

SHS1209	CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE	L	T	P	CREDIT
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COURSE OBJECTIVE :

1. To study an overview of the origin and development of literature after World War II, especially poetry, prose and drama that evolved in the period between 1930s and 2010 .
2. To develop the ability to appreciate contemporary literature as they become familiar with the works produced after World War II.
3. To identify the works of contemporary literature reflect a society's social and/or political viewpoints, shown through realistic characters, connections to current events and socioeconomic message
4. To produce graduates familiar with the contemporary literary publishing milieu.

UNIT 1:POETRY (9 hrs)

DETAILED:

1. Maya Angelou- Still I Rise, Touched by an Angel
2. Margaret Atwood- You fit into me, Night poem
3. Marion Angus- Mary's song

NON-DETAILED:

1. Rupert Brooke-The soldier
2. E.E.CUMMINGS-I carry your heart, my love, love is a place
3. Stephen spender- I think continually, The laborer in the vineyard

UNIT 2: PROSE (9 hrs)

1. Khaled Hosseini -The kite runner
2. Judy Brady-why I want a wife

Non-Detailed:

2. Ruskin Bond- In search of sweet peas

UNIT 3: FICTION (9 hrs)

Detailed:

1. Yarn Martel-Life of Pi
2. Margret Atwood-Handmaid's tale

Non-Detailed:

1. MarkusZusak- The book thief
2. Harper Lee- To kill a mocking bird

UNIT 4: DRAMA (9 hrs)

Detailed:

- Girish Karnad- The fire and the rain
- Cedric Mount- The Never-Never nest
- Fritz karinthy- The Refund

Non-Detailed:

- Caryl Churchill- Top Girls
- ken urban- sense of an ending

UNIT 5: SHORT STORIES (9 hrs)

Detailed:

- Kate Chopin - The Story of an Hour
- James Thurber- The secret life ofWalter

Non-Detailed:

- William Carlos- the use of force
- Katherine Mansfield- Miss Brill
- Hernando Tellez- Lather and Nothing else

COURSE OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to

1. Describe a working knowledge of the cultural and historical contexts of significant works prescribed for study
2. Identify distinct literary characteristics of contemporary literature and demonstrate an understanding of how 21st century culture, trends, and historical events affect the literature produced today
3. Acquire literary works from various genres for their structure and meaning,
4. Write elaborately about contemporary literature.
5. Effectively communicate ideas related to the literary works .
6. Analyse literary texts in multiple genres.

TEXTBOOK

..The Lottery (1948) by Shirley Jackson

References:

- W.H.Auden:Selected Poems by Dr. S. Sen Paperback
- Life of Pi.Yann Martel Published August 29th 2006 by Seal Books
- Sense of an ending.ken urban. Published June 2nd 2015 by Bloomsbury Methuen Drama.
- Top girls. Caryl Churchill. Published June 14th 1984 by Bloomsbury Methuen Drama
- The book thief. Markus zusak. Published March 14th 2006 by Knopf Books for YoungReaders



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SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UNIT I –CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE –SHS1209

Unit 1

'Still I Rise' by Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,

Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

Analysis :

This great poetess Maya Angelou presents in "Still I Rise" the average black American woman who rises like the phoenix each time she is bent by oppression. Here, she triumphantly asserts with conviction how she continues to rise with renewed vigor. In stanza one, Maya Angelou hints at her relationship with history and the body's relationship with the earth. With an African American background, she knows the importance and cruel irony of history. "His Story" is usually told from a European angle.

She also correlates how the body can be put and driven into the ground, but eventually it decomposes and humans turn into earth, like soil and dust. Maya Angelou tells how she is above lies and oppression, and 'like dust, I'll rise.' The speaker goes on to ask a rhetorical question to the reader. Her attitude as a confident, sassy, African American woman is out of the norm for society. A woman, let alone an African woman who has confidence in herself was a taboo idea.

She asks the reader if that upsets them, which at the time, probably did. She also mentions how she carries herself, portraying it to the world as though she is rich, which for Maya Angelou she wasn't rich growing up. This just explains how one can act confident and be proud of themselves even though they are not rich or perfect. In the third stanza Maya correlates her attitude with the certainty of nature. She explains how nature and people's hopes are certain facts that will never end.

The sun will always rise just like the moons. The tides and people's hopes will always rise that all have a natural order in life. Yet, the speaker knows, 'Still I'll rise.' The speaker describes her ability to rise above anything that happens to her in this poem. She also uses apostrophe to address her discourse, as well as give others the ability to share her voice. I believe this poem could be seen as the speaker addressing someone, or as a sort of self-help/self confidence booster for others to recite.

The speaker also asks questions throughout the poem, which give the readers the opportunity to review their lives, contemplate their beliefs, and review the questions being asked of them. The rhyme scheme remains the same as the beginning through the middle three stanzas. It seems like an ABCB pattern that is repeated until the very end. The overall line by line analysis is fairly similar for the three middle stanzas and its basic meaning is that no matter what others do to hurt her, in the past or future, she can rise above it.

She begins with a sort of taunting to the reader. She makes it feel as though she's saying you thought I couldn't do it, but look at me now! She then asks if her pridefulness is offensive, and then proceeds to say she doesn't care if it is or not. Finally, she says that you can try and hurt her any way that you want, but she's still going to rise above it. There is a reference to roots and the slavery era, and she uses her ancestors experience as a resource for her own strength.

She also says that she must preserve her ancestor's dreams (who were slaves) for success in a free world. In these last three stanzas she also uses questions to draw the reader in and require them to examine their own lives. She says that she will rise above the pain and suffering that her ancestors have experienced in order to fulfill their dreams of being granted the opportunity for success in a world where she is free. She also wants to emphasize the fact that she is not faltering from the pain and suffrage she and her ancestors have experienced, but she will continue to rise.

Touched By An Angel by Maya Angelou

We, unaccustomed to courage
exiles from delight

live coiled in shells of loneliness
until love leaves its high holy temple
and comes into our sight
to liberate us into life.

Love arrives
and in its train come ecstasies
old memories of pleasure
ancient histories of pain.
Yet if we are bold,
love strikes away the chains of fear
from our souls.

We are weaned from our timidity
In the flush of love's light
we dare be brave
And suddenly we see
that love costs all we are
and will ever be.
Yet it is only love
which sets us free.

TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL Analysis

Stanza 1

The first of three verses of the poem, which can be read in full [here](#), follows very much the same pattern as the rest of the work, in particular that there is no apparent pattern to it; it is written in a very free style of verse. There is no especial adherence to rhyme or syllable count, with the line breaks seemingly added for dramatic purposes more so than anything else — keeping “exiles from delight” on its own line helps it to stand out particularly strongly, for example. That the final line of the verse ends with a period and only the first word is capitalized makes the verse read almost as a run-on sentence, except that the line breaks give it a sense of pacing and rhythm despite not having any other punctuation.

The actual content of the verse discusses a number of unnamed individuals who are described as being “exiles from delight,” and as people who aren’t used to feeling courageous. The description brings to mind the image of people who simply live through their lives, alone and afraid to make an effort to change that about themselves. In this description, they are waiting for love, which is described as a divine force that chooses to leave its “high holy temple” to grace these lost souls with its presence. The image of a high temple, