Igbo culture considered outcasts
Osugo	-	The name means a low-ranked person.
Ozo	-	A class of men holding an ozo title
Palm	-	Fronds leaves of a palm tree
Pestle	-	A tool, usually club-shaped
Plantain	-	A hybrid banana plant
Singlets	-	Men's undershirts,
Tie-Tie	-	A vine used like a rope
Tufia-a	-	This sound represents spitting and cursing simultaneously

Udo	-	Peace
Udu	-	A clay pot
Uli	-	A liquid made from seeds that make the skin pucker; used for temporary tattoo-like decorations.
Umuada	-	Daughters who have married outside the clan
Umunna	-	The extended family and kinsmen
Umuofia kwenu	-	A shout of approval and greeting that means United Umuofia
Yam foo-foo	-	Pounded and mashed yam pulp pounded and mashed yam pulp

9.6 QUESTION

1. What is the significance of title *Things Fall Apart*?
2. What is the plot of the novel *Things Fall Apart*?
3. What is the literary contribution of Chinua Achebe?
4. Critically comment on igbo culture.

9.7 REFERENCE

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LESSON 10
CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THINGS FALL APART -II

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the lesson is to help the learners to understand

- The major themes of the novel *Things Fall Apart*
- The critical discussions on the novel *Things Fall Apart*
- Feministic criticism on novel *Things Fall Apart*
- Character list of the pre and post colonial condition in Nigeria
- Significance of igbo culture

STRUCTURE

10.1 MAJOR THEMES IN THINGS FALL OF APART

The following are the main themes of *Thing Fall of Apart*,

10.1.1 The Tussle between Tradition and Change:

Things Fall Apart begins on the verge of change. The Igbo people stand at a junction where they have to make a choice between Igbo tradition and change towards western order.

The choice is not simple. They have to choose between comfort and respect of tradition and development promised by the western culture. Making choice is complicated by the survival instinct. Survival is always the child of change. But tradition is identity. Some Igbo clansmen choose survival and progress over tradition. The rest are in dilemma. They do know that they have comfort and respect only in their tradition. They see the threat of losing freedom in embracing the foreign culture. Though this party wants to deny change, they could not as the change is inevitable. So, the novel concludes on the note of dilemma resolving in favor of change as it is enforced by the power.

10.1.2 Question of Individual Status:

Individual status in the cultural clash is another theme of the novel. Okonkwo always dislikes the church and missionaries. In his resistance towards western culture there is his attempt to uphold his individual status. The individual status changes in the new cultural identity. Okonkwo is not ready to lose his individual status which he achieved with sheer masculine power. Okonkwo has noted that his clansmen are not ready to fight for tradition.

He does want to surrender his masculine pride to the western order and committed suicide. Suicide is a sin in his tradition. Okonkwo prefers to commit sin than surrender to new order where his masculine identity does not matter.

10.1.3 Igbo Language:

Achebe employs Igbo language to showcase unique power which is hard to be translated into English or another western language. He uses words and expressions from Igbo language which does not have equivalent expression in English language. Thus he maintains the integrity of Nigerian culture within English frame work.

10.1.4 Memory:

The novel is the tragedy of Okonkwo. While narrating the rise and fall of Okonkwo Achebe documents on Igbo culture and people. It showcases the manner the white man has deceived and destroyed the African culture.

10.1.5 Social disintegration:

Towards the end of the novel we see the disintegration of Igbo order. The western culture breaks the kinship of the Igbo people. Umuofia loses its self determination. The readers feel that they are reading about the culture which is no longer in existence.

10.1.6 Ambition:

The protagonist of the novel Okonkwo is an ambitious person. He strongly wants to achieve honour and clinched it. He plans to be lord of Umuofia. But his ambition is also the reason for his fall. Okonkwo comes from exile to relive his dream of becoming a lord of Umuofia. But the western authorities seem to be too powerful to allow Okonkwo realize his dream. Having recognized his impending defeat in the colonized conditions, he commands his own death. To be the lord of his life Okonkwo gives the command of his death before western authorities give it. And he dies like lord of his life.

10.1.7 The Concept of Chi:

In Igbo culture chi means one's spirit. And one's own spirit control's one's life. Okonkwo believes in Igbo saying about chi. Okonkwo He lives his life by this saying. The new conditions does not allow him to live by his chi. So, he rests his chi in death.

10.1.8 Justice:

Another powerful preoccupation of the novel is Justice. For Igbo justice fairness is most important. The British imperial order breaks the Igbo justice and replaces it with their own law. The land dispute and death of Aneto is an illustration of the loss of Igbo justice. The imprisonment Okonkwo and Umuofia elders are another incident of loss of Igbo justice.
Conclusion: The discussed aspects are the major themes of Things Fall Apart.

10.2. TWIN TRAGEDIES IN *THINGS FALL APART*

A tragedy is serious action. Aristotle defines tragedy as "Tragedy, then, is an imitation that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude, in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the serval kinds found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative, through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions." *Things Fall Apart* is a tragedy with twin tragedies. The main tragedy is the tragic death of Okonkwo. The second is the tragedy of the culture of Umuofia.

10.2.1 Tragedy of Okonkwo:

10.2.1.1 Okonkwo's awesome Physic:

Things Fall Apart begins in the media res that are in the middle of the things. At the beginning of the novel, the protagonist of the novel Okonkow is seen in his youth in Igbo villages. He is a wealthy and respected warrior of the Umuofia clan.

Umuofia is a lower Nigerian tribe. Umuofia tribe population is spread across consortium of nine villages. Okonkwo lives in Iguedo, one of the nine villages. Okonkwo is a tall and huge person. He has bushy eyebrows and wide nose. These physical qualities give him a severe look. But Okonkwo has slight stammer. When he is in great anger he cannot pronounce words properly. So, angry Okonkwo prefers to pounce on other person with blows rather than struggle with his stammer. Eighteen year old young Okonkwo has made his village proud by defeating the unconquered Amalinze, the cat in a wrestling contest. Since then he has become very popular throughout the nine villages.

Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As young man of eighteen he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat. He was called the Cat because his back would never touch the earth. It was this man that Oknokwo threw in a fight which the old men agreed was one of the fiercest since the founder of the town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights.

10.2.1.2 OKonkwo's determination to be the contrary to his father:

Unoka is Okonkwo's father. He was a passive aesthetic loving person. He was gentle hearted person who was good in playing flute, telling proverbs and hosting people. But he could not earn food to his family. He never won a title during his life time. He took loans to reap food. But he was not prudent and hardworking. So, he failed to yield crop year after year. He took debts from his neighbor Okoye and many other villagers. He could not repay any of the debts. He died in heavy debt. He died of "shameful illness." According to Umuofia culture when a person dies with that illness his body is thrown in forbidden forest. So, Unoka was not given proper burial and thrown in forbidden forest after his death. The humiliation the family had to suffer due to Unoka's passive and gentle personality sting the heart of Okonkwo so hard. He has determined to be everything what his father is not and hated everything what is like his father. He has passionately tired to become great and important in his society and with his hard work and calculative decisions he becomes the most important person in his community.

10.2.1.3 Okonkwo – A self-Made Man:

Okonkwo has built is fortune alone as a sharecropper. He has begun by borrowing 400 seed-yams from his father's friend, Nwakibie. He withstands many bad weathers with his brilliant forecasts. Now he owns many properties, titles and has three wives.

10.2.1.4 Okonkwo and Ikemefuna's bond:

One night the town crier rings the gong and requests the villagers to gather at market the next day morning. In the morning all the people in the village gather at the market place.

Ogbuefi Ezeugo, the orator announces that the wife of an Umuofia tribesman was murdered by an Mbaino. Okonkwo,being the fiercest fighter, is asked to lead the delegation to settle this murder issue. Next day Okonkwo goes to Mbaino. Surprisingly, Mbaino agrees to the terms of Umuofia. A virgin to Ogbuefi Udo as a wife is given by Mbaino. A fifteen year old boy is also given. The Umuofia clan elders do not understand what to do with fifteen year old Ikemefuna. So, they leave him under the care of Okonkwo.

Oknokwo takes Ikemefuna to his first wife's hut. Ikemefuna is homesick and scared in the beginning. Oknokwo's first wife treats his like her son. Nwoye is Oknokwo's only son.

He develops a close bond with Ikemefuna. All other children of Okonkwo grow very fond of Ikemefuna. He knows many stories, possesses many skills like making bamboo flutes, setting traps etc. Okonkwo is very happy as he finds in Ikemefuna a real male companion to his son. He is also grows fond of Ikemefuan which he never expresses. Ikemefuna begins to address Oknkwo as father.

10.2.1.5 Okonkwo's Nso-ani:

In Umuofia culture the week before planting is observed in the honour of Ani, the earth Goddess. During the week of peace it is a Nso-ani to beat a Nso-ani means transgression of sacred week. Okonkow commits nso-ani. During sacred week of peace Okonkwo comes to the hut of Ojiugo. He notices Ojiugo is absent in the hut and she does not prepare food. She leaves her hut to braid her hair. Okonkwo beats his third wife for her negligence. Beating a woman in the week of peace is a transgression. Okonkwo realizes his sin and goes to priest to repeant. Priest asks him to sacrifice a nanny goat, a hen, and pay a fine of thousand cowries. Okonkwo fulfills the orders of the priest.

A feast is held in the week of peace to Ani. Okonkwo hates feasts as he feels that they are times of indleness. He goes to hunting. Okonkwo is not good in hunting and shooting gun. Seeing the indifference of Oknokwo to enjoy feast, his second wife Ekwefi mutters that "guns that never shot." Hearing this, Oknkwo's anger goes to the highest point. He beats Ekwefi and commits transgression once again.

10.2.1.6 Okonkwo's masculine parenting:

After the week of peace, the villagers clean their farming lands and offer prayers to Ani before planting. Nwoye and Ikemefuna help Okonkwo to prepare the seed-yam.

Okonkwo hates any sign of laziness and gentleness. He pushes both boys to work harder than their age. He wants them to become tough and able. So, deals them with harshness and criticism. Oknokwo is very happy in his heart seeing the bond between Nwoye and Ikemefuna.

10.2.1.7 Ikemefuna's Influence on Nwoye:

It has been three years since Ikemefuna started to live with Okonkwo family. He becomes an inspiring person to Nwoye. Ikemefuna kindled fire in Nwoye. Okonkwo loves this new masculinity in his son. Okonkwo wants his son Nwoye to be tough prosperous man to lead his family after his death. Often Okonkwo invites both the boys to his obi to listen to masculine stories. He shares his foo-foo, pounded yam with his sons Ikemefuna and Nwoye.

10.2.1.8 Killing of Ikemefuna:

Suddenly, locusts descend on Umuofia. They come once a generation. When they come they come every year for consecutive seven years. The villagers collect them because they are tasty to eat. One day Ogbeufi Ezeudu visits Okonkwo. He come to tell Okonkwo that the oracle has decreed the death of Ikemefuna. He advices Okonkwo to not to be part of the ritual of death as he boy loves him as a father. But Okonkwo takes part in the ritual because gentle emotions he associates with feminity and being tough and stoic is masculinity. He lies to Ikemefuna that they are going to return him to his home. Nwoye is heart-broken. While walking to the place of sacrifice, Ikemefuna dreams about meeting his mother. After long hours of walking Ikemefuna notices that somebody is about to hit him with a matchet and cries for Okonkwo's help calling 'Father'. Konkwo does not want to look weak and he himself beheads Ikemefuna with his matchet.

10.2.1.9 Disillusionment in Nwoye and Depression of Okonkwo:

When Oknkwo returns from the sacrifice, looking at him Nwoye intuitively knows that Okonkwo has killed Ikemefuna. Understanding this, something breaks him for the second time. He has this experience when he heard an infant crying form the Evil Forest. In their culture twins or children with disabilities are thrown alive into the evil forest. After the Ikemefuna's sacrifice, Okonkwo falls in depression. In his depression he wishes that Ezinma was a boy. He visits his friend Obierika's place for diversion. Oberika requests him to stay for her daughter's suitor arrival to settle bride price. During this stay, Okonkwo and Obierika debate about Okonkwo's participation in the sacrifice.

10.2.1.10 Okonkwo's accidental killing:

After Obierika's daughter marriage, the great elder of the clan Ezeudu dies. The funeral is attended by all the clan people. The ceremonies are going on. Egwugwu cult is also present. In the honour of Ezeudu, cannons are shot and rifles are fired into sky. In the firing ceremony Okonkwo's gun explodes, a piece of iron from his shoots into the heart of one of Ezeudu'son and kills him. Though it is an accident and a female crime, it is an abomination.

Okonkwo is to be exiled for seven years. Okonkwo obliges the punishment and shifts his yam seeds to Obierika barn. Before dawn, his family shift to his mother's home in Mbanta. Next morning the villagers destroy Okonkwo' huts and killed his animals.

10.2.1.11 Second Innings of Okonkwo:

Uchendu, Okonkwo's maternal uncle warmly welcomes the latter's family. Uchendu is a kind and generous man. The kinsmen of Okonkwo's kinsmen donate some land and modest quantity of seed yam. Konkwo and his wives are no longer young. He is in his middle age. He is working hard. But it no longer gives him pleasure. Okonkwo wanted to be the lord of Umuofia at this stage of his life. But this unforeseen setback pushes him into despair. His uncle notices this. On the second day of Uchendu's son's marriage, he addresses the family members and motivates Okonkwo. He reminds Okonkwo that many men have suffered worst fate than he. He asks his nephew to gather his courage to take care of his family.

10.2.1.12 Imprisonment of Umuofia leaders and Okonkwo:

After burning the church, Umuofia village is ready to face the lash out from white authority. So, they arm themselves with guns and matchets. The District Commissioner invites them to peaceful talks. Okonkwo and others go with matchets. When the commissioner says it is just a friendly conversation, they put down their arms. As they put their arms down police surround them and imprison them. They are physically abused and insulted for a few days. Their bail is set at the fine of two hundred bags of cowries. All the families in the village collect and buy the bail.

10.2.1.13 Oknonkwo's killing of District Commissioner Messenger:

The prisoners return to their homes with brooding looks after their release. Enzima and Obeirika take food to Okonkwo. They notice wipes on their back. Okonkwo attends the village meeting with a premeditated course of action. He slept little. He wears his warrior dress to wage war on White authority. The meeting is packed with men from all the nine

Villages. The speakers are expressing their views. Some feel they have to spill their blood to encounter the violence of Whiteman. As the speeches are going on five messengers from District Commissioner come there. The leader of the messenger group commands the gathering to end their meeting. As the words come out of the mouth of the messenger, Okonkwo kills him with two strokes of mathcet. Okonkwo expects the villager rise up in rage and kill the other messengers. To his dismay the villagers allow the other messengers to escape. And one in crowd asks why Okonkwo killed the messenger.

10.2.1.14 The Suicide of Okonkwo:

The district Commissioner arrives at Okonkwo's compound to arrest Okonwo. He is welcomed by Obierika and other men. He asks them to show him Okonkwo. Obierika says Okonkwo is not in the house. The commissioner repeates the question and Obierika repeats the answer. Finally Obierika leads the commissioner to the bush where Okonkwo's body is hanging to a tree. Obierika blames the commissioner for the suicide of Okonkwo. He praises the greatness of Okonwo. Suicide is a sin in Igbo culture. So, none of the clansmen touch the body of Okonkwo though they love Okonkwo. The commissioner summons strangers to bring down the body and bury his body. Obierika unlike his usual domineer, exhibits flash of temper towards the commissioner and ask him leave. The commissioner respects Obierika' words and leaves the place. But the commissioner feels happy to learn new things about African culture.

10.2.1.15 Tragic Flaw of Okonkwo:

Okonkwo suffers from tragic flaws. He fundamentally grooms himself to be rash, angry and violent because he associates them with masculinity. He commits feminine sins like beating his wives in Week of peace with his toxic masculinity. He kills Ikemefu because he does not want to show to the world his tender side of fatherly affection to the adopted son.

This is again a grave mistake which he commits out of his masculinity. Another flaw in Okonkwo is he is stoic in suffering. Had he not been stoic in pain after killing Ikemefuna he could have saved his son Nwoye from disillusionment. Finally, Okonkwo is against change.

Owing to masculinity he hates the new religion as fears this religions weaken him. After killing the messenger he comes to know that he is alone in this seemingly losing battle. So, with his stoicism he kills himself.

10.2.2. Tragedy of Umuofia:

The novel is not only about the tragic fall of an individual called Okonkwo but it is also about the downfall of Umuofia and its culture. The culture of Umuofia has flaws which lead to its disintegration. Some of the practices are inhuman and ruthless. The throwing twin children into evil forest, human sacrifices, physical abuse of women, punishments for innocent mistakes, and casting some people as outcaste etc., Umuofia culture generates dissatisfaction and discontentment among its people. The foreign order capitalizes on these cultural flaws and disintegrates Umuofia kinship. Thus comes the tragic fall of Umuofia.

10.3 GENDER POLITICS IN *THINGS FALL APART*

The novels of Achinua Achebe are worlds of men. Similarly, *Things Fall Apart* is often called a novel dominated by masculinity. It can be argued under the following categories,

1. The world in Things Fall Apart is androcentric. The patriarchy oppressively steps into very sphere of life. Women are more an acquisition of men. Having more wives is an honour just as possessing yam seeds or titles.
2. The women characters are invisible in the omniscient narrative of the novel. They are absent in the decision making of the family or community. The novel does not record the reaction of women characters in crucial points of the novel.
3. The staple food of Umuofia people is yam. Yam is equated with manliness. The earth from which yam comes is equates with woman. The earth is worshipped as goddess Ani. Sky is equated to masculine spirit.
4. The failure is associated with the woman. Unako is called effeminine as he wins to titles in his life.
5. But denigration of female principle brings ruin in the novel. The tragic fall of Okonkwo beings in Week peace when he breaks it by beating his wives. This dishonor towards women foretells his fall.
6. The novel has many violent conflicts occasioned by the lack of moderating influence women.
7. There is patronizing of woman in the novel. The woman like Chielo is there. They are respected. But that is patronizing than giving equal status to women.

Conclusion: There is undeniable sexiest attitude in Thing Fall Apart. But Achebe should be blamed for it as it is in the Negerina culture. And Achebe is documenting the culture of his people.

10.4 CHARACTERS IN *THINGS FALL APART*

Okonkwo: He is an Igbo warrior, wealthy clan leader and father. He is a self made man. He obeys only his chi, the voice of his spirit. When he could not live by his chi he has committed suicide.

Unoka: He is the father of Okonkwo's father. He is the most hated figure in the life of Okonkwo. The character and achievement of Okonkwo is the result of Okonkwo's aversion towards Unoka's character and failure.

Nwoye: He is Okonkwo's oldest son. He is contrary to his father. He is a sensitive person. He struggles to meet up to the expectations of his powerful father. He loves to e in the company of his mother. Okonkwo wants him to be tough and masculine to take care of the family after him. Nwoye, does not understand the reasonless aggression and toughness of his father. So, he struggles to follow the instructions of his father. Nowye lives an alienated life until the arrival of Ikemefuna. Ikemefuna becomes the caring elder guiding figure in Nwoye's life. In Ikemefuna's company he enjoys masculine responsibilities which Okonkwo pushes them to fulfill to make them powerful like him. But this sun shine in Nwoye's life is clouded with the sacrifice of Ikemefuna. Recognizing that his father killed his brother like Ikemefuna, Nwoye is spiritually broken. He suffers these spiritual wounds. Nwoye has a discontentment towards his culture. Two episodes have hurt him bad. They are the crude practices in his religion. In his culture the twin children are believed as ominous and they are thrown alive immediately

after the birth into the evil forest. Once Nwoye hears the infant twin crying form the evil forest and experience his first spiritual breakdown. The new religion of church offers the solace to his wounded spirit. He disowns his family and father Okonkwo and embraces the new religion.

Ekwefi: She is Okonkwo's second wife. She is the village beauty who falls in love with Okonkwo during the wrestle match. She leaves her husband comes to Okonkwo's hut. She has one daughter. She is good friend with Chielo, the priestess of the goddess Agbala.

Ezinma: She is the only child of Okonkwo's second wife, Ekwefi. She is the apple of eye to Okonkwo and Ekwefi. Ekwefi and Okonkwo have different reasons to love Ezinma. Ekwefi has given birth to ten chidren who died as infants. Ekwefi is the only child to survive. So, Ezinma is Ekwefi's life. Okonkwo see the masculine spirit in Ezinma and like her for that. He always wishes Ezinma could have been son. Ezinma grows up to be a beautiful daughter of Okonkwo. She also bears the family responsible as any son would do. She understands Okonkwo's plans and ambition and waits to get married until Okonkwo return from exile.

She plays key role in getting the bail of Okonkwo when he is imprisoned by the commissioner.

Ikemefuna: The unfortunate boy of the novel. Fifteen year old Ikemefuna is given as compensation to Okonkwo's clan. The elders of the village give to the care of Okonkwo.

Okonkwo's first wife and mother of Nwoye loves the boy like her own son which helps Ikemefuna to recover from homesickness. He soon becomes the centre of love to the entire family of Okonkwo. The other children of Okonkwo love and respect like their elder brother.

Of all the children Nwoye loves and admires the Ikemefuna the most. Ikemefuna is brave, strong and creative. All these qualities inspire Nwoye. Ikemefuna is the right male example to Nwoye which Okokwo with his rude masculity fails to become. Okonkwo also begins to truly love Ikemefuna like his own son. Ikemefuna begins to address Okonkwo as father. The day has come when Ikemefuna has to be sacrificed. Okonkwo is asked to stay away from the sacrifice. But Okonkwo who hates to show weakness of fatherly affection participates in the sacrifice and sacrifices the boy with his own hands

Mr. Brown: He is the first white missionary to travel to Umuofia. Mr. Brown institutes a policy of tolerance and compassion between church and the clansmen. He befriends many clan elders. He builds school and hospital in Umuofia. He even becomes friends with prominent clansmen and builds a school and a hospital in Umuofia.

Reverend James Smith: He comes to replace Mr. Brown. Unlike Mr. Brown, Reverend Smith is uncompromising and strict. He preaches his converts to reject all the native gods and goddesses and idol worship. With his encouragement the converts attack the egwugwua. This episode instigates the clansmen. He is the perfect example of colonial power.

Uchendu: He is the wise maternal uncle of Okonkwo. He is the younger brother of Okonkwo's mother. Uchendu warmly receives Okonkwo and his family when they travel to Mbanta for refuge. He counsels Okonkwo at crucial times. He motivates Okonkwo when the latter is in disappointment.

The District Commissioner: He is the prototypical racist colonialist authority in the white government in Nigeria. He tames the clansman with deception. He plans to work his experiences into an ethnographic study on local African tribes. He approaches his study with dehumanizing and reductive attitude toward race relations.

Obierika: The best friend of Okonkwo. He stands by Okonkwo in latter's worst days. He protects and sells Okonkwo's produce. He visits Okonkwo in exile and updates him about the developments in Umuofia. He is brave and reasonable person. He also question some of the inhuman practices in his culture. He lashes out the commissioner and blames him for the suicide of his great friend Okonkwo.

Enoch: Enoch is a fanatical convert to the Christian church in Umuofia. Mr. Brown has kept his aggression and zealotry in check. Mr. Reverend Smith encouraged him. He insults the traditional culture by ripping the mask off an egwugwu during an annual Ani ceremony. His action pollutes the atmosphere in Umuofia. It leads to fall of tradition and death of Okonkwo.

Ogbuefi Ezeudu: He is the messenger of Oracle. He is the oldest man in the village and one of the most important clan elders. Ogbuefi Ezeudu was a great warrior in his youth.

Chielo: She is the priestess in Umuofia who is dedicated to the Oracle of the goddess Agbala. Chielo is an old widow with two children. She is good friends with Ekwefi. She is fond of Ezinma, and calls her "my daughter."Once, she carries Ezinma on her back for miles in order to help purify her by appeasing the gods.

Akunna: He is the clan leader of Umuofia. Akunna and Mr. Brown peacefully discuss their religious beliefs. Akunna sympathy towards Mr. Brown helps the church to convert the clansmen

Nwakibie: He is the neighbor and a friend of Unako. He takes pity on Okoknkwo after his father's death and lends him 800 seed yam, twice the number for which Okonkwo asks. Thus, he is one of the reasons for success of Okonkwo.

Mr. Kiaga: He is the one of the first converts into Christianity in Mbanta. He strives to expand Christianity. He welcomes Osu the outcastes to convert. Nwoye takes Mr. Kiaga's help to take western Education.

Okagbue Uyanwa: He is a famous medicine man whom Okonkwo summons for help in dealing with Ezinma's health problems.

Maduka: He is Obierika's son. Maduka wins a wrestling contest at the age of fifteen mid-teens. Okonkwo wishes he had promising, manly sons like Maduka.

Obiageli: She is daughter of Okonkwo's first wife. Although Obiageli is close to Ezinma in age, Ezinma has a great deal of influence over her. She is beautiful. Okonkwo plans to arrange the weddings of Obiageli and Ezinma in a grand way after his exile.

Ojiugo: She is Okonkwo's third and youngest wife. She is the mother of Nkechi. Okonkwo commits transgression by beating Ojiugo during the Week of Peace.

10.5 QUESTIONS

1. How is Things Fall Apart a Classic Tragedy?
2. Critically argue Okonkwo as a tragic hero?
3. What are the twin tragedies in *Things Fall Apart*?
4. Critically discuss the cultural conflict in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.
5. Critically comment on the gender politics in Things Fall Apart.
6. Discuss the significance of title Things Fall Apart.

10.6 SUGGESTION TO FOLLOW THE MATERIAL

- Add the introduction of author and introduction about the novel from the lesson 3.1 in every answer

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LESSON-11
WOLE SOYINKA
(A NIGERIAN AUTHOR)

OBJECTIVES

The aim of the lesson is to know the biography of Wole Soyinka, a Nigerian writer and a noble prize winner. The main objective of the lesson is to acquaint his native Nigeria and the Yoruba culture, with is legends, tales, and traditions.

STRUCTURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Some writers are driven by their imagination to write fiction or fantasy. Other writers, like Wole Soyinka, write because they are driven to make a statement about their culture or circumstances.Wole Soyinka is a Nigerian writer whose plays, books, and poems capture his cultural traditions, are frequently autobiographical, and use language that is rich and visual.

Wole Soyinka was born in Abeokuta, Nigeria. His father was a priest in the Anglican Church and principal of a school. His mother owned a store and was active within the women's liberation movement. His family belongs to the Yoruba people, whose culture has influenced Soyinka's works. After studying in Nigeria and the UK, Soyinka worked at a theatre in London. His pointed criticism of Nigerian political regimes has contributed to his living mostly abroad, primarily in the US, where he has held professorships at several universities. Soyinka has six children. Wole Soyinka is best known as a playwright.

Alongside his literary career, he has also worked as an actor and in theaters in Nigeria and Great Britain. His works also include poetry, novels, and essays. Soyinka writes in English, but his works are rooted in his native Nigeria and the Yoruba culture, with its legends, tales, and traditions. His writing also includes influences from Western traditions from classical tragedies to modernist drama.

Soyinka knew that there would be a power vacuum in the country after it obtained independence and that the Nigerian political elite were just as capable of negatively affecting the new nation as the foreign invaders of the past. The play and its central message angered the political establishment, and the new Nigerian government deemed the publication and performance of *A Dance of the Forests* an act of rebellion.

This reaction is understandable from the elite's point of view, since the play portrayed the Nigerian politicians at the time as corrupt, greedy, and inept. However, this portrayal is

considered by many African historians to have been fairly accurate. Soyinka portrayed the government as aimless and disorganized. He depicted the politicians as more concerned with fighting each other for power and wealth than trying to improve the country.

Soyinka was aware that the colonial powers had made sure that the Nigerian political arena was divided, so that if and when the colonial powers lost control of Nigeria, the local politicians would struggle to unite the country, allowing the colonials powers to continue taking economic and political advantage of Nigeria. These were the same tactics of division and diversion that allowed the colonialists to control and govern Nigeria in the first place.

Soyinka's criticism of imperialism in Nigeria and other African nations was the prelude for articulating his vision of a new Africa. Soyinka proposed solidarity, or what could be called Pan-Africanism, and advocated for the implementation of a pure form of democracy.

3.2 SUMMARY

Wole Soyinka, in full **Akinwande Oluwole Soyinka**, (born July 13, 1934, Abeokuta, Nigeria), Nigerian playwright and political activist who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986. He sometimes wrote of modern West Africa in a satirical style, but his serious intent and his belief in the evils inherent in the exercise of power were usually evident in his work as well.

A member of the Yoruba people, Soyinka attended Government College and University College in Ibadan before graduating in 1958 with a degree in English from the University of Leeds in England. Upon his return to Nigeria, he founded an acting company and wrote his first important play, A Dance of the Forests (produced 1960; published 1963), for the Nigerian independence celebrations. The play satirizes the fledgling nation by stripping it of romantic legend and by showing that the present is no more a golden age than was the past.

He wrote several plays in a lighter vein, making fun of pompous, Westernized schoolteachers in *The Lion and the Jewel* (first performed in Ibadan, 1959; published 1963) and mocking the clever preachers of upstart prayer-churches who grow fat on the credulity of their parishioners in *The Trials of Brother Jero* (performed 1960; published 1963) and *Jero's Metamorphosis* (1973). But his more serious plays, such as *The Strong Breed* (1963), *Kongi's Harvest* (opened the first Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, 1966; published 1967), *The Road* (1965), *From Zia, with Love* (1992), and even the parody *King Baabu* (performed 2001; published 2002), reveal his disregard for African authoritarian leadership and his disillusionment with Nigerian society as a whole.

Other notable plays included *Madmen and Specialists* (performed 1970; published 1971), *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975), and *The Beatification of Area Boy* (1995). In these and Soyinka's other dramas, Western elements are skillfully fused with subject matter and dramatic techniques deeply rooted in Yoruba folklore and religion. Symbolism, flashback, and ingenious plotting contribute to a rich dramatic structure. His best works exhibit humour and fine poetic style as well as a gift for irony and satire and for accurately matching the language of his complex characters to their social position and moral qualities.

From 1960 to 1964 Soyinka was co-editor of Black Orpheus, an important literary journal. From 1960 onward he taught literature and drama and headed theatre groups at various Nigerian universities, including those of Ibadan, Ife, and Lagos. After winning the Nobel Prize, he also was sought after as a lecturer, and many of his lectures were published notably the Reith Lectures of 2004, as *Climate of Fear* (2004).

Though he considered himself primarily a playwright, Soyinka also wrote the novels *The Interpreters* (1965), *Season of Anomy* (1973), and *Chronicles from the Land of the Happiest People on Earth* (2021), the latter of which drew particular praise for its satirical take on corruption in Nigeria. His several volumes of poetry included *Idanre, and Other Poems* (1967) and *Poems from Prison* (1969; republished as *A Shuttle in the Crypt*, 1972), published together as *Early Poems* (1998); *Mandela's Earth and Other Poems* (1988); and *Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known* (2002). His verse is characterized by a precise command of language and a mastery of lyric, dramatic, and meditative poetic forms.

He wrote a good deal of *Poems from Prison* while he was jailed in 1967–69 for speaking out against the war brought on by the attempted secession of Biafra from Nigeria. *The Man Died* (1972) is his prose account of his arrest and 22-month imprisonment.

Soyinka's principal critical work is *Myth, Literature, and the African World* (1976), a collection of essays in which he examines the role of the artist in the light of Yoruba mythology and symbolism. *Art, Dialogue, and Outrage* (1988) is a work on similar themes of art, culture, and society. He continued to address Africa's ills and Western responsibility in *The Open Sore of a Continent* (1996) and *The Burden of Memory, the Muse of Forgiveness* (1999).

Born in Nigeria in 1934, Wole Soyinka lived on a mission compound where he learned the Christian ways of his parents and the Yoruba ways of his paternal grandfather.

The culture and language of the Yoruba is the basis for much of Soyinka's writing. These cultures played a large role in the work that would be the mainstay of his social and political voice.

He was educated in his primary years in the British system, and later at the University of Leeds, where he graduated with a degree in English. He was an excellent student, and became the editor of the school's magazine, The Eagle.

Soyinka spent some years in England working as a dramatist at the Royal Court Theater in London and wrote plays that opened to audiences in England and in Nigeria. In 1960, he returned to Nigeria, and taught drama and literature in universities in Lagos, Ibadan, and Ife.

He wrote, produced, and acted in plays and founded two theater groups, The 1960 Masks and Orisun Theatre Company. His voice grew stronger and stronger as he spoke out against the politics of Nigeria. He has worked as a visiting professor at universities around the world, including Yale, Cambridge, and Sheffield.

Soyinka was vocal about his dislike of Nigerian politics, and was willing to put it all on the line to fight oppression and tyranny. During the Nigerian Civil War in the 1960's, he

was arrested and incarcerated for twenty-two months as a result of an article he wrote demanding a cease-fire.

While behind bars he wrote The Man Died: Prison Notes. It's a memoir about his time in solitary confinement, which was the direct result of his speaking out against Yakuba Gowon, the head of state at the time.

Soyinka won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986; the first one given to an African. Shortly after, he was given the honorary title of Commander of the Federal Republic.

In 1996, during a period of self-exile, he wrote The Open Sore of a Continent: A Personal Narrative of the Nigerian Crisis, which angered military government leader General Sani Abacha because it exposed his selfish, greedy practices.

While in exile, Wole Soyinka was convicted and given a death sentence for his anti-military activities. Only after Abacha died in 1998 and was replaced by a more forward-thinking successor did Soyinka choose to return to Nigeria.

Justice, oppression, freedom, and social responsibility are all recurring themes in Soyinka's writing. He uses his writing as a vehicle for social change, with little or no concern for the impact it might have on his wellbeing.

Soyinka's first novel, The Interpreters came out in 1965 and is a story seen through the eyes of recent university graduates who have come back to Nigeria to play a role in the evolution of a newly independent country. Soyinka's writing is sensitive and vivid. He captures the characters as they struggle to become a part of the new Nigeria.

In 1973 Soyinka wrote Season of Anomy, which was derived from experiences he had in prison. It introduces the use of vivid details and myth and offers an engaging, realistic look at ritual. The novel attempts to make sense of the upheaval that was the status quo and represents an attempt to achieve wholeness of community, something that was clearly lacking.

In 1975, General Gowon was deposed, and Soyinka felt confident enough to return to Nigeria, where he became Professor of Comparative Literature and head of the Department of Dramatic Arts at the University of Ife. He published a new poetry collection, *Ogun Abibiman*, and a collection of essays, *Myth, Literature and the African World*, a comparative study of the roles of mythology and spirituality in the literary cultures of Africa and Europe. His continuing interest in international drama was reflected in a new work, inspired by John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and Bertolt Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*. Soyinka called his musical allegory of crime and political corruption *Opera Wonyosi*. He created a new theatrical troupe, the Guerilla Unit, to perform improvised plays on topical themes.

As dramatist, Soyinka has been influenced by, among others, the Irish writer, J.M. Synge, but links up with the traditional popular African theatre with its combination of dance, music, and action. He bases his writing on the mythology of his own tribe the Yoruba with Ogun, the god of iron and war, at the centre.

At the turn of the decade, Wole Soyinka's creativity was expanding in all directions. In 1981, he published the first of several volumes of autobiography, *Ake: The Years of*

Childhood. In the early 1980s, he wrote two of his best-known plays, *Requiem for a Futurologist* and *A Play of Giants*, satirizing the new dictators of Africa. In 1984, he also directed the film *Blues for a Prodigal*. For years, Soyinka had written songs. In the 1980s, Nigerian music, including that of Soyinka's cousin, the flamboyant bandleader Fela Ransome-Kuti, was capturing the attention of listeners around the world. In 1984, Soyinka released an album of his own music entitled *I Love My Country*, with an assembly of musicians he called The Unlimited Liability Company.

Soyinka also played a prominent role in Nigerian civil society. As a faculty member at the University of Ife, he led a campaign for road safety, organizing a civilian traffic authority to reduce the shocking rate of traffic fatalities on the public highways. His program became a model of traffic safety for other states in Nigeria, but events soon brought him into conflict with the national authorities. The elected government of President Shehu Shagari, which Soyinka and others regarded as corrupt and incompetent, was overthrown by the military, and General Muhammadu Buhari became Head of State. In an ominous sign, Soyinka's prison memoir, *A Man Died,* was banned from publication.

Although presidential elections were held in Nigeria in 2007, Soyinka denounced them as illegitimate due to ballot fraud and widespread violence on Election Day. Wole Soyinka continues to write and remains an uncompromising critic of corruption and oppression wherever he finds them.

He is among the exceptional class of writers that have made an overwhelming impact in the development of African literature. Awarded the 1986 Nobel Prize in Literature, where he was recognized as a man "who in a wide cultural perspective and with poetic overtones fashions the drama of existence", and became the first African in Africa and in Diaspora to be so honoured, Wole has continued to prove the point that African literature was indeed a unique inheritance and priceless inheritance of the African people; which stood at a unique and strategic place in the class of world literatures.

As was put by Ernest Emenyonu, a Professor of Africana Studies at the University of Michigan-Flint, USA, with the Nobel Prize in Literature, Wole Soyinka became the first African to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, and opened the 'gate' for other African writers to the extent that by the close of the 20th century, African Literature had gained world-wide acceptance and legitimacy in the academy and featured on the literature curriculum of schools and colleges across the globe. In the words of another writer, Nigerian (African) literature was born in earnest with the award of Nobel Prize in literature to Wole Soyinka in 1986; which thus implies according to him, that Soyinka, often referred to as the Bringer of Light to African Literatures, has put Nigerian and indeed African literature on the world map.

Due to the fact that his style and command of language is inimitable, it seems and indeed evident that another Wole Soyinka has to be born ere we find a person in his shoes.

Many opinions from the academic and non-academic circles are hoping that the Nobel Prize Committee for Literature may decide in the future to award Nobel Prize twice to a valiant and multi-talented writer/political activist like Wole Soyinka. Like Booker Prize, that will be a precedent, if it happens.

To further give African literature a strong and firm rooting, under the aegis of African Heritage Research Library and Cultural Centre, a writers' enclave has been built in honor of

Professor Wole Soyinka in Adeyipo Village, Lagelu Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The main objectives of the Enclave, amongst others, are:To promote African and World Literatures.To provide a conducive atmosphere for the improvement of writers' craft.To increase world-wide knowledge and appreciation of African literatures.To raise the standard of African literature toward ensuring its active participation in cultural and national development.To initiate an endowment for a prestigious African Writers' Prize.

Also, the Wole Soyinka prize for literature in Africa – a pan African writing prize for books of any type or genre has been established by the Lumina Foundation in Honour of Africa's first Nobel laureate in literature. It is awarded every year and the winner receives some monetary encouragement. It honours Africa's great writers and causes their works to be appreciated. By so doing, most African writers, especially those faced with financial constraints are further encouraged in their literary militancy.

Bottom of Form all in all, it is evident from the foregoing and indeed other evidences that the duo of Profs Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka has been in no small measure, of immense help in the development of modern African literature. It is therefore hoped that the younger generations will build upon their efforts to ensure that African literature is taken to its peak.

Legacy and honours

The Wole Soyinka Annual Lecture Series was founded in 1994 and "is dedicated to honouring one of Nigeria and Africa's most outstanding and enduring literary icons: Professor Wole Soyinka". It is organised by the National Association of Seadogs (Pyrates Confraternity), which organisation Soyinka with six other students founded in 1952 at the then University College Ibadan.

In 2011, the African Heritage Research Library and Cultural Centre built a writers' enclave in his honour. It is located in Adeyipo Village, Lagelu Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.The enclave includes a Writer-in-Residence Programme that enables writers to stay for a period of two, three or six months, engaging in serious creative writing. In 2013, he visited the Benin Moat as the representative of UNESCO in recognition of the Naija seven Wonders project.He is currently the consultant for the Lagos Black Heritage Festival, with the Lagos State deeming him as the only person who could bring out the aims and objectives of the Festival to the people.He was appointed a patron of Humanists UK in 2020.

In 2014, the collection *Crucible of the Ages: Essays in Honour of Wole Soyinka at 80*, edited by Ivor Agyeman-Duah and Ogochwuku Promise, was published by Bookcraft in Nigeria and Ayebia Clarke Publishing in the UK, with tributes and contributions from Nadine Gordimer, Toni Morrison, Ama Ata Aidoo, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Henry Louis Gates, Jr, Margaret Busby, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Ali Mazrui, Sefi Atta, and others.

In 2018, Henry Louis Gates, Jr tweeted that Nigerian filmmaker and writer Onyeka Nwelue visited him in Harvard and was making a documentary film on Wole Soyinka. As part of efforts to mark his 84th birthday, a collection of poems titled *84 Delicious Bottles of Wine* was published for Wole Soyinka, edited by Onyeka Nwelue and Odega Shawa. Among the notable contributors was Adamu Usman Garko, award-winning teenage essayist, poet and writer.

His honors and awards are:

1973: Honorary D.Litt., University of Leeds, 1973–74: Overseas Fellow, Churchill College, Cambridge,

1983: Elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature,

1983: Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, United States,

1986: Nobel Prize for Literature,

1986: AgipPrize for Literature,

1986: Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic (CFR).,

1990: Benson Medal from Royal Society of Literature,

1993: Honorary doctorate, Harvard University,

2002: Honorary fellowship, SOAS,

2005: Honorary doctorate degree, Princeton University,

2005: Enstooled as the Akinlatun of Egbaland, a Nigerian chief, by the Oba Alake of the Egba clan of Yorubaland. Soyinka became a tribal aristocrat by way of this, one vested with the right to use the Yoruba title Oloye as a pre-nominal honorific,

2009: Golden Plate Award of the American Academy of Achievement presented by Awards Council member Archbishop Desmond Tutu at an awards ceremony at St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town, South Africa,

2013: Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, Lifetime Achievement, United States,

2014: International Humanist Award,

2017: Joins the University of Johannesburg, South Africa, as a Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Faculty of Humanities,

2017: "Special Prize" of the Europe Theatre Prize,

2018: University of Ibadan renamed its arts theater to Wole Soyinka Theatre.

2018: Honorary Doctorate Degree of Letters, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB),

2022: Honorary Degree from Cambridge University: This is a degree that is bestowed upon people who have made outstanding achievements in their respective fields.

Europe Theatre Prize

In 2017, he received the Special Prize of the Europe Theatre Prize, in Rome.The Prize organization stated:

A Special Prize is awarded to Wole Soyinka, writer, playwright and poet, Nobel Prize for literature in 1986, who with his work has been able to create an ideal bridge between Europe and Africa With his art and his commitment, Wole Soyinka has contributed to a renewal of African cultural life, participating actively in the dialogue between Africa and Europe, touching on more and more urgent political themes and bringing, in English, richness and beauty to literature, theatre and action in Europe and the four corners of the world.

Works

His Plays are Keffi's Birthday Treat (1954), The Invention (1957), The Swamp Dwellers (1958), A Quality of Violence (1959), The Lion and the Jewel (1959), The Trials of

Brother Jero (1960), A Dance of the Forests (1960), My Father's Burden (1960), The Strong Breed (1964), Before the Blackout (1964), Kongi's Harvest (1964), The Road (1965).

Madmen and Specialists (1970), The Bacchae of Euripides (1973), Camwood on the Leaves (1973), Jero's Metamorphosis (1973), Death and the King's Horseman (1975), Opera Wonyosi (1977), Requiem for a Futurologist (1983), A Play of Giants (1984), Childe Internationale (1987), From Zia with Love (1992), The Detainee (radio play), A Scourge of Hyacinths (radio play), The Beatification of Area Boy (1996), Document of Identity (radio play, 1999), King Baabu (2001), Etiki Revu Wetin, Alapata Apata (2011) and "Thus Spake Orunmila" (in Sixty-Six Books (2011).

His Novels are The Interpreters (1965), Season of Anomy (1973), Chronicles from the Land of the Happiest People on Earth (Bookcraft, Nigeria; Bloomsbury, UK; Pantheon, US, 2021).

His Short stories are A Tale of Two (1958), Egbe's Sworn Enemy (1960) and Madame Etienne's Establishment (1960).

Memoirs are The Man Died: Prison Notes (1972), Ake: The Years of Childhood (1981), Ibadan: The Penkelemes Years: a memoir 1945–1965 (1989), Ìsarà: A Voyage around Essay (1989) and You Must Set Forth at Dawn (2006).

His Poetry collections are Telephone Conversation (1963) (appeared in Modern Poetry in Africa), Idanre and other poems (1967), A Big Airplane Crashed into The Earth (original title Poems from Prison) (1969), A Shuttle in the Crypt (1971), Ogun Abibiman (1976), Mandela's Earth and other poems (1988), Early Poems (1997) and Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known (2002)

His Essays are "Towards a True Theater" (1962), Culture in Transition (1963), Neo-Tarzanism: The Poetics of Pseudo-Transition, A Voice That Would Not Be Silenced, Art, Dialogue, and Outrage: Essays on Literature and Culture (1988), From Drama and the African World View (1976) , Myth, Literature, and the African World (1976), The Blackman and the Veil (1990), The Credo of Being and Nothingness (1991), The Burden of Memory The Muse of Forgiveness (1999), A Climate of Fear (the BBC Reith Lectures 2004, audio and transcripts), New Imperialism (2009), Of Africa (2012) and Beyond Aesthetics: Use, Abuse, and Dissonance in African Art Traditions (2019).

Films are Kongi's Harvest, Culture in Transition and Blues for a Prodigal.

His Translations are The Forest of a Thousand Demons: A Hunter’s Saga (1968; a translation of D. O. Fagunwa's ÒgbójúỌdẹ́nínúIgbóIrúnmalẹ̀) and In the Forest of Olodumare (2010; a translation of D. O. Fagunwa's Igbo Olodumare).

3.3 POST COLONIAL SPACE: A DANCE OF THE FORESTS

Post-Colonial Dilemma of Criminality of Africans, The Post-colonial African nation deals with the issues of criminality in the present and contemporary. Many Africans still faces the issue of being labelled as criminals today which has become a stereotyping in the post-colonial world for Africa. Soyinka traces back to the pre-colonial times where Africa as

a nation has an inglorious past. The story of Mata Kharibu and the Soldier (Dead Man) gives insight into the issue of African criminality which existed even before the colonial era.

Soyinka is trying to remind the fellow Africans regarding their issues of past which is pessimistic for the present as the criminals really existed within the society and Mata Kharibu is among them as well as Madame Tortoise (Rola at present). They represent criminals from the past before the colonial era where Kharibu castrated the poor Soldier and even sold him as a slave. These issues still continue even today at the post-colonial Africa and Soyinka has tried to establish the criminality regarding the fellow Africans which arises out of their inglorious past and the issues still exist today in the post-colonial Africa.

Political and Social Issues of Past– The political and social issues of the Africans in the post-colonial world faces corruption and ethnic rivalry. Soyinka traces back the political issues of corruption since the pre-colonial times of Mata Kharibu where corruption exists in morality and it is still prevalent in the present where Adenebi who is engaged with corruption who do bribery and is responsible for the mass killing of the people who were traveling in a lorry. His action reflects the same overall corruption of politics from the past till the present.

The ethnic rivalry is also the most common issue of post-colonial Africa. Soyinka projects that the ethnic rivalry exists among the kingdoms and it is seen subtly where Madame Tortoise was kidnapped by Mata Kharibu from another kingdom and decides to wage a war against their own kingdom reflecting the ethnic rivalry. Soyinka's post-colonial stance is evident where he institutes ethnic rivalry as something that had existed pre-colonial times including slavery. Slavery has also been subtly experienced in the play where the coloniser is Mara Kharibu colonised his own military named Dead Man subjugating his subaltern position, castrates him and sold him as a slave. This narrative is pessimistic in a sense that it is ironical since the depiction merely arrives not out of European colonial regime but of the native's own colonial regime. Soyinka could be hinting at the idea that internal colonialism existed in Africa since the pre-colonial times and he wants the fellow Africans to understand the internalised form of colonial mindset they have absorbed in their mindsets.

Modernity as a Disguise of Civilization and Nurture– Soyinka has presented modernity in his plays that has a post-colonial implication. Some scholars debate that modernity has to do with western civilisation that is severely criticised by many post-colonial writers and dramatists. In the play, the characters embraces or attach themselves to modernity in the name of civilisation and progress but Soyinka projects it in an ironical manner where modern tradition leads to a pessimistic society. Though the post-colonial world has no colonisers to civilise and nurture the natives yet the perspectives remain similar where modernity plays a different role in the same attribute to colonial civilisation and progress.

Modernity is criticised by Soyinka in the play ans he exposes the corruption of the people in social , political and economic spaces.

Ambivalent – Ambivalent is a post-colonial experience and many concepts and terms of the theory is based on the colonized experiences. Though the experiences in the play does not arise out of colonial power yet the perspective of postcolonial experience aligns itself with the term post-colonial or used interchangeably. The play also projects a sense of ambivalent relationship which is evident among the characters. Demoke shows an ambivalent relationship with his own traditional culture. He is torn between embracing modernity and the acceptance of his own culture. With his own culture or the society as a whole. However,

when Obaneji states that "people refuse to acknowledge them" shows Soyinka's development of ambivalent about the Africans who have failed to accept their own cultural roots in the post -colonial world. Rola and Adenebi at present as well detach away from their traditional roots while engaging in corruption as well as immoral behaviour that contradicts the Yoruba values and tradition. These characters embrace modernity rather than their own roots failing to accept at present.

Hybridity – Hybridity is another essence of the post-colonial aspect. The play shows the hybridity of Western literature and also shows the influences of Greek Chorus as reflected in the Chorus of the Half-Child. Soyinka might have been influenced by Shakespeare's The Tempest which is also known for postcolonial elements and uses deus ex machina which occurs at the end of the play where Prospero gives resolution to all human dilemmas. It is similitude to Aroni's giving resolution to all three human characters at the end of the play.

The element of play within a play is also a western influence of Shakespeare's Hamlet and Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy where Soyinka inputs play within a play to show the social and political issues of Africans. Critically, the element of Western influence is used to show the experiences of Africans about their inglorious past. The another instance of hybridity is the similar archetypal experience that the play may have taken from Homer's "The Iliad". His epic focuses on the Trojan war where the war is waged between Greeks and people of Troy after the abduction of Queen Helen. Similarly, one can observe in the play where Rola is abducted by Mata Kharibu from another tribe and he decides to wage a war against the another tribe. This scene clearly depicts the Greek famous Trojan War where Rola represents Queen of Helen and the war is being waged because of her. Soyinka inputs it as a similar flow of archetype in his play to justify the ethnic rivalry that exist among the tribe in the African society as well as institute the hybrid space in his theatrical writing.

3.4 TECHNICAL WORDS/KEY WORDS

- **Nigeria:** Nigeria, an African country on the Gulf of Guinea, has many natural landmarks and wildlife reserves.
- **Political regime:** In politics, a regime (also "régime") is the form of government or the set of rules, cultural or social norms, etc. that regulate the operation of a government or institution and its interactions with society.
- **Anglican church:** the Church of England and those churches that are in communion with it and each other and that share essentially its doctrines and order, as the Church of Ireland, the Episcopal Church of Scotland, the Church of Wales, and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.
- **Yoruba:** The Yoruba were the dominant cultural force in southern and northwestern Nigeria as far back as the 11th century.
- **Africa:** Africa is the world's second-largest and second-most populous continent, after Asia in both aspects. At about 30.3 million km² including adjacent islands, it covers 20% of Earth's land area and 6% of its total surface area. With 1.4 billion people as of 2021, it accounts for about 18% of the world's human population.

3.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Write an essay on Wole Soyinka's life and works?
2. Write a short note on Yoruba culture in Africa?

3. Write Wole Soyinka's legacy and honors in African literature?
4. What is the contribution of Wole Soyinka in the African literature?
5. Write an essay on Post colonial space in A Dance of the Forests?

3.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Dr. K. Narasimha Rao

LESSON 12
A DANCE OF FORESTS
BY WOLE SOYINKA

OBJECTIVES

The aim of the play warns to the people of Nigeria that if they do not remain alert, history will repeat itself and people would repeat their mistakes. The main objective of the play satirizes the fledgling nation by stripping it of romantic legend and by showing that the present is no more a golden age than was the past.

STRUCTURE

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Wole Soyinka is a Nigerian playwright, essayist, poet, and novelist, known for making work about Africa from a distinctly African perspective. His work often includes a critique of European colonialism, and he seamlessly blends African creative traditions, mythology, and symbolism with more Western theatrical tropes in his work. He has been celebrated throughout his career for his unique perspective, his political critique (specifically of Nigerian dictatorship and government) and his poetic language.

Born in 1934 in Nigeria, Soyinka was close with both his parents, who were English speakers, and his grandfather, who was influential in teaching him about Yoruba culture. He underwent traditional Yoruba initiation rites when he came of age, before then going to college for a Western education at the University of Leeds. This unique blend of traditional upbringing with Western education is an important part of Soyinka's work. After deciding to stay in England to work as a play reader at the Royal Court Theater, he began to write plays of his own.

After returning to Nigeria in 1960, Soyinka taught and wrote more plays, many of which had a political message of breaking from European culture in order to embrace the authenticity of African heritage. There, he became more politically involved, and was even imprisoned for 2 years in 1967 for helping rebel forces in Nigeria in procuring military aircraft.

In 1986, Soyinka was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature. He has had a tempestuous relationship with Nigeria, having been exiled and let back into the country several times throughout his life. His plays include *Death and the King's Horseman, Dance of the Forests,* and *The Swamp Dwellers,* among others.

A Dance of the Forests is one of Wole Soyinka's best-known plays and was commissioned as part of a larger celebration of Nigerian independence. It was a polarizing play that made many Nigerians angry at the time of its production, specifically because of its indictment of political corruption in the country.

After having gone to university in England, Soyinka returned to Nigeria to write this play in 1959, submerging himself in Yoruba folklore as a way of reconnecting with his homeland. The play is about a group of mortals who invoke the spirits of the dead, hoping that these wiser spirits will help to guide them, but disappointed to discover that the spirits are just as petty and flawed as they are.

The play has been interpreted by many as a cautionary tale for the Nigerian people on the occasion of their newfound independence, to remind them to be critical and seeking, and warning against becoming complacent. It also provides a metaphor for not sentimentalizing pre-colonial Africa too much and remaining vigilant. When Soyinka won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986, *A Dance of the Forests* was named as one of his crowning achievements, and he was named "one of the finest poetical playwrights that have written in English."

12.2 CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY "A DANCE OF THE FORESTS"

Dead Man
The Dead Man was a soldier in a former life who was castrated for his unwillingness to go to war against a neighbouring tribe. He took issue with the motives for going to war and so refused to participate. He was sold to a slave-dealer and eventually killed. During the time of the play, he has been brought back to life by Aroni to settle the unfinished business of his ill-fated death.

Dead Woman
The Dead Woman was pregnant with the Dead Man's child when she attempted to plead for her husband's life in the court of Mata Kharibu. Her plea was rejected and she and her husband were killed.

Forest Head
Forest Head is a god who attempts to have the four characters who tortured the Dead Man and Dead Woman in a past life remember their sins and atone for them.

Rola
Rola is a prostitute, who was once Madame Tortoise in a past life, and queen to Mata Kharibu. She was known for driving men to madness and is the reason the Dead Man/Soldier was castrated and his wife killed.

Demoke
Demoke is a carver who was once a poet in a past life. While carving an araba tree he pushed his apprentice, Oremole, from the tree to his death. The Forest Head wants him to see the sin he has committed and atone for it.

Adenebi
Adenebi was a court historian for Mata Kharibu who accepts a bribe from a slave trader to sell the Soldier as a slave, even wrongfully stating that the ship he will travel in is not tortuous.

Agboreko
Agboreko is the Elder of Sealed Lips. In a former life, he was a soothsayer in the court of Mata Kharibu and predicted that the stars did not favor a victory for the king if he chose to go to war.

Eshuoro
Eshuoro is a wayward spirit who is seeking vengeance for the death of Oremole. He seeks Demoke as Oremole's murderer and is vengeful and spiteful throughout the play.

12.3 SUMMARY

A Dance of the Forests, by the literal implications of the name, hints upon “dance” as the sense of celebrating the spirit of life, and carries out an exegesis into the native African culture and tradition by employing the word “forests” within the title.

The play begins with a Dead Man and a Dead Woman breaking free from their burial in the soil in the middle of a forest. They ask those that pass by to "take their case." The Man and Woman were a captain and his wife in a past life and were tortured and killed by an Emperor by the name of Mata Kharibu and his Queen, nicknamed Madame Tortoise.

The Dead Man and his wife have come to the Gathering of the Tribes, and were sent here by Aroni, a god, with permission from the Forest Head, in place of the forefathers that the living have requested to join them.

Four characters come through the forest initially: Rola, a prostitute, once known as Madame Tortoise and a queen from the previous life; Adenebi, a court historian in the time of the Emperor Mata Kharibu, now a council orator; Agboreko, who was a soothsayer to Mata Kharibu in a past life and plays the same role in this life; and finally, Demoke, who is now a carver but was once a poet in the court. Aroni has selected these four in order for them to gain knowledge about their past lives and to atone for their sins.

Another character, Obaneji, is actually the Forest Head disguised in human form. He invites the characters to join in a welcome dance for the Dead Man and Woman. Eshuoro, a wayward spirit seeking vengeance for the death of Oremole, Demoke's apprentice, comes and interrupts the proceedings. He claims that Demoke killed him by pulling him off the top of an araba tree they were carving, which caused him to fall to his death. Ogun, the god of carvers, stands up for Demoke against Eshuoro's claim. We learn that Demoke encouraged the cutting of the araba tree, and also that there was a great fire in which 65 of 70 people were killed.

As the play moves forward we are taken back in time into the court of Mata Kharibu, where we learn that the Dead Man was a soldier who led Karibu's men. The soldier refuses to go to war against another tribe because Kharibu has taken the tribe leader's wife, Madame Tortoise.

All of the characters from the earlier part of the play (but from later in time) are seen as the court counselors of Kharibu. They do not help the soldier, who is castrated and given to a slave dealer. The scene ends as the soldier's wife comes in, pregnant. It is left up to the audience to determine how she is killed.

The forests are then smoked out by humans with a petrol truck. The Forest Head says that he must "pierce the encrustations of soul-deadening habit, and bare the mirror of original nakedness." He exits knowing that he is alone in his fight. Demoke is led to climb up a totem he built by Eshuoro, who lights the totem on fire. Demoke falls and joins his father and the other mortals and they discuss what they have learned.

12.4 THEMES OF THE PLAY

Atonement
Atonement is a major theme of the play. The Dead Man and Dead Woman are brought back to the land of the living so that the four mortals who mistreated them in the past will recognize their former sins and atone. While the mortals spend a great deal of the play unaware of this, they eventually realize that the purpose of the Dead Man and Dead Woman's visitation is to teach them a lesson, and by the end, they go through a kind of conversion, understanding that they have sinned before.

Corrupted Power
Corrupted power is another major theme in the play, particularly as it represented in the characters of Mata Kharibu and Madame Tortoise. As we are taken back to the palace of the king, we see that Madame Tortoise exploits her beauty and her power over men in order to stir up discord. Mata Kharibu is also corrupted by his immense power, as demonstrated by the fact that he is demanding that his soldiers fight against their better judgment, and the fact that he mercilessly punishes free thinking. Wole Soyinka tells a story that reveals to the reader that all power is corruptible, and that just because people are given authority does not mean that they are good or ethical people.

Wounds & Trauma
The play depicts the ways that people carry around trauma and wounds from the past, that everyone has some sensitive part of their biography that haunts and hurts them. The Forest Head knows this and attempts to bring these wounds to light in hopes that those who have been hurt in the past can move on.

The Past
The play does not follow an exactly linear structure, in spite of the fact that it all takes place in the course of a day. As we learn rather quickly, the narrative concerns the sins of the past, and each mortal character has multiple identities, representing both who they are in the present as well as who they once were in the past. The present is layered onto the past as if to suggest that nothing from our history is ever fully gone, that we descend from patterns and events that precede us and continue to affect us in the present. The plot of the play concerns the ways that human beings must overcome their pasts and learn from them.

Nature
The play takes place in a forest, and throughout, various elements of the natural world come to life to take part in the reckoning that is taking place with the mortals. The Forest Head is a spirit who presides over the forest, and during the welcoming of the Dead Man and Dead Woman, various spirits of different natural elements are called upon to speak their piece.

These include Spirit of the Rivers, Spirit of the Palms, Spirits of the Volcanos, and others. All of these elements of nature are personified through verse, showing us the connection between the human and the natural world.

Birth

One of the unresolved features of the Dead Woman is the fact that she was killed while pregnant with a child. She returns to the world of the living still with a pregnant belly, and during the welcome ritual, the fetus appears as a Half-Child, who is caught between being influenced by the spirit world and remaining with his mother. The Half-Child is a tragic figure, as he was never given the relief of life, and when he is given a chance to speak- he says, "I who yet await a mother/Feel this dread/Feel this dread,/I who flee from womb/To branded womb cry it now/I'll be born dead/I'll be born dead." The figure of the child is a tragic one, standing in as the ultimate symbol for the wrongs done to the Dead Man and Dead Woman, and the unresolvedness of their plight.

Ritual

Another major theme, as well as a formal element of the play, is ritual and tradition. Throughout, we see the characters going through traditional motions in order to understand more about their circumstances. These rituals include the ceremony for the self-discovery of the mortals, in which the mortals must relive their crimes, the Dead Man and Dead Woman must be questioned, and the mortals revealing their secret wrongs.

Another ritual that gets performed is the Dance of Welcome, in which the spirits of the forest perform and deliver monologues. Then the Dance of the Half-Child determines with whom the unborn child will go. Often, rituals, dances, and formal representations stand in for literal events. Indeed, the entire play can be seen as a stringing together of the different formalized rituals that make up the narrative.

A Dance of the Forests 20th century Nigerian Theater

While performance modes undoubtedly predate the 20th century, Nigerian theater history is often traced back to the 1940s, during which time the Yoruba people created performances using mime, drumming, music and folklore. These traditions are some of the sources that Wole Soyinka used in writing *A Dance of the Forests*, incorporating many traditional styles into a more contemporary Western aesthetic.

Curiously enough, what is now thought of as "traditional" Nigerian performance took many cues from Christian doctrine and church practices, side effects of colonialism. Influential figures in early Nigerian theater, who all had traveling theater troupes, were Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola, and Duro Lapido, who each cultivated different distinctive modes of performance, ranging from profound tragedy to goofy satire.

After being educated in England, Wole Soyinka became determined to take his Western education and incorporate it into his playwriting, not as a way to side with the colonizer, but in an attempt to combat corruption in his country and give African identity back to itself. Throughout his career, he used the language of Nigerian theater as a way to critique the system and speak truth to power. He is quoted as once saying, "I think the Yoruba gods are truthful. Truthful in the sense that I consider religion and the construct of deities simply an extension of human qualities taken, if you like, to the ninth degree. I mistrust gods who become so separated from humanity that enormous crimes can be committed in their names. I prefer gods who can be brought down to earth and judged, if you like."

12.5 TECHNICAL WORDS/ KEY WORDS

- **Tortoise (noun)**: An animal similar to a large turtle, with a longer lifespan and living exclusively on land.
- **Araba tree (noun**): A type of tree found in Africa.
- **Carver (noun):**A person who carves wood, stone, or other materials professionally.
- **Canary (noun):**An African finch with a melodious song.
- **Reveler (noun):**A person enjoying themselves in a lively way.
- **Garb (noun):**Distinctive or specific clothing.
- **Flog (verb):** Beat someone with a whip or a stick.
- **Flea-bitten (adjective):**Sordid, shabby, or disreputable.
- **Cockerel (noun):**Young rooster.
- **Totem (noun):**Object or animal regarded as having spiritual significance and standing in as a symbolic emblem.
- **Razed (adjective):**Destroyed or torn down.
- **Stout (adjective):**Strong and thick, sturdy or fat.
- **Wallop (verb):**Violently strike someone or something.
- **Quarry (noun)**:A place from which stone or materials are extracted.
- **Proverb (noun):**A pithy statement that reveals a truth about existence.
- **Cicatrize (verb):**Heal through formation of a scar.
- **Sage (noun):**A wise man, a thinker.
- **Alloy (noun):**A metal made through combining two different elements, resulting in an even stronger metal.
- **Uncouth (adjective):**Lacking good manners, refinement, or grace.
- **Leprous (adjective)**: Suffering from leprosy, a skin disease

12.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Critically justify "A Dance of the Forest" by Wole Soyinka is a postcolonial play ?
2. Write a critical note on Wole Soyinka's dystopian vision of Nigerian society and culture as presented in "A Dance of the Forests."
3. What is the significance of the “Unborn Child” in the play?
4. What is the thematic pre-occupation of the play
5. What's the significance of double roles of certain characters in "A Dance of the Forests"?
6. In what ways has the play been interpreted as a political allegory?
7. How does Soyinka incorporate traditional modes of African theater into the play?

12.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Wole Soyinka. A Dance of the Forests. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
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LESSON 13
A GRAIN OF WHEAT

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the lesson is to help the learners to understand

- The literary contribution of Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o
- The literary innovation in Native literary churning.
- Significance of Gikuyu culture
- The Colonial and Post Colonial history of Kenya
- The plot of *A Grain of Wheat*

STRUCTURE

13.1 INTRODUCTION OF THE AUTHOR

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is a Kenyan author and academic reformist. He was born on 5 January 1938. He changed his name from James Ngugi to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. At the beginning of his career, he wrote in English. Later, he has written in Gikuyu language. He has written essays, short-stories, plays and novels. He is the founder and editor of the Gikuyu language journal Mũtĩiri. In 1977 he started the project to develop independent theatre in his native Kenya. This theatre is free from bourgeois education and encourages spontaneity and audience participation in the performance. His novel *Petals of Blood* and the play *I will Mary When I Want* have revolutionary political meanings which provoked then vice president Daniel Arap Moi who ordered Ngũgĩ's arrest. He was imprisoned for one year during which period he wrote his novel *Devil on the Cross* on the prison toilet Paper. At the age of 85 he works as a distinguished professor of Comparative Literature and English at the University of California, Irvine. In 2001, he won International Nonion Prize in Italy. His first novel is Weep Not Child (1964). His recent works are *Wrestling with the devil: A Prison Memoir* (2018) and a children book The Upright Revolution, Or Why Humans Walk Upright.

13.2 INTRODUCTION OF THE NOVEL

A Grain of Wheat is a historical novel. It was written by Kenyan novelist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. Ngũgĩ had written the novel when he was studying in Leeds University. It was first published in 1967 by Heinemann as part of Heinamann African Writers Series. The title was picked up from St.John Gospel. The line is 12:24 which reads that "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." In the Gospel, these lines are prologue to Jesus's death which is discussed from 12:27-36. The novel explores the lives which fell to death and buried in the silence of history to bloom into freedom. The novel unravels through unraveling of Mugo and his people's past.

13.3 SUMMARY

On a rainy morning a drops of rain water dripping from the roof wake up Mugo from a strange dream. He prepares morning breakfast porridge with the small quantity of maize-flour. The taste of porridge reminds of the porridge he had in his detention camp. He picks his tools and steps out of his hut to go and do farming on his strip of land. He meets Warui, the village elder while walking towards his farming land which is on the other end of the village, Thabai. , lying alone in his hut, deciding whether or not he should rise for the day.

Warui speaks about the coming Uhuru celebrations until Mugo excuses himself. At present Mugo grows his food on the land given to him by Warui as his own land was taken by the imperial government during his detention period. Since Warui mentioned about Uhuru, the independence celebrations Mugo goes into the mood of contemplation. He contemplates on the conditions of the country before and after the independence. He feels that conditions in Thabai are the same in 1963 like they were in 1955 when there was whiteman's rule. As Mugo continues to walk, he keeps head down as if he is ashamed to look into the eyes of his people. Githua, one legged man approaches Mugo addressing him as "Uhuru na Kazi", in the name of blackman's freedom. Mugo is strangely embraced and continues walking. He passes by an old woman, Mugo remembers her deaf son Gitogo who was shot dead by British Soldier. The deaf son could not hear the warning of the soldier to halt and ran desperately to protect his mother from shooting. Mugo feels that Gitogo's mother can see through his soul.

He desires to help her but does not know how to help. When Mugo has reached his farming land he does not have motivation to work. The land is filled with weed no crop. Mugo has not felt the motivation to work on his land since emergency.

Mugo returns home early. He is visited by Warui, Wambui and Gikonyo. Warui has dedicated his entire life to freedom Movement. He was part of the protest march in support of Harry Thuku. Brave lady Wambui has commited her entire life to Movement. She used to smuggle information and weapons to the freedom fighters through police check posts.

Gikonyo is a wealthiest man who married the most beautiful woman in the land. Fearful, Mugo is uneasy to receive these elders at home and he goes to "pit lavatory". Though he makes the visitors wait too long, the waiters are not angry. Then they say him that they have come as voice of the Movement on behalf of the Party. They have come to discuss with Mugo the preparations for uhuru celebrations. They express their common sentiment to commemorate Kihika on the day of Uhuru. Hearing Kihika's name Mugo panics. As they speak, General R. and Lt.Koina come and to Mugo's hut and join the conversation. General R. and Lt. Koina have spent last seven days in forest and fought for independence. General R. brings up the discussion about who might have betrayed Movement and Kihika on the night when he was arrested. He suspects it to be Karanja. He works for the white people. Because he knows for sure that Mugo was giving shelter to Kihika after assassinated Robson, the district officer. Only person who had seen Kihika before he was captured was Mugo. So, they ask Mugo whether he knows anything about the betrayer of Kihika. Mugo appears be in discomfort and merely shakes his head and says 'no.' Gikonyo, Wambui and Warui explain to Mugo that they have come to request him to lead the ceremony as he is closely attached to Movement and Kihika. They want him to lead Uhuru ceremony and act as their regional representative. Mugo does not give any reply. The visitors want him to give his decision in the next three days and leave the hut. Gikonyo goes back to his wife Mumbi. Gikonyo refuses to eat the food that is prepared to him by Mumbi. He refuses to play with the child.

Karanja works in the forestry research station in Githima. John Thompson is in charge of the research station. Thompson on the eve of Uhuru, is caught in two worlds of colonial past and liberated Kenya. He ambitiously begins writing a manuscript entitled *Prospero in Africa*, a manifesto of British colonialism. To his wife Margery, 'this moral mission' is the only point of bond that sustains their marriage.

Mugo has spoken only once on the public platform. He feels uneasy pressure when people around him want him to be their representative on uhuru day. One day Gikonyo goes to Mugo's hut. Mugo thinks Gikonyo has come to ask for his decision. But Gikonyo says he has come to confess. His confession take us back to past to the times of kihika.The utterance of the word takes him back to the memory of his past. It takes the readers back to the times when Karanja, Gikonyo, and his wife Mumbi were young. Mugo is a destitute child. He loses his parents when was a child. He is left to the care of an abusive alcoholic aunt who believes everyone is conspiring against her. Mugo always dreamed to kill her. But she herself dies with her over drinking. After her death, Mugo becomes lonely and decides to work hard and become wealthy so that the world recognizes him as important. His dreams are alive until Kihika.

The Christian missionaries arrived with the promise of good days. They preach the Bible and show the Kenyan's the promise of salvation when the benevolence of the English Queen stretches over Kenya. Hearing such promises, Gikuyu laughed as Kenyans themselves were once ruled powerful women warriors who were overthrown when men started to impregnate them. However, missionaries are successful to convert many Kenyans into Christians. They started to gather land for the missionary or the whiteman. They started to build permanent structures to themselves. Before the elders of villages had realized the scheme more white people came with swords in place of bibles and dominated suppressed the protest and occupied the land. The colonial power built infrastructure to carry away their loot in Africa. The Thabai people had seen a train which they called "the iron snake." Everybody was fascianated by its structure. The platform had become a social centre. Everybody gather on the platform to look at the iron train. Gikonyo, Karanja, Kihika, Mugo, and Mumbi along with many of their family members and friends never missed to see the iron train.

Young Gikonyo was a poor carpenter and lived with his mother. His mother Wangari had brought him up as a single parent when his father abandoned her and baby Gikonyo. He hoped to buy land for his mother. His desire to be wealthy had strengthened when he had fallen in love with Mumbi. Mumbi the daughter of Wanjiku and Mbugua, was the most beautiful girl on Thabai. Khihika and Kariuki were her brothers. Like many young men of the village, Gikonyo and Karanja went to Mumbi's hut to visit her. But the attraction and love between Gikonyo and Mumbi was mutual. Karanja was the jealous lover of Mumbi. While Gikonyo and Karanja were dreaming about Mumbi, Kihika was dreaming about Mau Mau-revolution. Kihika and Wmabuku were in passionate love. Wmabuku was always insecure in the relationship as Kihika spoke always about revolution. She felt that revolution is demon that might snatch Kihika from her. Kihika was strongly influenced by revolutionary spirit of Gandhi and preparing for revolution.

Emergency was declared. Kenyan leader named Harry Thuku carried the word of God to free the Kenyan people from British rule just as Moses freed the Israelites from Pharaoh, the Kenyans had reeled under the violent rule of British. Under Harry Thuku's leadership the Movement had blossomed. When Thuku had been captured by the whiteman, many tribesmen had gathered in Nairobi and staged a peaceful protest. The Police received

unarmed protestors with bayonets and bullets. This event hurt the Movement for time. It was not long when new hero emerged to bear the flag of Movement. It was Kihika. Suddenly one morning Thabia realized that Kihika had gone to forest to take forward the revolution.

Mumbi feared Gikonyo too would soon disappear into the forest. Soon her fears of separation had come true. Gikonyo did not go forest but the colonial government arrested him and sent him to detention camp. Along with Gikonyo many in detention waited for the defeat of white power to be released from detention camp. At home their women suffered poverty and imperial abuse and exploitation to protect the old, children and home. The prisoners were strong for the first few months. They took oath never to confess the oath or reveal details about the Mau Mau fighters. Learning that Jomo Kenyatta' special appeal for freedom was denied they recognized that the day of deliverance might be a distant future. , Gikonyo begans to fear his own death. Six years later Gikonyo accepted the white power to release from detention camp. He betrayed nation to be with Mumbi. He was not returning as a hero. He had only hoped to resume his life with Mumbi.

Mumbi and Wangari lived in different huts. He first went to Mumbi's hut and saw her with a child. Mumbi was surprised than happy to see Gikonyo. His mother ran to him and embraced him. Gikonyo suspected that Mumbi was sleeping with other men in his absence.

The child cried and Mumbi fed it and comforted it. Wangari told her son that the Karanja's child. Gikonyo was spiritually broken. He did not eat or sleep on the following days. He wandered with suicidal urge. He went to report in the local office after his return.

And the chief of the village to whom he had to report was Karanja. Enraged in anger, he strangled Karanja. Karnaja pointed a gun and reinforced his power. Leaving Karanja, Gikonyo went home to kill Mumbi. The door was locked. He furiously banged on it. He triped and hist his head agiant the hearth, leaving him lying on the floor, making strange gurguling noises and leaking foam from his mouth. At here Mugo finishes his confession to Mugo. Though he briefly believes in the innocence of Mumbi, the child is a constant reminder of treachery. Since then he has turned his frustration on life into an aggression to become richly. And he has become rich. Now in Independent Thabai, he has met the MP to buy a five acres of land along with his friend. Gikonyo leaves the hut while feeling - "Mugo's purity, Mumbi's unfaithfulness, everything had conspired against him to undermine his manhood, his faith in himself, and accentuate his shame at being the first to confess the oath in [his detention] camp."

Mugo calls back Gikonyo into the hut but he stays still and fails to utter a single word of comfort. On hearing the confession of Gikonyo, Mugo feels a strong urge to confess his past and his role in the death of revolutionary hero, Kihika's death. Over the come days, Mugo decides to bury his past and accept the offer to speak on the day of Uhuru celebrations.

The narrator of the novel takes the readers into the past when Mugo was in detention camp. Mugo was arrested and sent to detention camp. He was sent in train to a much larger detention camp. He was kept with third section for hardcore prisoner who swore to never disclose the details of freedom fighters. John Thompson who had reputation as a extractor of confession was posted there. Thompson would not torture but soften the prisoners with the promise of home. He tried to convert in the present detention camp. But his magic did not work and prisoners did not take oath. He was frustrated and ordered brutal beating of the prisoners. It killed eleven people and became infamous across the world.

Narration comes back to the present, Mugo goes to Gikonyo's house to tell him that he will deliver speech on Uhuru day. Gikonyo is absent and Mugo is received by Mumbi. Mumbi now speaks her side of the story to Mugo. Mumbi dreamed to fight beside Gikonyo for freedom. She was inspired by Wambuku who sacrificed her life for Kihika. She got pregnant with Karanja's child when she trapped by Karanja. Karanja send false news to Mumbi that Gikonyo was released. She ran to Karnaja's house where she was trapped and rapped by Karanja. And the child was result of the rape. Mugo walks out of hut have been burdened by the heavy information. General R. and Koina arrive and share their recent discoveries in their investigation into the betrayal of Kihika. They believe it is Karanja and say that they scheme to kill him. They plan to allure Karanja to attend Uhuru.

Mumbi notices a change in the behavior of Gikonyo. Earlier he used to be distant. Now he is hostile. One day he throws the baby to floor and a fight erupts between the embittered wife and husband. Gikonyo calls Mumbi whore. Wangari saves Mumbi from the situation by castigating her son. Gikonyo is not actually angry but he tries to take his anger on Mumbi. The MP swindles him and steals his land. Gikonyo is helpless and tries to take out his frustration on his easy target Mumbi. Mumbi goes to her parents' home. Then Wangari tells the story of child. At her parents' home Mumbi worries about Karanja's death. Though she hates him she does not want the violence continue in the name of her brother Kihika.

Mumbi receives Wambui's request that she speak with Mugo. Mugo who is not in his control reveals the truth about the death of Kihika. He confesses that it is he that has betrayed Kihika and revealed his whereabouts to the colonial power. After confessing he goes in fit of mad rage and strangles Mumbi which she resists and goes away from there.

The narration moves to 1954. Then DO Thomas Robson, known as Tom the Terror, oppresses Thabai and the surrounding region with a psychopathic fury. It was Tom who names the Freedom Fighters the Mau Mau and began hunting them relentlessly. In May 1955, as Tom was driving his jeep, a bent-over man was hobbling across the road. Tom called him over to his jeep. The man approached, visibly terrified, but when he was near, stands straight, pulled a pistol from his pocket, and shot DO Robson twice in the chest. And the man was Kihika. Kihika killed the terror of Gikuyu. The new DO Robson was determined to kill Kihika. A bounty was put on Kihika's head. Then tweny five year old Mugo came back home and somebody was kocking at his door. It was Kihika. Mugo was jealou of Kihika. Unaware of Mugo's secret jealous, Kihika motivates Mugo towards revolution and tells him the next Mau Mau meeting place in the forest. Kihika sliped out and disappeared into the night, a nervous "man on the run."

Confused Mugo sat alone by himself. His future seems obliterated, as Kihika had unjustly forced his own struggles upon Mugo's life. Mugo bitterly reflected, "He is not satisfied with butchering men and women and children. He must call on me to bathe in the blood." Mugo spent the next several days in fear, wandering between his hut and his land, convinced first that he wiould be arrested and then later that Kihika would come to murder him. More than anything, Mugo repeats to himself, "Why did [Kihika] do this to me?" This anguish and Mugo's wandering ended the moment he saw a wanted poster with Kihika's face above a hefty monetary sum. Mugo was struck with a strange pleasure. His mind wandered to the righteousness of Abraham sacrificing Isaac, yet Isaac was spared from death. In Mugo's mind, one thought rings clearly: "I am important. I must not die. To keep myself alive, healthy, strong—to wait for my mission in life is a duty to myself, to men and women of tomorrow." These righteous notions mix with fantasies about money and the power and

women that would bring him, cementing his place in society and proving to the world that he was someone important.

Mugo went to the DO's office and requested a private audience. The homeguards viciously had harassed him until John Thompson arrived, earning Mugo's gratitude by saving him from the bullies. Mugo was nervous, but announced to Thompson that he knew where Kihika would be that very night. Momentarily, the act of betrayal thrilled Mugo and he saw it as "a great act of moral courage." This evaporated, however, when Thompson grabed him by the chin, spited in his face, and knocked Mugo to the floor, claiming that many had already given them false information. Mugo would be kept a prisoner until Thompson determined that his information was correct; if it was not, he would hang Mugo. Within that instant, Mugo had overcome with regret. "He did not want the money. He did not want to know what he had done." Kihika was captured, tortured, and executed publicly. The homeguard (the colonial security force) forces the local people in the area to go see Kihika's dead body.

The narration final comes back to the present to the day of Uhuru. On the night of December 12, 1963, Kenya reclaims its independence. In Thabai, the people dance in the streets and sing songs that are hybrids of Christmas hymns and traditional initiation rites. The villagers swarm Mugo's hut for over an hour, singing songs about he and Kihika's heroism together, but he never coms out. In Wambui's eyes, Mugo is "Kihika born again" and thus his participation is vital for their Uhuru celebrations. Since Wambui "believe[s] in the power of women to influence events, especially where men [have] failed to act," she and the other women of the village decide that Mumbi must go to convince Mugo to attend Uhuru.

On the day of Uhuru, people are awaiting nightfall and the beginning of the celebration that will formally mark Kenya's independence. Mugo is spotted walking to the market in the rain. This is an odd behavior, conjuring images of Jomo Kenyatta returning from his exile during a rainstorm. Mumbi, the night before, has discovered that Mugo is Kihika's real betrayer. However, she saw such pain in his eyes then that she cannot bring herself to tell anyone else what she has discovered. Mumbi does not want any more bloodshed. She finds herself wishing she could ask Gikonyo for his help in the matter.

A preacher from the Kikuyu (Gikuyu) Greek Orthodox Church leads the congregation in prayer to open the ceremony, commemorating the blood that has been spilt by the villagers. Speeches are made about the oppression of the British and the heroism of the Freedom Fighters. Everyone is waiting for Mugo, but he is not there. When the speaker announces that General R. will speak in Mugo's place, the crowd is furious. The elders promise that they will send two more delegates to appeal to Mugo, but in the meantime General R. will continue. General R. begins, but finds it difficult to speak. He thinks of all the African traitors: Karanja, Rev. Jackson—who preached against the Mau Mau at the behest of DO Robson and was warned three times to cease before they were forced to kill him. He thinks of the fact that it is not Freedom Fighters marching through the streets of Nairobi, but those Kenyan soldiers who served as the British colonial force. General R. is haunted by Koina's fear that Uhuru will not bring change. Nevertheless, General R. continues through his speech, speaking of the need to spill blood to resist the British Empire and protest their wealth in the face of African poverty. General R. declares that the new Kenya must be "built on the heroic tradition of resistance of our people," meaning they must celebrate heroes and "punish traitors." General R. announces that Kihika's betrayer is in their midst and asks him to reveal himself, letting the tension build. At that moment, Mugo arrives, takes the

microphone, and speaks clearly: "You asked for Judas […] That man stands before you now." Mugo explains his crime. The crowd goes utterly silent and parts as he walks through them and away from the gathering. The only person to move is Githua, who follows behind Mugo mocking him. As Githua's voice fades, the crowd disperses.

13.4 GLOSSARY

Fern	-	A flowerless plant with feathery fronds and reproduces by spores
Jembe	-	Hoe used to dig earth
Panga	-	Shovel
Maguita	-	A Detention Camp
Shamba	-	Small strip of farm land
Thabai	-	A big village on top of the Rungeˈi valley
Uhuru	-	Freedom
The Emergency	-	A state of emergency in Kenya which is declared on October 20.1952
Churchill's war with Hitler	-	Second World War
Kabui	-	The name of the market place
Gakaruku	-	wild weeds in Gikuyu dialect
Misege	-	Another wild weed in Gikuyu dialect
Mikerengeria		Wild weed. It is a nutritious food for rabbits
Bangi	-	Opium
Rika	-	Age-Group
Harridan	-	Strict, belligerent, bossy woman
Voices from the Movement	-	Spokespersons of the freedom Movement Party
The Great Lake		Lake Victorian
Gikuyu	-	The people of Fig Tree. Original word is Kikuyu
A Powerful Women	-	Queen Victoria
Agikuyu	-	Gikuyu Prophet
Murang'a	-	A territory in Kenya
Mugo wa Kibiro	-	The wise leader of a community
The Iron Snake	-	The Railway
Kibwezi	-	The place where Waikyaki is buried alive
Pharaoh	-	The title of ancient Egyptian King
Cannan	-	The name of the place in the coastal areas of modern Isreal and Syria in ancient Semitic language.
First Big War	-	First World War
Jomo Kenyatta	-	Burning Spear
Nairobi	-	Capital of Kenya
Nyanza	-	Western region of Kenya
Kikulacho Kimo Nguom Mwako	-	Swahili proverb meaning whatever destroys you is within you or within your environment.
Mahee	-	A Big police garrison in the Rift Valley

Kinnie Forest	-	A dense forest in Runge'i Valley
The New Woman on the Throne	-	Queen Elizabeth II
Wiyathi	-	Freedom
Calabash	-	Cooking Pot
Naivasha	-	Town northwest of Nairobi beyond Limuru
Pole Mama	-	Sorry, Mother
Mwenanyaga	-	A tribal God of Gikuyus
Tahi Thathai Ngai, Thaai	-	Praise be to God
Masai	-	A tribe
Githima	-	A thick Forest where Githima Forestry and Agricultural Research Station is located
Lodwar and Lokitaung	-	Places where Jomo Kenyatta was imprisoned
Thingira	-	Hut
Shambaboy		Gardener
Rira	-	Site of detention camp. Thompson is the in charge of this.
Bwana	-	Boss
Shauri	-	Friendly banter
Albion	-	Old name for England
Southern Rhodesia	-	Renamed Zimbabwe after independence
Madagascar	-	World's fourth largest island
Gold Coast	-	After independence it is Ghana
Nyeri	-	North of Nairobi
Kisumu	-	The largest city in Kenya located outside Nairobi and Mombasa,
Ngong	-	The name of a place
Runge'I	-	The valley in which Thabai village is located
Kiambu	-	A place in Runge'i
Mau Mau	-	The Land and Freedom Party in Gikuyu
Kiriita	-	A wholesale vegetable market
Heifer Boma	-	It is a slang word meaning Home for Cows, that means Kenya High School for girls
Kampala	-	The Capital of Uganda
Fema Brokowi	-	A member of the British House of Commons
Kapenguria Trial	-	Jomo Kenyatta was put on this trial
Agu and Agu	-	Phrase meaning 'from time immemorial'
Hodi	-	May I Come in
Uhuru Bado	-	The country Is not ripe for freedom yet
Simsis	-	Long poles used as weapons
Podos	-	A kind of Wood
Aber Danes	-	Forest situated in the hills
Pnaga	-	Cooking pan
Ruth	-	A biblical Character
Muthirigu	-	A tribe
Wiyathi	-	Freedom

Wattle	-	A large group of trees or shrubs
Manyani	-	A site of a detention camp
Gikoi	-	Scarf Wrapped aourng the head or waist
Misri	-	Egypt
Pass-book	-	A kind of identity card that all African natives have to carry with them always in colonial Africa
Ladwar	-	A prison where jomo Kenyatta was held
Ngai!	-	Exclamation meaning O God
Barazas	-	Meetings
Mwengu	-	Apron, Women's upper garment
Ka-40	-	The bastard from the 1940s
Boer	-	Literary meaning a Dutch farmer
Oginga Odinga	-	President of the Luo Union during 1952-57
Ka	-	A derogatory term used to express hatred towards a superior
Tanganyika	-	Modern Tanznia
Nbwa Kalis	-	A Slang word for native black man
Kanzus	-	White overalls worn by Muslims
Fez	-	A flat-topped conical red hat
Kamwene Kabagoira	-	Even if your own person has done a wrong, he is still yours
Aspro midawaa ya kweli	-	A radio jingle for Aspro tablet
Mithuru	-	Women's Skirt
Murungu	-	Women's apron
Mzungu	-	A Whiteman
Askari	-	Soldier or police officer in East Africa
Usiogope Mzee	-	Please Relax; feel at ease
Effendi	-	Sir, master
Ululation	-	Howling or wailing
The Five Ngemi	-	Five Types of Rejoicing
Muthuo, Mucung'wa and Ndumo	-	Traditional tribal dances for various age-groups
Man of horn	-	A drunkard
Toboa!	-	Reveal! Expose!
Gikoi	-	Sack-cloth tied as scarf on head to protect from rains
Harambee	-	Unity for purpose of freedom

13.5 QUESTIONS

1. Critically comment on the plot of *A Grain of Wheat*.
2. What is the significance of *A Grain of Wheat* in the literary career of Thiong'o?
3. Is Mugo the villain or victim? Attempt a critical essay.
4. What is the significance of the title *A Grain of Wheat*?

5. What your observation on the culture of Gikuyu after reading the novel?

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LESSON 14

CRITICAL STUDY OF A GRAIN OF WHEAT

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the lesson is to help the learners to understand

- The literary contribution of Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o
- The themes of *A Grain of Wheat*
- Significance of the title of the novel *A Grain of Wheat*
- Significance of Gikuyu culture
- The characters in *A Grain of Wheat*
- The plot of *A Grain of Wheat*

STRUCTURE

14.1 "CUMBERSOME NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE IN *A GRAIN OF WHEAT*

A Grain of Wheat is a complex novel that knits the effects of great events of the external world on individual people. The novel does not exhaust itself in glorifying the freedom struggle. It is bent on depicting the individual soul and mind and person to person relationship in extraordinary crisis.

14.1.1 Baffling and Exasperating Narrative Technique:

Ngugi chooses an unorthodox way of writing by denying conventional narrative technique with a beginning, middle and end. The story opens on the eve of Kenya's Uhuru that is independence celebrations. It ends four days later. But the real action happens in past which is narrated through the point of views of numerous witnesses. The story begins and ends in present time. However, to discover the ending in the present, the plot weaves in and out of past time, not only revealing aspects of the past of its characters but also revealing a larger historical story of colonial resistance and betrayal. The present is persuasion of Mugo to speak at the celebrations is present time but much of the story is told in flashback as the narrator recounts events from Kenya's recent and remote past.

14.1.2 Reader, Narrator and Writer:

Writer, Ngugi has written the novel from west lands about his home land. So, the narrator in the novel balances the narrative which helps the writer to speak to his western and African readers. Through psychonarration, the narrator reveals, mediates and analyses the characters' thoughts and emotions, allowing the readers how characters perceive themselves as with secrete desires that may not meet the expectation of their society. The readers are taken into confidence by the narration as the narrator evokes the complicit ideological position.

Conclusion: Form the above arguments it can be concluded that A Grain of Wheat has a cumbersome Narrative Technique.

14.2 KIHIKA – *A GRAIN OF WHEAT*

Kihika, pervades through the novel even though he actually appears briefly in the novel. He is the local hero and song are sung about his bravery and integrity. The narrative centers around the betrayal of Kihika by one of his friends and ends with the public exposure of the culprit at the Uhuru celebrations.

14.2.1 An Early Rebel:

The elder son of a former warrior and now a respected community elder and farmer Mbugua and his wife Wnajiku. Kihika is a rebel of sorts form his childhood. He left school after an argument with his teacher Muniu when the latter could not prove his justification of the Circumcision of girls from the Bible: "The Bible does not talk about circumcising women." When Muniu tires to hit him for this blasphemy, Kihika tells him,"You will hit me only after you have told me exactly the wrongs that I have done." He then clambers over the desks in the classroom, reaches the nearest window and climbs out of "the church to freedom."

After leaving school, Kihika occupies himself with reading. He teaches himself to read and write English and Swahili. Soon after the Second World War, he goes to work in Nairobi, attends political meetings and discovers the movement. He has found "a new vision."

14.2.2 Influenced by Gandhi:

Kihika's interest in politics begins when he is a small boy and listens to Warui's stories of how the land was taken from black people as well as the tales about early black resistance to colonial rule. Soldiers returning from the war relate stories of what they saw in Burma, Egypt, Palestine and India; "wasn't Mahatma Gandhi, the saint, leading the Indian people against his British rule?" Fed on these stories, Kihika sees himself, from early on, a saint, leading Kenyan people to freedom and power.

He talks to his friends in Taabia- Gikonyo, Karanja, Mugo and others- about Indian's freedom movement and the unity Mahatma Gandhi had forged among his people during the Emergency:

> It's a question of Unity…The example of India is before our noses. The British were there for hundreds and hundreds of years. They ate India's wealth. They drank India's blood. They never listened to the political talk-talk of a few men. What happened? There came this man Gandhi. Mark you, Gandhi knows his whitemen well. He goes round and organizes the Indian masses into a weapon stronger than the bomb. They say with one voice: we want back our freedom. The British laughed; they are good at laughing. But they had to swallow back their laughter when things turned out serious. What did the tyrants do? They sent Gandhi to prison, not once, but many times. The stone-walls of the prison could not hold him. Thousands were goaled; thousands more were killed. Men and women and children threw themselves in front of moving trains and were run over. Blood flowed like water in the country. The bomb could not kill blood, red blood of people, crying out to be free. God! How many times must fatherless children howl, widowed women cry on this earth before this tyrant shall learn?

14.2.3 Kihika's Exploits:

Kihika's exploits as a Mau Mau fighter turn him into a legendary hero. People still talk of his capture of the invincible fortress, Mahee Police Post. Kihika and his men freed the detainees there and robbed the garrison of guns and ammunition before disappearing inot the

forest under cover of darkness. His second exploit was to shoot down the District Officer Robson, known as Tom the Terror, during the Emergency years in Rift Valley. This wins him wide renown in the countryside. He becomes a legend who can achieve the impossible; he can move mountains; he is seen as the hero of deliverance.

After shooting down Robson, Kihika goes to Mugo's hut when the soldiers are on a hot chase after Robson's murderer. Kihika wants to enlist Mugo's support in the underground movement. Mugo, who largely keeps to himself and is till now "untouched by the Movement, does not want to involve himself with Kihika and his band of forest fighters. He feels uneasy and confused. But finally he decides to betray Kihika to the whiteman for "monetary reward" because that will help him to come up in life, buy more land, marry and raise a family. But he is arrested and detained. He suffers during his detention and when he comes out, he is bracketed with Kihika for his reticence, modesty and self-effacement.

14.2.4 The Traitor: Kihika is captured, killed and hanged from a tree, and people from all the ridges and forced to watch the fate he has met. People wonder all the ridges and forced to watch the fat he has met. People wonder how such a person like Kihika could not be caught and hanged. Someone must have betrayed hi, And they are all determined to find out who the traitor was. Everyone suspects Karanja who has become a British stooge now. Kihika's followers, General R. and Lt. Koina who have been released under the Uhuru amnesty, plan to expose Karanja and punish him publicly before the Uhuru congregation. But the tables turned w hen Mugo, who was earlier invited to preside over the celebrations and had turned down the honour, quietly comes forward and publicaly confesses his guilt. The people are too stunned to react. Instead of being condemned, Mugo is admired for his moral courage. People part to make way for him when he leaves.

But determined as they are, General R. and Lt. Koina knock at Mugo's hut that night and take him captive. He is tried by a tribunal of these two men and the village woman, the veteran freedom fighters Wmabui, Kihika stands vindicated. His spirit pervades the novel, which ends with the summary trial and death of the man who had betrayed him. He is the presiding deity of Ngugi's novel, A Grain of Wheat.

14.3 MUGO- AN ANTI-HERO

Mugo is treated as the hermit by people in Thabai. They bracket him with the legendry hero of the legendry hero of the freedom struggle, Kihika. That is why they wish to honour him at the Uhuru celebrations for having undergone hardships and sufferings during his detention uncomplainingly. He is one of the survivors of the Rira camp where he had organized a hunger strike against the prison conditions which caught global attention. Questions were raised in the British House of Commons as a result of which Thompson, the camp superintendant, was transferred to Githima as Administrative Secretary of the forestry research station.

14.3.1 Lonely and Compassionate:

Mugo is the central figure of the novel. He is around thirty-five when we see him in the opening scene preparing his morning uji. He seems to have lost his will to live. He goes about working in his field mechanically, deriving no joy from it, and avoiding the people of the village as he goes to and returns from his small strip of land. "Wher," wonders Mugo as

he sits eyeing his shamba, "was the fascination he used to find in the soil before the Emergency?"

He feels that conditions in Thabai are the same in 1963 like they were in 1955 when there was whiteman's rule. As Mugo continues to walk, he keeps head down as if he is ashamed to look into the eyes of his people. Githua, one legged man approaches Mugo addressing him as "Uhuru na Kazi", in the name of blackman's freedom. Mugo is strangely embraced and continues walking. When Mugo has reached his farming land he does not have motivation to work. The land is filled with weed no crop. Mugo has not felt the motivation to work on his land since emergency. "There is a bond between old woman and Mugo which make him live.

The bond of loneliness and reluctant compassion is seen again when Mugo makes his futile attempt to prevent the pregnant Wmabuku, Kihika's girl friend, from being beaten by the guard. It runs right through Mugo's life. So there is symbolic significance when he makes his final visit to the old woman – the only person to greet her on Uhuru day and she dies in the act of mistaking him for her own son come back to her, the deaf and dumb son butchered by the Emergency forces.

14.3.2 His Penalizing Guilt:

Mugo is a betrayer; he is burdened by an insupportable sense of guilt. We know a great deal about this shriveled, frightened, unfulfilled existence before we guess at his crime. His guilt creeps into our consciousness on waves of his perpetual terror, a terror which brings us close to him in the melting pot of raw human emotion. It is a gnawing sense of self-shame, we empathise with him and realize that we are not Mugo's judges but his equals.

Mugo betrayed Kihika because he did not want to be involved in the Movement; he was "untouchable" by it. Then he justified the betrayal to himself by convincing himself that he was doing it for "monetary reward" that would enable him to buy more land, marry and raise a family. But this led to his detention.

The visit of the elders which causes Mugo so much terror at the end of the first chapter is echoed by the last visit of General R and Lt. Koina in which that fear is fulfilled and resolved. The first visit brought the invitation to speak at the Uhuru gathering; the last visit is the result of Mugo's having spoken.

He resolves the meaningless muddle of his life be seeing himself as a savior of the people: "It was he, Mugo, spared to save people like Githua, the old woman, and any who had suffered.Why not take the task? Yes. He would speak at he Uhuru celebrations. He would lead the people and bury his past is their gratitude.

Inevitably he abandons this project when he discovers that his Uhuru speech is to be the occasion for the public accusation of Karanja for the crime Mugo himself had, in fact, communicated. But the vision reveals to us the man buried inside Mugo.

14.3.3 Mugo's Confession:

Now we arrive at simple, stark, carefully prepared, yet breathtaking climax, when Mugo voluntarily confesses himself before the Uhuru congregation. And Ngugi emphasizes

that, for all its terror, this is the moment when the events in Mugo's life fall into place. It is a brief experience, but time enough for the metal of his existence to run into a new mould:

> As soon as the words were out, Mugo felt light. A load of many years was lifted from his shoulders. He was free, sure, confident…. He was conscious of himself, of every step he made, of the images that rushed and whirled through his mind with only one constant thread; so he was responsible for whatever he had done in the past, for whatever he would do in the future. The consciousness frightened him.

The fear is justified. The acceptance of responsibility is fatal to Mugo. "Your deed will condemn you," says General R. Mugo does not escape. But his dignified acceptance, his calm facing of his actions, changes the whole significance of his life.

14.3.4 Empathy with Mugo:

People are too stunned to react to Mugo's confession. They part to make way for him as he gets down from the platform. Only the "monolegged champion" of the village Githya, whose own life has been a big lie as he has told everyone that he was hit in the leg by a whiteman's bullet but actually lost his leg in an accident, mocks him and challenges Mugo to fight. Almost everyone is guilty of something or the other in the novel. No one can be self-righteous in condemning Mugo. And this too is how the other characters see him, the very people he has betrayed most deeply and have most reason to recoil from him. "He seems to be a courageous man" admits Karanja; and Mumbi agrees: "Yees!" Wambui, utterly steadfast in her devotion to the cause, at length has doubts after Mugo has both paid for his deed and for his final honesty in confessing it: "Perhaps we should not have tried him." But it is Gikonyo, in one of the key passages of the novel, who really pronounces Mugo's funeral oration:

"He was a brave man inside," he said. "He stood before much honour, praises were heaped on him. He would have become a Chief. Tell me another person who would have exposed his soul for all the eyes to peck at" he paused and let his eyes linger on Mumbi. Then he looked away and said, "Remember that few people in that meeting are fit to lift a stone against that man. Not unless I-We-too in turn open our hearts naked for the world to look at."

14.3.5 An Anti- Hero:

Mugo is an anti-hero in two senses. First, he himself is taken by surprise by his own defiant bravery in the face of inhumanity. His futilely leaps to the defence of Wmabuku against the trench guards. And secondly through his being miscast by Runge'i in the role of hero, an irony which forms one of the main structural features of the novel. His truest moment of heroism is when he publicly confesses his betrayal of Kihika. This is the opposite of heroism of the battlefield: it is the heroism of admitting our guilt and weakness.

14.4 CHARACTERS MUGO

14.4.1. Mugo:

He is the primary character in the novel. He is the nub around whom the story of the novel revolves. He is an orphan who has an abusive childhood under the care of his aunt. He loves his loneliness. He is the tragic character whose tragic flaw of jealous torments him and

fails him at the end. The irony in character and life of Mugo is representative of ironic fate of Independent of Kenya. Mugo wishes to be ideal person. But he has flaws which fail him. Mugo secretly betrays the freedom struggle by disclosing the place of Kihika, the freedom fighter. Unaware of this the people in the village of Thabai respect him as leader of the freedom fight. According to them he is the person who gave last shelter to Kihika. The independence of Kenya is also the characterization of Mugo. Kenyans believe that the political liberation to be the path of develop but it is actually the beginning another form of exploitation.

14.4.2. Kihika:

He is the great hero and martyr in the independence struggle of Kenya. He is the brother of Mumbi and Kariuki and the son of Mbugua and Wanjiku. He is physically absent in the most of the book. Kihika is influenced by Moses and Gandhi to rise in Mau Mau for Uhuru. Mugo betrays him and lead to his capture and public execution in the novel. In his death, Kihika becomes an icon of the resistance for his people and is the "grain of wheat" referred to in the title, who by his death brings new life into the world.

14.4.3. Gikonyo:

He is Mumbi's husband and Wangari's only son. Gikonyo Mumbi is his life and destiny. He becomes rich and betrays freedom struggle for Mumbi. But colonial conditions are too complex to permit a simple life of happiness. Mumbi is raped by Karanja by the time Gikonyo returns from detention camp. She has the child of Karanja. Gikonyo does not digest the harsh reality and punishes himself and Mumbi with bitterness. Finally the patience of Mumbi and his mother make him reconcile with life and Mumbi.

14.4.4. Karanja:

He is the main antagonist for standing by the white government. He plays key role in the main tragedies of the novel. Everybody suspects him as the betrayer responsible for the death of Kihika. He madly loves Mumbi. But she chooses Gikonyo. Karanja's detestable character and pathetic fate supplies a strong argument against forsaking one's community for the sake of personal gain.

14.4.5. Mumbi:

She is the sister of Kihika and wife of Gikonyo. She is the most strong woman character in the novel. She loves Gikonyo in spite of his poverty and marries him. After her brother's death and arrest of Gikonyo she is alone. She wants Gikonyo of fight for freedom. Karanja exploits her by saying her that Gikonyo is released. Though she loath the episode, she wants to keep the child who is result of the rape. When Gikonyo returns and hates her for carrying and protecting Karanja's child. She with her patience helps Gikonyo a true man to see life beyond jealousy and petty emotions. She is first person to know that, Mugo is the real betrayer. Yet she hates bloodshed in the name her brother and does not disclose it.

14.4.6. John Thompson:

He is a typical example of colonial power. He is famous for influencing the native freedom fighters to take oath without torturing them. But this reputation is busted when he kills prisoner in detention camp who test his patience by not yielding to his gimmicks. Mugo reveals Kihika's identity to Thompson. John Thompson projects an image of power but is actually weak and indecisive.

14.4.7. Margery:

She is the wife of is John Thompson. Margery plays a small role and principally helps to demonstrate that women may exert power in other forms even when they are constrained by society.

14.4.8. Warui:

She is an elder and plays a key role in the Mau Mau. He teaches Kihika about resistance. He is one of the leading members in the organizing team of Uhuru celebrations. He is bent upon convincing Mugo to represent the community on the day of Uhuru celebrations. He is most disheartened when Mugo confesses his betrayal.

14.4.9. Wambui:

She is a good friend of Warui and participated in freedom struggle along with him. She respects Mugo as he is the living soul of Kihika.

14.4.10. Wangari:

She is Gikonyo's mother. She is another example of powerful womanhood. As single mother she brings her son up. When her son is in detention camp she stands by Mumbi during her worst times. She supports her daughter-in-law in keeping the baby of Karanja. She understands and accepts the ironies in life and faces them bravely as good model to Mumbi.

14.4.11. Wambuku.

She is Kihika's sweetheart. Wambuku does not want kihika to go to revolution. She wants an ordinary happy life with Kihika. But when Kihika goes to forest to fight for freedom she stands by his cause. After Kihika's death she tries to carry forward his mission. She is brutally beaten to death

14.4.12. Njeri:

She is a friend to Wambuku. She also loves Kihika. Though Kihika loves Wambuku when he has gone to forest, she follows him to fight for freedom. She is shot to death

14.4.13. Mbugua:

He is the father of Kihika, Kariuki, and Mumbi's father and Wanjiku's husband. His character depicts the tragic pain of losing a child.

14.4.14. DO Robson:

He is a British District Officer who rules over Thabai as terror. He is assassinated by Kihika. After his assassination, a bounty is put on Kihika's head and led to final his betrayal by Mugo.

14.4.15. Harry Thuku:

He is an early revolutionary leader who inspired the people towards freedom. He started using biblical images to fight for freedom. He is arrested and broken by British government.

14.4.16. General R.:

He is a Freedom Fighter and former comrade of Kihika. He is committed to avenge the betrayer of Kihika. He suspects it to be Karanja. After Mugo's confession he is decides take Mugo into forest and execute him.

14.4.17. Lt. Koina:

Like General R. is a Freedom Fighter and comrade of Kihika. Lt. Koina is pragmatic enough to understand that Kenyan conditions do not change after Uhuru.

14.4.18. Githua

is a one-legged cripple, the village beggar. Although Githua tells a story about how he lost his leg as a Freedom Fighter, General R. discovers that Githua is lying. In reality, Githua lost his leg in a traffic accident. He is a mocking replica to Gikonyo, and Mugo who have a secret of their own.

14.4.19. Dr. Lynd:

She is a British researcher and an old spinster. Lt. Koina briefly works for her as a young man.

14.4.20. Gatu:

He is a Kenyan detainee. He is Gikonyo and Gatu are imprisoned in the same camp. He tries to keep the hopes of the co-prisoners for liberation by narrating fake stories about Abraham Lincoln.

14.4.21. Rev. Jackson:

He is a British preacher. He was an accommodating preacher respecting the local people's sentiments and beliefs. Later he becomes an orthodox Christian denying all the traditions and beliefs. He even preaches against the Freedom Fighters. So, Mau Mau Fighters execute him as traitor.

14.4.22. The old woman:

She is the mother of Gitogo who dies while trying to protect his mother from a gunshot. She mother hermit figure in the novel. Mugo feels a strange affinity with her. He feels that she can see through his soul. At the end of the story it is revealed that she feels that Mugo is her own son who has raised from the death.

14.4.23. Wanjiku:

Wanjiku is Kihika, Kariuki, and Mumbi's mother. She is protects her daughter Mumbi when she returns from Gikonyo's home.

14.4.24. Dr. Henry Van Dyke:

He is a drunken researcher who works at the Githima station. Henry and Margery have an affair. He dies in an accident.

14.4.25. Mwaura:

Mwaura is Lt. Koina's associate who works with and spies on Karanja at the Githima station. Basing on the information collected by Mwaura it is confirmed that Karanja is the betrayer of Kihika. And he has supposed to lure Karanja into forest where he will be executed to avenge the death of Kihika.

14.4.26. Jomo Kenyatta / "The Burning Spear":

He is the imprisoned political leader of the Uhuru movement

14.4.27. Gitogo:

He is the deaf and dumb son of old woman. He is shot in the back by a Britsh soldier.

14.4.28. Kariuki:

Kariuki is Kihika and Mumbi's brother. He is absent in the main action of the novel as he goes to college outside Thabai.

14.5 QUESTIONS

1. Critically analyse Cumbersome Narrative technique in *A Grain of Wheat*.
2. Who is the protagonist of *A Grain of Wheat*?
3. How can you evaluate the betrayal of Mugo?
4. Dicuss betrayal is the theme of *A Grain of Wheat*?
5. Who are the women characters in *A Grain of Wheat*?

14.6 SUGGESTIONS

- Do include the introduction of the author and novel from the lesson-4.1

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LESSON 15
INTRODUCTION, SUMMARY OF A HOUSE FOR MR.BISWAS

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the lesson is to help the learners to understand

- The literary contribution of V.S.Naipual
- The background of the novel *A House For Mr. Biswas*
- The story line of the novel *A House For Mr. Biswas*
- Characters in *A House For Mr. Biswas*

STRUCTURE

15.1 AUHTOR INTRODUCTION

Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipual (17 August 1932 – 11 August 2018) was Indian origin Trinidadian-born British Writer of fiction and Non-fiction. He is a Nobel laureate and has a fair amount of controversies in his career. He was born in Chaguanas, the sugar plantation town on the island of Trinidad. Both his paternal and maternal grandfathers had emigrated from British India as an indentured laborer in a sugar plantation. His parents are Droapatie and Seepersad. Biswas inherited his love for writing from his father. The writer in Biswas has bloomed and grown on Oxford campus. But his experience as the student of Oxford is not good. He later openly expressed his hatred towards Oxford. He said that "hated Oxford." The first published novel by Naipual is *The Mystic Messeur* in the year 1957. He has become famous with the publication of *A House for Mr Biswas* in 1961. In the year 2001 he won the Nobel Prize in Literature. He passed away on 11 August 2018 in London. The following are the works of Naipaul.

15.1.1 The Mystic Masseur:

This is a comic novel by V.S.Naipaul. The novel which is published in 1957 portrays the life of a frustrated writer of Indian descent, Ganesh Ramsumair, who escalates to the status of a politician from impoverished conditions with his dubious talent as a mystic masseur.

15.1.2 The Suffrage of Elvira:

This is again a comic novel. It was composed in 1957 and published in 1958. The novel mocks democracy and multiculturalism of Trinidad. Surujpat Harbans is the main character.

15.1.3 Miguel Street:

It is a collection of linked Short stories which are weaved from the childhood memories of V.S.Naipaul. The novel was published in 1959.

15.1.4 The Middle Passage:

The Caribbean Revisited: This 1962 work is Naipual's first full length non-fiction work. It is a travelogue which covers a year long journey of Naipaul through Trinidad, British Guiana, Suriname, Martinique, and Jamaica.

15.1.5 An Area of Darkness:
This 1964 travelogue incorporates into itself the travel experience of Naipual in India. It is first of the trilogy. The other two works of trilogy are *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977) and *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990). Critics describe it as an pessimistic work.

15.1.6 The Mimic Men:
The novel was published in 1967. This novel blends the qualities of fiction and non-fiction into it. The plot of the novel revolves around life of Ralph Singh, an Indo-Caribbean politician. Singh is in his attempts to write political memoirs in exile in London.

15.1.7 A Flag on the Island:
This collection of short-stories was published in 1967. *A Flag on the Island* is dedicated to Diana Athill. It has eleven short stories.

15.1.8 The Loss of El Dorado:
Published in 1969 it is a historic book referring to El Dorado legend. The history of Venezuela and Trinidad are covered in this book.

15.1.9 In a Free State:
This novel published in 1971 won Booker Prize. It is composed in the framing narrative mode. It has three short stories "One out of Many", "Tell Me Who to Kill", and the title story, "In a Free State".

15.1.10 Guerrillas:
It was published in 1975. Some of the episodes in the novel are modeled after the life of Michael X, a Trinidad revolutionary. The main character of the novel is Jane.

15.1.11 A Bend in the River:
This is the most famous work of V.S.Naipual. It is a1979 novel which is short listed for the Booker Prize that year. The novel is also controversial because it is perceived as a novel that defends European colonialism in Africa.

15.1.12 Among the Believers:
An Islamic Journey: This 1981 work explores the situation in the countries where there is Islamic fundamentalism.

15.1.13 The Enigma of Arrival:
A Novel in Five Sections: This is an autobiographical novel in five sections. It was published in 1987.

15.1.14 A Turn in the South:
Naipual's trip to the southern states and the United States is detailed in this 1989 travelogue.

15.1.15.XV A Way in The World:
This 1994 novel is a linked narrative. 'Sequence' is its sub-title.

15.1.16 Beyond Belief:
Islamic Excursions among the Converted Peoples: This sequel to Naipual's Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey is published in 1998. He makes a distinction between Arabs and converted Muslims.

15.1.17 Half a Life:

This 2001 novel is long listed for Booker Prize. The main character in the novel is Willie Somerset Chandran. It's a prequel to Naipual's *Magic Seeds.*

15.1.18 The Writer and the World:

Essays: It is collection of essays and reportage. Many of the essay are previously published.

15.1.19 Magic Seed:

It is the sequel to *Half a Life* published in 2004. The life journey of Willie Somerset Chandran is continued in this novel.

15.1.20 A writer's People:

Ways of Looking and Feeling: In this non-fiction Naipual explains his views on the works that affected his own writing. It was published in 2007.

15.2 INTRODUCTION OF THE NOVEL – A HOUSE FOR MR BISWAS

The novel was published in 1961. V.S.Naipaul has declared his literary emergence with this novel. It is an autobiographical novel. The central character Mr.

Mohun Biswas is modeled after Naipual's father Seepersad. Anand character who is the son of Mr. Biswas is a reflection of Naipual himself. The structure of the novel constitute a prologue, Part I, Part II and an Epilogue.

15.3 SUMMARY OF A HOUSE FOR MR.BISWAS

15.3.1 Mr. Mohun Biswas's Birth-Parentage-Father's Death:

Mr. Mohun Biswas was born in village of Trinidad to humble parents Bipti and Raghu Biswas. He was born at an inauspicious hour at midnight. And he was born wrong way with six fingers. A Pundit professed on Mohun's birth that "The boy will be a lecher and a spendthrift. Possibly a liar as well. The only thing I can advise is to keep him away from trees and water. Particularly water." "Never bath him" (5-6)? The midwife predicted that the boy would eat up his mother and father. Biswas did eat up his father. Once, child Biswas took neighbors' calf to graz and lost it with his negligence. He was afraid that he would be punished by his parents and hid under bed.

His worried father went on search and drowned in well.Thus Biswas along with his two elder brothers and sister became fatherless children. His elder brothers were sent away to work on sugar-estate. His only sister Dehuti was sent to his aunt Tara at Pagotes to work as domestic assistant. Biswas, along with his mother, moved to Pagotes.

15.3.2 Brief Schooling:

Mr. Biswas was sent to Canadian Mission School. His teacher was a low-caste Hindu with the name Lal. Lal had been converted to Presbytarianism, a sect of Christianity. Biswas had befriended a Christian boy Alec. Together, the boys played all the pranks. They would lay six inch nails on the railway track to flatten them to turn them into knives and bayonets.

Biswas with Alec smoked cigarettes on the banks of Pagotes river. They tore off their shirt buttons and used them as marbles. At school their teachers tried to discipline them by flogging them and separated them. But the boys were inseparable. In the company of Alec, Biswas found his natural talent for lettering. His teachers praised him as sign painter. And Biswas did become a sign painter at a later stage of his life.

Biswas was luckier than his sister Dehuti because he had at least six years of education. While his sister spent her childhood being a domestic servant to Tara, Biswas went to Tars's house on auspicious occasions or on days of ceremonies. Tara invited him as a few Brahmins had to be fed on those occasions. He was well treated, well fed and offered new clothes on such ceremonies. After those days, Biswas was treated like any other sons of a laborer as his birth certificate obtained from the Commissioner of Oath had it. Tara's husband, Ajodha was keenly interested in a newspaper – "That Body of Yours." Sometimes, Biswas would be summoned by Ajodha to read loud the column on different human diseases in that newspaper. On such days Ajodha would pay a penny and treat him like a hried worker rather than a nephew.

15.3.3 First Job:

Biswas was taken out of school when he began learning stock and shares in arithmetic. Tara kept him under Pundit Jairam as an apprentice to be groomed into an able Pundit. Pundit Jairam taught Biswas Hindi, important scriptures and ceremonies.

Biswas perform puja to his master's family every day, morning and evening. Biswas showed positive signs of progress in his profession and personal status. Pundit Jairam had started to take him on his professional visits. Owing to this his status in the eyes of Tara's family grew. Biswas was offered the seat next to his boss, Pundit Jairam.

He would mix bicarbonate of soda for his master to drink when the master over ate. The young apprentice also had to carry back home the gifts offered to his master.

On one occasion Biswas had to carry Jariam's home a large bunch of bananas offered to the master. And this bunch was hung in kitchen to ripen. Biswas had plucked two bananas from the bunch and eat them when his master and his wife went out.

Jairam detected the missing bananas and was furious on Biswas. He ordered Biswas to eat all the rest of the bananas on the bunch. Biswas had eaten them all and became sick.

On the following day his stomach was upset. For some days after that day Biswas had constipation problem. Nature calls had come at unpredictable intervals. In such condition, one night he relieved on a handkerchief and threw it on a tree which was very sacred to Jairam. Next morning Jairam went bananas after discovering the handkerchief on his holy tree and shunted off Biswas. Thus, the protagonist of the novel lost his first career option. His mother rebuked him which hurt Biswas bad.

Thirty years after this, Biswas wrote a poem on his mother and he did not express this disappointment in it.

15.3.4 Second Job:

Tara was only hope to show Biswas to save him from unemployment. She treated him with sympathy and sent to work in her husband's rum shop. The rum shop was run by Tara's brother-in-law, Bhandat. Biswas had new experiences in the new job.

He found out that Bhandat was a drunkard, an abusive husband and had a mistress from a different community. It was also noticed by Biswas that Bhandat was cheating the customers by giving them less measures of drink. Biswas was silent witness to all this. He began to give a dollar a month to his mother. He visited his mother twice a week when the shop was closed. On day Bhandat unjustly alleged Biswas of stealing a dollar from his pocket. Biswas was beaten and driven out of job by Bhandat on this pretext. Mr. Biswas went back to his mother Bipti. Bipti scolded her son and complained that she had no luck with her children.

15.3.5 On Search for next Job:

Biswas now decided not to go back to Tara for any help. He searched for jobs in a tailor shop, a barber shop, an undertaker, a dry-goods seller etc., but had hard luck in all the shops. He returned to his mother. His mother Bipti suggested him to go back to Tara and ask for her forgiveness. Biswas strongly refused the suggestion saying that he would rather die. He met Ramchand while strolling on main road in frustrated mood.

Ramchand was the boy with whom his sister Dehuti eloped. He was taken to his sister's home by Ramchand. Dehuti was then happily married and had a child. Ramchand informed Biswas regarding latter's elder brothers Pratap and Prasad. Biswas neither enjoy the conversation nor his visit to his Dehuti's house.

15.3.6 Signboard-Painter:

During these stressful times, Biswas met his dear school friend Alec. Now, Alec is a professional signboard-painter. Biswas immediately became Alec's assistant.
The new job was satisfying to Biswas even though the offers were irregular.

Biswas skipped his duties and went on long breaks. He developed love for reading.

He read all the novels he found in the bookstalls of Pagotes. He became a fan of novels of Hall Caine and Marie Corelli. Biswas's mother and brothers began to pressure his to get married. Biswas did not want to be married until he secured a good job. He was fascinated by the works of Samuel Smiles. The money he earned from sign painting was not sufficient for him to buy electric equipment which he wanted to learn some skills. So, he joined as a conductor in Ajodha's buses. Then one day he got an offer from Hanuman House to draw some signs for Tulsi Store. This offer twisted the fate of Biswas.

15.3.7 Marriage:

Biswas saw a sixteen year old daughter of Tulsi and was attracted to her. Shama was working as a shop assistant in Tusli store. He addressed a love note to Shama saying "I love you and I want to talk to you." Biswas kept the letter under the cloth of the counter where

Shama usually stand and served her customers. The love note was found by Shama's mother Mrs. Tulsi. After all enquiries, Mrs. Tulsi and Seth decided to get Shama married to Biswas.

Mrs. Tulsi was an orthodox Hindu. She was widow with a huge property. She maintained the family and property with the help of her late husband's loyal brother, Seth. All her daughters except Shama were married.

All her married daughters along with their husbands stay in Hanuman House and did some duty given to them by Mrs. Tulis and Seth in Tulsi businesses and estates.. Biswas was accepted as match to Shama because of his caste. Biswas was not with an intention to marry Shama when he wrote the love note. He was coerced to marry Shama by Mrs. Tulsi and Seth.

The marriage was a big twist in the life of Biswas. He is now member of Hanuman House and like other sons-in-law he lived in Mrs. Tulsi's household.

15.3.8 The Influence of Arya Samaj:

In no time Biswas understood that he was a miss fit in the Mrs. Tulsi household. He continued with his job as a sign post painter. He met Misir, an under-employed painter like himself. Misir was Arwacas correspondent of a newspaper called the Trinidad Sentinel. Misir became a comrade with whom Biswas discussed all the topics like employment, Hinduism etc. He introduced him to Arya Samaj. Here, at Arya Samaj, Mr. Biswas understood the orthodox practices in his life.

15.3.9 The Disharmonious Marriage (Mr. Biswas and His Wife):

Biswas and Shama did not develop any harmony in their marriage. They both were antagonistic. He showed his frustration on Hanuman House on his wife. His wife, a loyalist to Hanuman House replied him with bitterness. He called Shama's family names "the little gods", "the big boss" (Seth), "the old Queen," "the old hen," "the old cow," (Mrs. Tulsi) etc. Shama retorted him by asking did anyone of the Tulsi family plead him to marry her. He replied saying that one day he spit on the faces of Tusli family. Shama immediately countered and told him that her family does not care to spite on his family as he was from a far inferior family. Thus grew disharmony between Biswas and Shama.

15.3.10 Open Quarrel Between The Tuslidom and Biswas:

Govind, one of the sons-in-law of Mrs.Tulsi suggested that Biswas should become a supervisor on one of the estates of Tulsis where Seth was the boss. Biswas denied the suggestion saying that he would continue as an independent man with his profession as a sign-painter. He added that Tuslis were blood sucker. So he would sell coconuts or crabs but never work under them because, Biswas wanted independence.

He openly mocked all the Tulsi family members from Mrs. Tulsi to Seth to her Sons. Govind, Owad and Tulsi was enraged by Biswas's words and demaned an apology to his mother. Biswas denied and threatened to leave Hanuman House. Then, Seth's wife Padma and Govind's Chinta stopped him from leaving.

15.3.11 Growing Misconduct of Biswas:

Biswas became more open and disgraceful in his criticism of Tuslis. He said that Mrs. Tulsi's two sons look like monkeys. He called Hanuman House a zoo where different animals lived. He mocked Hari, one of the sons-in-laws of Tulsi, as "the constipated holy man" In retaliation Shama calls Mr. Biswas a "barking puppy dog." He shocked the orthodox Tulsidom by advocating unorthodox views of Arya Samaj.

One day he intentionally threw a plate full of food on the head of Mrs. Tulsi's younger son Owad. Vexed with the disgraceful behavior of Biswas, Govindhad beaten him.

Next morning Seth summoned Biswas and told him he could be tolerated any longer in Hanuman House. He was sent away to The Chase. Shama was pregnant at this time.

15.3.12 Life at The Chase:

Biswas was given a shop at chase to run and support himself and Shama. Shama suggested Biswas that they should conduct house warming ceremony. Biswas agrees, though reluctantly. Tulsi family is invited. Hari, of the Tulsi sons-in-laws acted the priest of the ceremony. The Tulsi family attended the ceremony. The children were too naughty and undisciplined that they broke bottles in the shop whose loss Biswas bore later. The shop business soon was on the track of loss. Because Biswas was giving goods on credits and those customers stopped coming after a few days. Meanwhile Shama gave birth to their first child, a daughter. Seth gave the name Savi to the baby girl. Biswas protested that in the birth certificate of Savi, father's profession as 'labourer' instead of a shop-keeper. He continued with the same shop keeper profession as it was for next few years. After three years he had a son who was named Anand by Seth. Gradually Biswas started to recognize the order of Hanuman House which he had failed to recognize earlier. He acknowledged the hierarchy the backup it could provide to the Tulsi family members. Now Hanuman House had become a refuse to his wife and children in their difficult days. He also began to pay long and short visits to the house. Shama was not happy with living conditions at Chase. The couple were having series of quarrels on this issue. And the family expanded with the birth of third child, a daughter Myna. Biswas was entangled in litigations with bad customers. Seth suggested Biswas to insure the shop and burn it. Biswas felt it a let out of his bad business. He insured the shop and burnt it. Seth secured the insurance money and gave it to Biswas.

15.3.13 New Life at Green Vale:

Mrs. Tulsi and Seth showed new livelihood option to Biswas. He was sent with his family to Green Vale. His family lived in a room in Barracks. Biswas was paid twenty five dollars a month. Every Saturday Seth went to supervise the work done by the laborers under Biswas. Biswas started to grow restless regarding his job at Green Vale. He often argued with Shama and made her family responsible for his arduous life.

Shama often went to Hanuman house with children. On one Christams eve, Biswas went to see Shama and children who were staying at Hanuman House. He went with a gift to his daughter. He gifted a doll house to Savi and enraged the Hanuman House for his biased nature. All the sisters of Shama became hostile to Shama and her daughter. They openly complained to Shama about her husband's strange behavior. The convention in Hanuman House was that all the children must be treated equally while giving them some gifts or

presents. Mrs. Tulsi scolded Biswas. Shama smashes the doll house into pieces as he could not bear the hostility of her sisters. As a protest to all this Biswas took his daughter and went to Green Vale. When Biswas went out to his daily job Savi stayed alone. In the evenings and nights Biswas tried to spend as much time as possible with Savi by reading novels to her. But Biswas was unable to understand and handle his life and muttered curses to Tulsi family.

Meanwhile, Shama came to Green Vale and taken Savi back to Hanuman House as it was time her school reopening.

Now Bisaw as was all alone. His loneliness afflicted fears of all kind on him. He is haunted by apprehensions about his future. During this depressing time he had an unpleasant experience with Chinta. He learnt that his son Anand had been punished at school for some misdemeanor. He wanted some how to break from then cycle of life. He strongly desired to build his own house to liberate himself from this cycle of life. He believed his new house might bring about a new state of mind. Biswas constructed an incomplete house and moved into it. His son Anand came to live with him for some days. A great storm hit his incomplete home this thunders and lighting.

Anand was frightened. His lonliness, a sense of failure to build a proper home had taken a toll on Biswas's health and he was ill now. Govid Came and taken Biswas back to Hanuman House. Here he was nursed back to normal health. His self-respect kicked in after his recovery and he decided to go to Port of Spain. Biswas's sister Dehuti and her husband Ramchand were living in Port of Spain. However, his attitude further softened towards Hanumn House. He believed it as an heaven to his family. He thought his family could never starve in Hanuman House.

15.3.14 Biswas in Port of Spain:

Biswas was now thirty four years of age and father of four children. As soon as Biswas came to Port of Spain he got a new job. Biswas took the job of a reporter for a news paper called the Trinidad. Mr. Burnett, the editor of this newspaper was happy with Biswas's reports. Mrs. Tulsi arranged accommodation for Biswas in his own house in Port of Spain.

Mrs. Tulsi had been living in that house for some years now with her younger son Owad. Mrs. Biswas accepted the accommodation, though reluctantly. Mr. Biswas decided to explore more success in his career as reporter. He wrote articles to other magazines. But all of them were rejected. His children went and met all the family members from paternal and maternal side. They were part of Hanuman House. They started to go to Pagotes where Tara and Ajodha continue to live.

Owad sailed away to England for his medical education. Biswas began to focus on his son Anand's education.

On the other end, new editor took the charge of Trinidad Sentinel. He introduced a few changes in the policy and Biswas was adversely affected by them. His momentary peace in his personal life started to crumble once again. Biswas planted rose garden on one side of Tulsi's house. Seth leveled it to create parking place to his lorries. Biswas expressed his disappointment. Seth replies strongly by reminding Biswas his early days of marriage when he was poor and nobody. Seth concluded that Biswas was able establish only through his marriage with Shama.

Biswas felt miserable in his job. But could not resign it as he feared me might not find another job. Mrs. Tulsi decided to shift to her estate at Short hills. She asked Biswas family to move with her. Biswas family moved with her to Short hills.

From Short hill Biswas cycled every day to Port of Spain to attend his office. His children too had to come to Port of Spain to attend their school. This daily journey did not worry him so much. But to depend on Tulsi's for home worried him.

So, he built a house in Short hills and moved his family into it. Unfortunately his house caught fire. His family was shifted back to Mrs. Tulsi's house and he sold his burnt house. Soon a few more Tulsi family members came to stay at Short hill. And Biswas felt suffocated with this crowded home. At work his situation had become worse day by day. One dasy Biswas received the news of his mother's death. He and Shama went to attend the funeral. Biswas met his brothers and sister in the funeral. Dr. Rameshwar was very rude to his brothers when they went to obtain Bipti's death certificate. After returning to Shorthills, Biswas wrote a letter to Dr. Rameshwar condemning his behavior.

Biswas saw hope of success in his life in the success of his son Anand. His son had been preparing for Exhibition Exams so that he could secure scholarship for his higher studies. Simultaneously, Govind's son Vidhiadhar was also preparing for the same exam. When results were declared Ananad passed while Vidhiadhar failed.

Anand got third rank in the exams. He comfortable won the scholarship for his higher studies abroad and went to pursue his studies.

15.3.15 The Last phase of Biswas Life and his Death:

When Biswas was in deep dejection, he was offered a governmet job as a Community Welfare Officer with a good salary. His new superior was Miss. Logic who was an intelligent and kind hearted woman. He bought a car on loan. With his new job her was given loan on nominal interest. So, he took it and bought a car. He changed his attari. He bought suits. He went to inter-colonial cricket match in his new suit. He carried a tin of cigarettes and a box of matches in one hand. Govind made fun of Biswas's car calling it a match box.

Ajodha also mocked the car saying that the car was too light that it would be blown off the road by a strong wind.

Mrs. Tulsi asked Biswas to vacate the house as she wanted to renovate it to receive her younger son Owad after eight year stay in England. Biswas was annoyed but shifted to a humble house on rent. After the renovation they moved back. This time in place of two rooms, Biswas family were given only one room. Owad's stay made the home more over crowded. One day he quarreled about it with Mrs. Tulsi. As a resulted, Mrs. Tulsi asked him to leave house as soon as possible. He bought a house of a solicitor's clerk for five thousand and six hundred dollars. He borrowed four thousand dollars from Ajodha. The house was full of repairs. And the family was shifted to own home.

Meanwhile, Community Welfare Department was abolished by the government and Biswas lost his job. He went back to Trinidad Sentinel where his salary was very low. The debt he incurred to buy his house was now multiplied. The heavy debt had become a burden on his mind. Among these gloomy developments, Savi got a scholarship to England. On the

other end, his son Anand wrote a gloomy letter with self-pity. The letter had given the final push to Biswas' mental suffering and he went into permanent depression. One day Biswas collapsed in his office with heart attack. He was immediately taken to Colonial Hospital. This was his first heart attack. He was forbidden to claim stares. Now, Biswas hit by multiple fears. He feared for his heart, feared for his son Anand and feared for his debt. When he was on his medical rest, his salary was reduced by half by his Trinidad Sentinel. After one month he returned to his office. He had to claim staries. He took the risk of climbing the stairs to retain the job which was only source of livelihood and to repay his debt. He toiled hard day and night to write his articles. His health also improved. Now he stopped smoking altogether.

Though Biswas was working hard he failed satisfy his editors and they sacked him from job. Trinidad Sentinel served him three months' notice. Biswas was so desperate and wanted to share his anguish with somebody. He wrote a letter to his son Anand. Anand replied after three weeks and said he wanted to come to his father but situation did not permit him to do so. Biswas wanted to bring his son back to home. He prepared to take another loan to pay for Anand's fares. But Anand changed his mind and did not want to come. A brief interlude of happiness happened to Bsiwas when his elder daughter got a good job with a big salary. She came home. His daughter gave the emotional comfort and confidence which Biswas looked for a long time. They both went on small excursions in their car.

This good time with his daughter came too late to save Biswas from death. After suffering nine heart attacks, Biswas passed away at the age of Forty six. His death is reported in Trinidad Sentinel as "JOURNALIST DIES SUDDENLY." No other newspaper carried the news. An announcement came over the radio, but this had been paid for by the family. All Shama's sisters came to share her sorrow. For them it was an occasion of a family reunion.

Mr. Biswas's cremation was held on the banks of a muddy stream and attracted spectators of various communities and races. Shama and the children went back in their Perfect car to their empty house.

15.4 CHARACTERS

Mohun Biswas: Mohun Biswas is the protagonist of the Novel. He is an autobiographical character. He is literary sketch of Naipaul's father. He is mediocre character who tried best to liberate from social constrains, but failed.

Shama: Shama is the wife of Mr.Biswas. She and Biswas have not developed true bond and understanding. As daughter of orthodox Brahmin family, Shama's fate is never her hands. Before her marriage, it is decided by her mother for the sake of preserving caste interests. After marriage, she is a punch bag to Biswas to release his frustrations and despair the come from his failures.

Savi: Savi is the elder daughter of Biswas. She is naughty yet resourceful. Though Biswas showed great importance to Anand than Savi, Savi proves to be the real pillar support to her father in his final stage of life.

Anand: He is another autobiographical character of the novel. He is the literary prototype of Naipaul in this novel. In his later part of life, Biswas has grown very fond of his son and seen him as his pillar of support.

Raghu: He is the misey and superstitious father of Biswas. He is drowned in a well to death while searching for his son Biswas.

Bipti: Bipti is mother of Biswas. As a single parent of four children she relies on her sister Tara.

Pundit Jairam: He is pompous and suspicious Pundit who takes Biswas as an apprentice for some days.

Tara: She is the rich sister of Bipti. She is childless. She gives all the help she can to Bipti to bring her children.

Ajodha: Ajodha is Tara's husband. He is shrewd and good husband who is obsessed with body fitness. He helped Biswas several times with finance.

Mrs. Tulsi: She matriarch of Tulis family. She runs Hanuman House with the help of Seth. She has two sons and 14 daughers.

Seth: Seth second in command in Hanuman House. He is brother of Mrs. Tulsi's brother.

Dehuti: She is the only daughter of Bipti and sister of Mohun Biswas. She eloped with Ramchand and married him.

Pratap and Prasad: They are the brothers of Mohun Biswas.

Owad: He is the younger son of Mrs. Tulsi. He went to England to study medicine and returned as doctor.

Shekhar: The elder son of Mrs. Tulsi. He along with is younger son Owad bring westernization and breaks the Hindu tradition of Hanuman House.
Dorothy: She is the wife of Shekar. She represents modernity.

Hari: Hari is one of the Sons-in-law of Mrs. Tulsi and family priest to Hanuman House.

Govind: He is a son-in-law of Mrs. Tulsi. He breaks the Brahmin tradition and becomes a car driver. He often insults Biswas.

Dhari: He is the neighbor of Raghu. Biswas lost Dhari's calf which led to his father's death.
Lokhan: Lokhan is the man who took out Raghu's body.

F.Z. Ghany: He is corrupt person who supply fake legal certificates to people.

Bhandat: He is Ajodha's brother. He is drunkard and an abuser. But he fears Tara.

Miss Logie: She is the young head of the Community Welfare Department where Mohun Worked.

Sushila: She is the widowed daughter of Mrs. Tulsi. She takes care of Mrs. Tulsi.

Chinta: She is another daughter of Mrs. Tulsi. She is a passive wife of Govind. She does not resist if even Govind beats her.

15.5 QUESTION

1. Critically explain the literary career of V.S.Naipual.
2. What are the common themes in V.S.Naipual's novels?
3. What is the plot of *A House for Mr. Biswas*?
4. What are the main characters in *A House for Mr. Biswas*?
5. Elucidate Mr. Mohun Biswas's character.

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DR. CH.V. MANJUSHA

LESSON 16
CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF *A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS*

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the lesson is to help the learners to understand

- The thematic concerns of *A House For Mr. Biswas*
- The critical aspects of *A House For Mr. Biswas*
- The Cultural relevance of the novel
- Technical excellence of the novel

STRUCTURE

16.1 THE PICARESQUE NOVEL

Introduction:

A Picaresque novel is the one where a rogue protatginist undertakes series of adventures in the course of life journey. V.S. Naipual's magnum opus *A House For Mr. Biswas* is a picaresque novel. The picaresque nature of the novel can be noted in the following qualities of the novel

16.1.1 The Titles of the Chapters:

The titles of the chapters in the novel echo the journey of Mr. Biswas. In the first part, the chapters titled 'Pastoral,' 'Before the Tusli,' 'The Tulsi,' 'The Chase,' 'Green Vale' and 'A Departure' illustrate the journey of the hero. Similarly in the second part the chapter titles – 'Amazing Scenes,' 'The New Regime,' 'The Shorthill Adventure,' 'Among the Readers and Learners,' 'The void,' 'The Revolution' and 'The House' maintain the nomadic atmosphere in the novel. Naipaul aptly titles his chapters to showcase the picaresque quest of his hero.

Every chapter of Part I and II has its own importance. The first chaptere "Pastoral' details the circumstances in which Biswas takes his birth and how his family moves from Parrot Trace to Pagotes. The second Chapter shows how Biswas's mother Tara tries to establish him in life firstly as a Pundit and secondly as wine-vendor. This chapter also tells us how he becomes a sign-painter. The chapter 'The Tulsi' narrates his marriage with Shama one of the daughters of Tulsi family and birth of his love of independence and his rebellion.

The next chapter 'The Chase,' details the birth of his four children and Biswas's anxieties. In the chapter 'Green Vale' Biswas makes failed attempts to build a house of his own and falls in realms of depression. Finally, 'A Departure' gives him a farewell from Hanuman House.

In the Part II of the novel, the chapters - Amazing Scenes,' 'The New Regime,' 'The Shorthill Adventure,' 'Among the Readers and Learners,' 'The void,' 'The Revolution' and 'The House' shows Mr. Biswas on path of rebellion, short lived liberty, ultimate doom and the conclusion of his mediocre life in premature death. Thus, the sequence of event in Part I and II clearly demonstrates that Mr. Biswas's life is an adventurous one and he had to pass through many stresses and strains to survive to the last. Hence, the chapters are designed to the affect of picaresque.

16.1.2 Picaresque Structure:

The structure of the novel also indicates the picaresque expedition of the protagonist. *A House for Mr. Biswas* lacks unity of action and a clean knit compact structure. The lack of well knit structure and loose and episodic plot is a remarkable indication of picaresque mode.

Readers might feel that many episodes in the novel might be more clean with pruning. However, Naipual with his high deft of fiction is not faulty. But he intentionally lets his pen follow free with his imagination which hightens the picaresque nature of the novel.

16.1.3 Picaresque Characterization:

The novel has plenty of characters. All the characters have a direct or indirect role in shaping the life of Mr. Biswas. But there is an inconsistent interaction between the protagonist and other characters which again makes the novel a picaresque novel. The protagonist Mr. Biswas's feelings, frustrations and the sense of futility are kept divided over many places and among various characters.

16.1.4 Picaresque Hero:

A pircresque hero is a rogue who does not comply with any moral, value system and sentiment. Mr. Biswas is apt depiction of Picaresque hero. He has no concern for any social values or cultures.

Conclusion: A *House For Mr. Biswas* stands first in Naipaul's picaresque novels like *A Flag on the Island, In a Free State, Guerillas* and *A Bend in the Rivers*.

16.2 THE MEDIOCRE AS REBEL

V.S. Naipual portrayed Mr. Biswas as a mediocre, a novice and a man without anchorage. The protagonist of A House For Mr. Biswas is a mediocre. He does not possess any traditional heroic qualities like being ideal, strong, brave, virtuous, free from malice, kind, considerate, wise, intelligent and effective in any sense. He is a feeble heart to face any odds in life. In spite of all his heroic short comings he longs for respect and independence.

On the grounds of his longing for independence he qualifies as a mediocre hero. However, the question does he deserve to be a hero?, make a whole another discussion. Generally, a hero triumphs over all the challenges and odds in the end of any story. But in the novel hero Biswas dies prematurely after failing to secure his long desired independence.

16.2.1 Ill-Fated Child:

Mr. Biswas was born with a bad horoscope. At his birth, he was prophesied that he would grow up to be a liar, a lecher and spendthrift. Though his prophecy did not come out true entirely, his life progressed on the levels of sub standards of life. The prophecy that Biswas was ominous to his father came true in totality. His father who went on search to seek missing child Mohun Biswas, he was drowned in well to death while Biswas was hiding under bed at home.

16.2.2 Mediocre Career:

Mr. Biswas had an unsuccessful career. He was an average student. First he worked as an apprentice to a pundit. But with his irresponsible behavior he got fired. Pt. Jairam drove him away after he stolen a banana. He failed as a Wine-shop keeper. He was very good in sing board painting. But he ruins this profession when he dared to write a love letter to one of the daughters of Hanuman House. Then career options went out of his hand and into the hands of Mrs. Tulsi and Seth. He messed up every job he got in different enterprises of Tulsis. At last he ended his career as an unsuccessful reporter and short story writer.

16.2.3 Selfish Person:

Biswas held sentiment towards no body. He had no filial feeling. He did not care or worry about his mother Bipti. He did bother about his brothers and sister. He showed neither loyalty nor respect to any of his employers. Biswas always complained that he was forced to marry Shama. The fact was he intiated the marriage as he wrote an amorous love letters to her. As a father he proudly claimed the success of his children but he played minimal role in their upbringing. All he cared for was his own comfort.

16.2.4 Suffers from Identity Crisis:

Mr. Biswas was a man of self-respect. He loved freedom. But he lacked vision, talent, and commitment to keep his self respect and win his freedom. These conflicting qualities gave him anxiety and depression. He wanted freedom from Tulsidom. He constructed three houses to win his long cherished dream of independent house and liberation from Tulsidom.

All the three times his inadequate preparation led him to failure and consequent depression. Unable to pay the loans incurred to buy his third house finally doomed him at an age of fourty six.

16.2.5 Mediocre Rebel:

The deficiencies as discussed above made him mediocre. But he went to his grave as a rebel. He rebelled against everybody and everything that encroach his freedom and self-respect. But his substandard personality made him a mediocre rebel.

Conclusion: V.S. Naipual's Mr. Biswas is an ambiguous personality who is a hero of his own life. But by general standards of life he is a mediocre Rebel.

16.3 THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY

Introduction:

Two themes of social and individual development are blended in V.S.Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*. Of the two themes the theme of individual development dominates the quest of identity. Failing to establish as an assistant to Pundit Jairam or Bhandat Mr. Biswas marries Shama to survive in this world. For many months he does not live in subordination and his self-respecting independent soul starts to rebel against the Hanuman House which is a symbol of traditionalism, conservatism and the old Hindu culture. This is first phase of identity quest.

16.3.1 Disobedience to code of conduct:

Biswas quest for identity lies in refusing to obey every code of conduct that reduces his freedom. He mocks them in his own absurd way if not in a heroic way. Biswas hated the job of pandit and restriction of his master he threw dirty handkerchief on the tree which is very sacred to his master. This is a mocking act of disobedience. He hated the code of conduct of Hanuman House. He tried to break it by buying gift only to his daughter Savi and ignoring the other children of Hanuman House. He could not confront the domination of Mrs.

Tulsi and Seth. So, he meekly displays his disobedience by calling them different names in front of his wife.

16.3.2 Marginalized Childhood:

Mohun Biswas had a marginalized childhood with lack of father figure. He had no wise man guidance in his growing up years. Hence, he developed inferiority complex and anxieties which clouded his true identity. For the rest of his life he is in quest of his individual identity.

16.3.3 Poverty:

Economic crisis inflected great wounds of the identity of Biswas. His financial weakness always entices him to bow down before the domination which Biswas struggle against to embrace his own independent identity. He is burdened to support his mother and later his wife and children.

16.3.4 Conflict between individual vs the Society:

The identity quest in the novel *A House For Mr. Biswas* mainly constitutes the conflict of Biswas's individuality and the society manifested in the form of system of Hnauman House etc. Every attempt Mohun has made to liberate himself from Human House domination over his life it is an individual's attempt to liberate from the constrains that society lays over an individual.

Conclusion: Quest of identity is one of the main themes of the novel *A House For Mr. Biswas*. Mohun Biswas's attempt to construct an individual house is an individual to liberate form the bounds of society.

16.4 THE CLASH OF CULTURES

The first four novels of V.S. Naipual deal with cultural confusions in a Trinidadian society. The cultural confusions in these novels arise out of the multi racial society where traditional culture is lost. The clash is between rural Indian conditions, failure of Hindu culture and failure of younger generations to survive in Caribbean situation. The Caribbean cultural tapestry weaves in the cultures of Africa, Asian and European. V.S. Naipual satires the cultural conflict in the novel *A House For Mr. Biswas*. The clash of cultures is one of the dominant themes of this novel.

16.4.1 Tulsidom or Hindu Culture:

Tulsi Family representation the old Hindu culture. Tulsi family is symbol of old Hindu culture ever since it was late Pundit settled in Trinidad along with thousand other Indians. Mrs. Tulsi and Seth are the custodians and the law of the family. The elders are respected by the youngers. Every members of the family has a job or duty in the family. Even the married daughters follow the customs of Hanuman House. The sons-in-law also must obey the regularities and system of Tulsidom. The family priest, Hari performs the pujas regularly. The family has solidarity under the command of Mrs.Tulsi to resist any outside efforts to affect the family custom.

16.4.2 Western Influence and Disintegration of Tulsidom or Hindu Culture:

The Western culture is interpolated into Tulsidom by its sons. Mrs. Tulsi has sent her sons to Roman Catholic schools where they have learnt western education along with western culture. They wear crucifixes. One of her sons, Shekar marries Christian girl. Her other son Owad has gone to England to study Medicine and Surgery. To cross seas is against Hindu religion. As such Mrs. Tulsi's sons deviated from the traditional culture of Hindu family. The new generation even leaves the Hanuman House, the fiefdom of Hindu culture and settles on its own terms. Govind breaks away from family traditions and becomes a driver. Similarly, W.C. Tuttle move out of Hanuman House. The combined effect of these actions is the Tulsidom the symbol of Hindu culture.

16.4.3 Mr. Biswas – Cultural confusion:

Mohun Biswas is perfect illustration of cultural clash in Trinidad settled Indians. He neither compromise with Indian traditional culture nor succeeds to immerse totally into the Westernized conditions. He resists settling to the traditional role meant for him by the virtue of his birth as Pandit and tries in his own mediocre way to escape from it. He makes many attempts to break out of the custody of customs of Hanuman House or traditional cultures.

His attempt to become a journalist and short story wrtier are his attempts into the westernized culture. Unfortunately he fails. His attempts to construct a house is his attempt his own identity amidst the clash of traditional and western cultures. By the end he fails to makes a place for himself in this clash of cultures and dies. But his children are bent towards the western culture with education and professional life. Savi, his eldest child takes a profession unlike her grandmother, mother and aunties. Hence, his children might be more comfortable in western culture while retaining the traditional roots is left to speculation.

16.5 THE COMIC ELEMENTS

A House For Mr. Biswas amuses its readers with a healthy dose of comedy while being a tragic novel. V.S. Naipaul generates three types of comedy. They are character portraitures, comic situation and comedy of Dialogue.

5.5.1 Comedy of character Portraiture

The following are the comedy of character Portraiture

a) **Tara:** Her obsession for jewelry brings relieving humour into the novel. She wears bangles until her elbows. Often, she encourages her sister Bipti to follow her taste in jewelry. This aspect of the novel amuses the readers.

b) **Ghany:** The solicitor and oath commissioner Ghany' eccentric behavior is an element of humour. He has all his books covered in thick layers of dust.

c) **Lal:** The contradiction in the beliefs and actions of Lal, a low caste teacher who was converted into Christianity. He has high principles and believes in teaching the student with stick.

d) **Alec:** The school friend of Biswas has a unique physical condition. When he consumes medicinal pills everything appears to him in blue colour.

e) **Pandit Jairam:** He is again a character of contridictions. He does one thing and advices others the opposite. He believes in God but does not tell others to do so. He is vegetarian. But he advices others to eat non-vegetarian food saying that God Ram also ate non-vege. His punishment to Biswas to eat whole bananas is funny too.

f) **Mrs. Tulsi:** Mrs. Tulsi is the most dominating character in the novel. V.S. Naipual adds humours element to this character too. Tulsi has fainting fits. Whenever she has fits a funny ritual shall be conducted. All her daughters attend to her. A daughter will rushes to Rose Room where Tulsi is resting. Other daughter fans her. Anotehr two daughters massage her feet. The rest of the family eagerly await at the doors of the Rose room to help in serving Tulis on the instructions of Padma and Sushi. The description of medicine bottles is also funny. Naipaul gives comic touch after this elaborate episode that Tulsi is faking the faint.

g) **Mr. Tulsi's Sons-in-Law:** Tulsi's sons-in-law's do not lag behind in providing that comic touch to the novel. Govind's appetite appears funny. He leaves his traditional land work and becomes a taxi driver. The changes he makes to his attair is funny. Another son-in-law, Hari spends most of the time in toilet making the other family members wait outside the bath room. He is the family priest and his ridiculous manners as priest also are comic.

h) **W.C. Tuttle:** He is another source of comedy. His obsession with gramophone, his extra marital affair with Chinese woman and his son create a good amount of humour.

i) **Mr. Biswas:** Though Mohun Biswas is a tragic hero his character also serves humorous. His mediocre behavior creates humour. The relationship between Biswas his wife Shama is oddly amusing. The scene where Biswas rides on bicycle in suit with tin of cigerettes. The episodes where Biswas is humours in ironic way.

16.5.2 Comedy of Situation:

The novel has comedy of situation. The death of Mohan Biswas is sad but the manner it happens is humourous. Raghu, Mohun Biswas's father goes out search for his son who went missing. Mohun went with a calf out and calf was lost. Afraid of punishment Mohun hides under the bed. When his parents did not find him, his father went out searching him near the well. While searching for his son Raghu accidently falls into the well dies. In the

first part of the novel this episode is the most ironic yet comic episode. Later, Mr. Biswas spits the gargled water on Owad's head and throws a plate of food on him is also funny. The insurance of Mr. Biswas's shop at the Chase and its immediately setting on fire for compensation creates amusing situation. The rivalry between Govind, China and Tuttlee, Mr. Biswas's adventures of investigating deserving detitutes and the prostitute demanding his fee make the reader laugh.

Conclusion: *A House For Mr. Biswas* is a tragedy novel. Yet, V.S. Naipual manages to include humour in it.

16.6 THE SYMBOLIC DEVICES

Symbolism is a preferred literary technique in modern literatures. Symbolism is a literary device in which an abstract idea is represented by concrete object or phenomenon.

Characters and events can also be employed as symbols. Symbolism can be subtle. A symbol can be a physical object, or a character, or an event. To give deep impact of meaning the writers employ symbols. V.S. Naipual's pen is one of the efficient hands in using employment. *A House for Mr. Biswas* is testament to the bent of V.S.Naipual. The important symbols in the novel are like the following-

16.6.1 Hanuman House:

The main symbol of A House For Mr. Biswas is Hanuman House. It stands for rigid conservatism. It stands for ordering society where an individual freedom is compromised. It has a hierarchy where Mrs. Tulsi and Seth are at the helm of power. The remaining sons, daughters, sons-in-law and grand children are slaves. The House exploits the homelessness and poverty of the family members. V.S. Naipual incorporates this symbol to mock at traditional conservatism in the society. Mr. Biswas is the mouth piece of V.S. Naipual to satire the conservative oppression in the society. He calls Hanuman House as monkey – god or monkey-business or Zoo. Mrs. Tulsi's sons and the mediocre rebel of Biswas shake the foundation of Hanuman House. Mrs. Tulsi's sons have crossed the Hindu culture when they crossed the seas to pursue education and returns to Hanuman House with Christian wives. Thus, crumbles the Hanuman House.

16.6.2 Barracks:

Mr. Biswas always tries to escape from barracks. Barracks are Tulsi houses. They are symbols of regimentation of life. Hence Mr. Biswas suffers with low self-esteem while living in the barracks. He tries multiple times to escape form uncomfortable command over his life. In such attempts he goes to Green Vale, to the Chase and to Port of Spain to breathe the air of freedom.

16.6.3 Mr. Biswas's Independent House:

On the whole Mr. Biswas makes three attempt to build his own house. His obsessive desire to build his house is symbolic action to achieve individual liberty. However, since Biswas is a tragic hero, he fails to win his freedom and dies burdened by debts incurred on his house.

16.6.4 The Doll's House:

Mr. Biswas brings a doll house to his duaghater Savi on her birthday. He invites the wrath of Hanuma House for bringing gift only to his daughter ignoring all other children.

Shama, Mr. Biswas's wife breaks the doll house to pieces as she could not put up with hostility of her sisters. The doll house stands for Biswas's future plan to build a house. And Shama's action predicts the fate of Biswas's dream independent house – It shall be crashed.

This doll house and the scene predicts the future of Mr.Biswas's desire to build his own house and failure of his dream.

16.6.5 The Forestation and Deforestation of Land:

The rejection of authority in the novel is portrayed through forestation and deforestation phenomenon. The forestation represents Biswas's aspiration and his partial success in building his independent house. The deforestation represents the depression and anxiety of failure in Biswas. At Chase and Green Vale Biswas does not plant anything which indicates his nightmarish feelings. At Port of Spain and Sikkim Street he plants and nurtures beautiful gardens. This indicates his fulfilled and happy mind.

Conclusion: To conclude, V.S.Naipual uses apt symbols in most effective way to portray his themes in the novel.

16.7 IRONY, PATHOS AND HUMOUR

Irony, Pathos, and Humour are major features of A House For Mr. Biswas. Irony is a literary technique that emphasis the targeted idea or emotion or ideas by juxta positioning the surface meaning and the actual meaning. Pathos evokes the sad feelings of the readers.

16.7.1 Irony:

The life of Biswas is marked by irony. Biswas career is ironic. He wants to succeed in every career he has taken up from pandit to news reporter. Ironically, he fails in all of them.

Releasing himself from the powerful tentacles of Hanuman House is his life ambition. Every time he separates from Tulsidom irony pushes him into the command of Tulsidom.

Ultimate irony, Biswas's dream becomes his doom. The irony in the novel is partly comic because, Biswas's efforts to achieve land him in the ironic predicaments.

16.7.2 Pathos:

A House For Mr. Biswas is a tragedy. Pathos is the main machinery that creates tragic atmosphere in the novel. The death of Ragu, father of Mohun Biswas is a pathetic episode.

Biswas becomes a fatherless child, an irreparable damage to his life. Teenage and young Biswas living in Pundit Jairam's house and later at Bhandat's wine-shop is also very pathetic. The inhuman strictness imposed on him at these places is pathetic. Young Biswas pathetically asks his mother why he is being sent to live at their mercy. At Chase, Biswas

loses his health and leads a gloomy live. He becomes helpless to save himself from the debts on his house. He is further burdened by news of his only hope his son Anand fails in his scholarship exams. At the end he suffers heart attacks and meets a pathetic death at the age of forty six.

16.7.3 The Humour:

There is no dearth of houmour in this novel. The following textual passage which etches the deficiencies of Mr. Biswas's house is a good example to the sarcastic houmour in the novel - "In the days that followed they made more discoveries. The landing pillars had rotted because they stood next to a tap which emerged from the back wall of the house.

Shama spoke about the possibility of subsidence. Then they discovered that the yard had no drainage of any sort." The portrait of his neighbor is also hilarious – "The man was a joke. As I say, it was like a hobby to him. Picking up window frames here and there, from the American base and where not. Picking up a door here and another one there and bringing them here. A real disgrace. A speculator that's what he was. A real speculator…"
Thus irony, pathos and humour are richly supplied in the novel.

16.8 QUESTIONS

1. What are the major symbols of V.S. Naipaul's *A House ForMr. Biswas*?
2. Critically examine the mediocre personality of Mr. Mohun Biswas?
3. How do the Irony, Pathos and humour of the novel effect the novel?
4. What is a Picaresque Novel? What are the Picaresque qualities of the novel?
5. Analytically describe the cultural clash in the nvoel?

16.9 REFERENCES

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16.10 DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENTS

- While attempting questions on this novel write the authors introduction and novel introduction from the previous lesson that is 5.1.1

DR. CH.V.MANJUSHA,

LESSON 17
WAITING FOR THE BARBARIANS
By J.M.Cootzee

OBJECTIVES

The aim of the novel waiting for Barbarians is a novel about empires and imperialism by South African Noble Laureate J, M. Coetzee. It is about the barbarians and waiting for them to do whatever horrible thing people imagine.The objective of the novel, barbarian does make thematic use of its setting, offering subtle commentary on Detroit's economic and cultural abandonment.

STRUCTURE

17.1 INTRODUCTION

J.M. Coetzee**,** in full John Maxwell Coetzee**,** (born February 9, 17940, Cape Town, South Africa), South African novelist, critic, and translator noted for his novels about the effects of colonization. In 2003 he won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Coetzee was educated at the University of Cape Town (B.A., 1960; M.A., 1963) and the University of Texas (Ph.D., 1969). An opponent of apartheid, he nevertheless returned to live in South Africa, where he taught English at the University of Cape Town, translated works from the Dutch, and wrote literary criticism. He also held visiting professorships at a number of universities.

Dusklands (1974), Coetzee's first book, contains two novellas united in their exploration of colonization, *The Vietnam Project* (set in the United States in the late 20th century) and *The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee* (set in 18th-century South Africa). *In the Heart of the Country* (1977; also published as *From the Heart of the Country*; filmed as *Dust*, 1986) is a stream-of-consciousness narrative of a Boer madwoman, and *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), set in some undefined borderland, is an examination of the ramifications of colonization. *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983), which won the Booker Prize, concerns the dilemma of a simple man beset by conditions he can neither comprehend nor control during a civil war in a future South Africa.Coetzee continued to explore themes of the colonizer and the colonized in *Foe* (1986), his reworking of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Coetzee's female narrator comes to new conclusions about power and otherness and ultimately concludes that language can enslave as effectively as can chains. In *Age of Iron* (1990) Coetzee dealt directly with circumstances in contemporary South Africa, but in *The Master of Petersburg* (1994) he made reference to 19th-century Russia (particularly

to Fyodor Dostoyevsky's work *The Devils*); both books treat the subject of literature in society. In 1999, with his novel *Disgrace*, Coetzee became the first writer to win the Booker Prize twice. After the novel's publication and an outcry in South Africa, he moved to Australia, where he was granted citizenship in 2006.

The structure of Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello* (2003), a series of "lessons" (two of which had been published in an earlier volume) in which the eponymous narrator reflects on a variety of topics, puzzled many readers. One reviewer proposed that it be considered "non-nonfiction."

Costello makes a surreal reappearance in Coetzee's *Slow Man* (2005), about a recent amputee's reluctance to accept his condition. *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007) employs a literally split narrative technique, with the text on the page divided into concurrent storylines, the main story being the musings of an aging South African writer modelled on Coetzee himself.

In *The Childhood of Jesus* (2013), a boy and his guardian scour a dystopian world—from which desire and pleasure have apparently been purged—in search of the boy's mother. The first in a trilogy, it was followed by *The Schooldays of Jesus* (2016) and *The Death of Jesus* (2020).The notably reticent author's nonfiction books included *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (1988); *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews* (1992); *Giving Offense: Essays on Censorship* (1996); and the autobiographic trilogy *Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life* (1997), *Youth: Scenes from Provincial Life II* (2002), and *Summertime* (2009). *Here and Now: Letters 2008–2011* (2013) is a collection of correspondence between Coetzee and American novelist Paul Auster. *The Good Story: Exchanges on Truth, Fiction, and Psychotherapy* (cowritten with Arabella Kurtz) was published in 2015.

17.2 CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL

The Magistrate
A civil servant of the Empire who's looking forward to retiring soon, the magistrate is the narrator and protagonist (though his proper name is never revealed) of *Waiting for the Barbarians*.

The Barbarian Girl
Captured (along with her father and several others) by Colonel Joll's men during the first days of their military campaign against the nomads.

Colonel Joll
A colonel in the Empire's army, Joll visits the Empire's frontier settlements in order to interrogate any barbarians who have been taken prisoner, hoping to gain information about the barbarians' raiding plans.

Warrant Officer Mandel
A warrant officer for the Empire, Mandel is sent to replace the magistrate's position after the magistrate has been charged with treason (consorting with the barbarians).

The Girl at the Inn
The magistrate visits a "girl at the inn" (probably a prostitute) regularly, and even continues to visit her when he's involved with the barbarian girl.

The Two Soldiers
Conscripted by the magistrate to accompany him on his expedition to deliver the barbarian girl back to her people, the two soldiers ultimately serve an integral role in the magistrate's incrimination.

The Barbarian Man
Captured along with his nephew, the barbarian boy, this nameless man is ultimately killed during his interrogation by Colonel Joll.

The barbarian girl's father
The father of the barbarian girl. He dies while being interrogated.

Minor Characters
Mai
Mai cooks at the inn located in the settlement under the magistrate's jurisdiction (before his arrest). When the magistrate is released from jail, assuming leadership of the fort again, he sleeps with her—the two having been sexually involved in the past.

The Guide
To lead his expedition to return the barbarian girl to her people, the magistrate hires a hunter and horseman as a guide, since he's familiar with the vast stretch of land between the magistrate's settlement and the mountains where the barbarians live.

The Warder
While the magistrate is imprisoned, he's supervised by a warder who brings him his breakfast and releases him every two days for an hour of exercise.

The Barbarian Boy
A boy captured along with his uncle, the barbarian man, at the start of the book. After his uncle is killed, the boy is tortured by Colonel Joll and then taken along with Joll to act as a "guide."

The Little Boy
While the magistrate is imprisoned, a little boy brings him his dinner every night, escorted by a guard. The boy, for a while, becomes one of the magistrate's only contact with other human beings—a daily interaction to which he looks forward.

The Doctor
The only doctor in the settlement, and not a very skilled one.

17.3 SUMMARY

The historical background of Waiting for the Barbarians

In 1976, five years before *Waiting for the Barbarians* was published, the Soweto Uprising occurred, marking a turning point in the history of South Africa and the anti-apartheid movement. During the Soweto Uprising, approximately fifteen-to-twenty thousand school children in the South-West Townships of South Africa (one region, among others in South Africa, where blacks were forcibly relocated by the South African government controlled by the apartheid-enforcing National Party) marched in protest of an educational

policy mandating the use of Afrikaans (the language of the Dutch settlers in South Africa) in such regions of black segregation. The policy was problematic for a number of reasons, but especially for the difficulty it posed for the students' learning—the language was not commonly known by both students and teachers. While the protest began peacefully, police eventually opened fire on the students. At least 176 died the week after the riot, and, in the weeks that followed, protests occurred in 160 different black townships throughout the country. Ultimately, 14,000 students would go into exile and join a resistance movement (Umkontho we Sizwe, or "Spear of the Nation") against the South African government. In general, the 1970s in South Africa witnessed the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement, an ideological movement spawned by anti-apartheid thinkers and activists in reaction to the racist governance of the National Party. This movement emphasized the psychological and physical liberation of black people from the rampant oppression they faced on social, political, and economic levels—but especially the social. The anti-apartheid activist Steven Biko was a prominent leader in this movement, and his death is alluded to in the novel.

Arrested by the South African government in 1977, he died within eighteen days of being detained. Like Colonel Joll's explanation for why the barbarian girl's father died during his interrogation, an officer in charge of Biko's arrest claimed that "there was a scuffle . Mr. Biko hit his head against a wall." But it was later revealed that Biko had suffered monstrously harsh torture. More generally, the government's fear of an "other" that it both oppresses and depicts as an existential threat as a way to assert its own control that is on display in Waiting for the Barbarians was also visible in apartheid South Africa. *Waiting for the Barbarians* can and should be read as dissecting the nature of such political structures, though the novel should not *only* be seen as such a criticism. The novel takes place in an unnamed, fictional country that in some ways resembles real world South Africa and in others seems as if it is from Medieval or Roman times.

Plot summary

The main protagonist of the novel is a nameless civil servant, who serves as **magistrate** to a frontier settlement owned by a nameless empire. The Empire, a vague colonialist regime, sets itself in opposition to the "barbarians," mysterious nomadic peoples who live in the wild lands bordering the Empire. The magistrate is looking forward to a quiet retirement, and hopes to live out his last years of service without anything too eventful happening—he spends his free time looking for ruins in the desert and trying to interpret pieces of pottery he finds. His life falls into disarray, however, when a **Colonel Joll** arrives at his fort.

There's been fear recently brewing in the Empire's capital that the "barbarians" are plotting a full-scale offensive, and Joll has been sent to investigate whether this is true. But his methods of investigation are brutal, and they deeply disturb the magistrate. Joll employs vicious torture tactics, which seem to force his victims into fabricating information that confirms his hypothesis, just in order to cease the pain. One such victim, a young **barbarian girl**, whose father died at the hands of Joll and his interrogation assistants, ends up playing a central role in the magistrate's life. After her release, he sees her begging on the streets of the fort; her ability to walk and to see have been greatly hindered by Joll's torture techniques.

The magistrate takes the girl in, hiring her as a cook and maid, but their relationship quickly moves from professional to sexual—from being motivated by the good will of the magistrate to more questionable intentions. Over time, the magistrate grows frustrated with

the barbarian girl, finding her personality enigmatic and impenetrable. He begins to have anxiety over the meaning of his own sexuality. Eventually, he decides to take the girl back to her people. The magistrate then assembles a team of two other soldiers, several horses, and a stock of supplies, and heads out on a grueling journey into dangerous wintry storms in the desert. Upon returning, and having successfully returned the young girl to the mysterious "barbarians," the magistrate's life becomes especially complicated.

An officer (**Mandel**) has already replaced the magistrate's office, and the magistrate is taken into custody, being believed to have consorted with the barbarians. Mandel informs him that the Empire is planning a military campaign against the barbarians. The two soldiers who accompanied the magistrate, having witnessed from afar the magistrate's interactions with the barbarians in returning the girl, confirm this false accusation. The magistrate is imprisoned at the fort, and charges of treason are drawn up against him.

The magistrate, demanding a trial, is never given one, but he's nevertheless tortured, beaten, and starved; eventually, Mandel sets him free, no longer viewing the magistrate's keep as a justifiable expenditure. The magistrate then assumes a life of begging, and gradually regains the trust of the village people. Meanwhile, the soldiers, led by Joll to fight against the barbarians, are dying in the desert, their campaign failing, and those who remain at the frontier settlement begin to abuse their authority, ransacking the fort's shops and causing mayhem.

Eventually, Mandel and most of the soldiers return to the capital, and many of the fort's inhabitants follow. The magistrate regains his former position, and stability among the settlement returns. One day, a weary Colonel Joll returns to the settlement in a carriage, accompanied by several soldiers, but the villagers throw bricks at them. The magistrate tries to communicate with Joll, but he won't open the carriage. He and his company quickly leave.

The novel ends as the magistrate tries to write the history of the settlement, but he finds himself unable to. He's unable to reconcile the horror of the events which befell the settlement at the beginning of Joll's investigation with the beauty he attributes to the life of the town as a whole—a life whose scale he conceives as being beyond day-to-day historical events, but rather as bound up in the cyclical time of the constantly changing seasons.

17.4 THEMES IN WAITING FOR THE BARBARIANS

Savagery and Barbarism

Barbarism, from the Latin *barbarismus* and Greek *barbarismos*, can be defined two ways. First, it can mean a "lack of culture or an uncivilized condition" as in the Latin root and "foreign speech" as in the Greek root. This is what the magistrate means in Chapter 2 when he describes the barbarians as "lazy, immoral, filthy, stupid." The Empire perpetuates the second definition of *barbarism*—"extreme cruelty or brutality"—to spread fear and garner support for its expeditions. At the beginning of the novel, the magistrate and possibly even the reader believe society is divided into two groups. There are the civilized townsfolk who follow the orders of the Empire, and the savage outsiders, the barbarians, who pose a threat to well-ordered civilization.

Throughout the novel the reader never catches a glimpse of the so-called "violent" barbarians. The closest the reader comes to seeing violence from the barbarians is when the

crucified soldier's body is returned strapped to a horse in Chapter 5. Nevertheless, panic about an impending barbarian attack spreads. The Empire sends Colonel Joll and his men to investigate the likelihood of a barbarian attack. Their inquisition gives them the power to arrest, question, and torture anyone they believe might have useful information. As they feed the fear of the people, they are given license to intensify their methods. When Mandel, a warrant officer, arrives, the magistrate draws a comparison between Mandel's outward appearance and the facade of civilization. Mandel keeps his office clean and organized, with a beautiful vase of flowers on the desk, but clearly Mandel is the savage "barbarian," not the nomads. He treats his prisoners, including the magistrate, as subhuman, delighting in their pain and suffering. Under Mandel's example, the townsfolk are transformed from bystanders into participants. The savage torture of prisoners begins hidden away in the granary.

However, only a few months later, the torture takes place in the yard in full view of the townsfolk, who are encouraged to participate.

The magistrate starts out believing he is better than the barbarians. He also sees himself as better than the violent officers, such as Colonel Joll and Mandel, who treat the barbarians savagely. Through his experiences, however, he realizes his complicity in the savage treatment of his neighbors. While he never actively participates in torturing prisoners, he benefits from the violent colonization of indigenous people. In his position of power, he perpetuates the Empire's rule and is, thus, party to their tactics. When considering the connotations of the words *barbarian, barbarism,* and *barbarous,* the reader can see that the terms can be applied to any of the characters in the novel and to the Empire itself.

Truth

Both the magistrate and Colonel Joll are obsessed with the idea of truth, although their understanding of the word differs. Colonel Joll believes in absolute truth. To Joll, history has a clear divide between good and bad as well as truth and lies. He uses torture as his way of exacting "truth" from his prisoners. "Pain is truth; all else is subject to doubt," he says.

It immediately becomes clear that Joll is only interested in the truth that matches his own views, namely that the barbarians are plotting against the Empire. He will question, coerce, and torture victims until their version of "the truth" matches his own.

The magistrate, on the other hand, equally subverts truth, but does so in a passive, nonviolent way. As an unreliable narrator, the magistrate omits information from his story, changes his opinions, and casts himself favorably—as a savior rather than a predator. The magistrate's version of "the truth" differs wildly, no doubt, from the nomad girl's version of the truth, although the reader never learns her version of events. This discord within the narrative nods to the "truth" of history in general. The magistrate obsesses over the ancient ruins he excavates, and he collects various scraps of ancient writing that he hopes to translate.

As he excavates, he considers the history his own settlement will leave behind. He longs to record the "true" history of his settlement through maps, ledgers, and eventually a memoir. As the novel progresses, it becomes clear that history will be written by the colonizer. The "truth" of the relationship between the Empire and the barbarians will likely be written by the Empire. It will not be written by the indigenous people whose language and

culture the Empire erases. The barbarian version of "truth," just like the nomad girl's version of "truth," will be as easily discarded as the ancient scraps of paper Mandel destroys.

Dominance and Masculinity

Power in *Waiting for the Barbarians* is tied to dominance—typically through violent dominance imposed by white men upon vulnerable subgroups, including women, minorities, and animals. This dominance is best exemplified through the Empire, represented by Colonel Joll, Mandel, and the guards, all of whom are white men. The Empire asserts its dominance first through the colonization of barbarian land. It perpetuates its dominance through the violent imprisonment, questioning, and torture of the indigenous people, the ethnic minorities referred to as "barbarians" throughout the novel. Its dominance is tied to traditionally masculine activities—hunting and womanizing. When the magistrate first meets Colonel Joll, for example, Joll brags about having been on a recent hunting excursion so successful, "a mountain of carcasses had to be left to rot." The magistrate, in contrast, fails to kill his hunting quarry in Chapter 2, which symbolizes his weakened masculinity and loss of dominance. Similarly, when the magistrate first meets Mandel in Chapter 4, he imagines him as an "unsatisfying" womanizer who flexes his muscles and basks in admiration. The magistrate, in contrast, struggles to perform sexually and is emasculated through Mandel's torture, which culminates in the hanging ruse while the magistrate is wearing women's clothing. Male dominance can also be seen through the multitude of references to the animals that are treated cruelly in the novel. The animals represent the oppressed: fish represent the fisherfolk, lambs represent the nomadic prisoners, and dogs represent the magistrate after he is tortured.

Symbolism
The Magistrate's Dream

Throughout the novel, the magistrate has a recurring dream in which he approaches a group of children building a castle out of snow. As he gets closer, the children around the castle slowly disperse, while one hooded child remains in the center. After the magistrate begins seeing the barbarian girl intimately, the hooded child sometimes takes on her form, other times taking on the form of a monstrous, wraith-like entity. Whenever he faces the form presented to him, he falls into a spell of either absolute elation or confusing despair. Though the dream has several manifestations throughout the book, its structure is consistent. The dream reveals how the magistrate is plagued by an ambivalent desire for an ambiguous object, exploring more broadly the relationship between civilized humanity and monstrousness.

The magistrate's search, on one thematic level, is an insignia of his complicated sexuality—a complexity provoked by the barbarian girl's enigmatic, opaque personality—as well as his (unrequited) desire to uncover the past of the barbarian girl, to find a deeper, more profound history in the past when her body was not yet marked by Joll's torture. This search also speaks to how the magistrate's sexual conflict expresses a broader tension between civility and monstrousness. Though perhaps the most 'civilized' person in town—if we think of true civility as being opposed to the evils of Joll, even though his tactics are thought by many to preserve civilization against the barbarians—the magistrate ironically faces a remarkably uncivilized psychological problem. At once desiring and loving the barbarian girl somewhat innocently, the magistrate also has the urge to possess her. It's this surging, possessive drive, propped up by an ambiguous sexual desire for the girl, that forces the

magistrate to confront his sexuality as something which seems at once a part of him yet also alien, like a monstrousness stemming from within him but which he nevertheless can't control. The magistrate's conflict therefore points to how civility is always shadowed by its opposite—by monstrousness or 'barbarism.' While civility wants to tame barbarism, while it wants to assimilate into itself the barbarism it has cast as an Other, civility's clash with barbarism reveals that what it perceives as 'barbaric' stems from itself, and that civility cannot count itself as closed-off and self-containing. It is enmeshed with its Other.

Further, we can read the snow castle in the dream as a symbol of the Empire or civilization itself. When seen as a snow castle, as a transient structure that could be blown away at any instant by the wind, the seeming longevity and enduring fortitude of the Empire is cast as an illusion. The preservation of civilization is not guaranteed—an idea furthered by the magistrate's archeological explorations, which suggest that past Empires have risen and fallen. Additionally, in one of the magistrate's experiences of the dream, the barbarian girl builds an elaborate model of the settlement with mittens on, amazing the magistrate. We can read this as dream-code for the magistrate coming to understand that, even though she hails from the barbarians, the girl has as equal a capacity for high artisanal, 'civilized' craftsmanship as anyone from the Empire.

Blindness and Joll's Sunglasses

The idea of blindness is expressed both by Colonel Joll's sunglasses and the barbarian girl's damaged eyes. In the case of Colonel Joll, his sunglasses ironically suggest his willingness to put blinders up to the truth—the reality of the Empire's corruption and the harmlessness of the nomadic people. Though he claims to seek the truth and to have special abilities in obtaining it, his use of torture largely manufactures the responses of his interrogation victims such that they ultimately agree with his own hypotheses and preconceptions. Joll is, therefore, fundamentally blind to the truth, and willfully so.

In the case of the barbarian girl, whose (partial) blindness was caused by Joll's torture tactics, her lack of sight actually illuminates the truth of the magistrate's somewhat perverted way of relating to her. The opacity of her eyes—eyes which cannot fully take the magistrate in—reflect back to the magistrate his own desire, the truth of his own sexuality. Unable to recognize and register it, the girl's blindness makes the magistrate aware of part of his sexuality which heretofore has gone undiscovered: the fact that it stems wholly from within him, but is itself an eerily foreign, monstrous force that controls him. The girl's blindness therefore reveals the magistrate's own blindness.

17.5 TECHNICAL/ KEY WORDS

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Barbarian: A word derived from the Greek barbaros, used among the early Greeks to describe all foreigners, including the Romans. The word is probably onomatopoeic in origin, the "bar bar" sound representing the perception by Greeks of languages other than their own.

Just: Fair and reasonable
Recuparate: To heal after an illness
Oblivion: A state of absolute nothingness
Annihilation: Complete destruction
Prolong: Keep something going
Ruthless: Having no pity for others

Bloodhound: A species of dog that is good at hunting animals and tracking humans
Sack: To take over and destroy a city
Virtues: Good values
Befuddled: Very confused
Contingent: Random or due to chance
Wails:Cries
Immobile: Unable to move
Empire: Kingdom, realm, domain
Magistrate: Judge
Barbarian: Savage person, often violent
Nomad: Migrant person
Rapine: The violent seizure of property
Waterfowl: Duck, geese, water birds
Colonel: An army officer of high rank

17.6 SELF- ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe Colonel Joll's position in relation to the ambiguous Third Bureau?
2. How would you explain the Magistrate's personality as he portrays himself at the beginning of the novel?
3. How would you evaluate the Magistrate's reliability as a first-person narrator?
4. What is the main idea of Waiting for the Barbarians?
5. How is history represented in Waiting for the Barbarians?
6. Why was it called barbarian?

17.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

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(305EG21)

MODEL QUESTION PAPER
M.A. DEGREE EXAMINATION
Third Semester
English
Paper V(A) — Colonial / Post Colonial Literature - 1

Time : Three hours **Maximum : 70 marks**

Answer ONE question from each Unit.
All questions carry equal marks.

1. (a) Write a short note on any FOUR of the following.
   - (i) Colonial Literature.
   - (ii) Native Culture.
   - (iii) African past in Literature.
   - (iv) African Theatre.
   - (v) Caribbean Literature.
   - (vi) Myth in post Colonial Literature.

Or

(b) Make an overview of Post Colonial Literature.

2. (a) Discuss the central theme of Raja Rao`s Kanthapura.

Or

(b) Explain Raja Rao`s Art of characterization with reference to the Kanthapura.

3. (a) Discuss the Significance of the title Things Fall Itpart by Chinua Achute.

Or

(b) What is the message did wole Soyinker convey through his play A Dance of Forests.

4. (a) What is the Central theme of A Grain of Wheat by Ngugi?

Or

(b) How does Ngugi portray the element of betrayal in his note A Grain of Wheat?

5. (a) Bring out the Post Colonial perspective of N.S.Naipaul`s A House of Mr. Biswas.

Or

(b) What is Coctzeds purpose in giving no name to the Protagonist of his novel Waiting for the Barbarians?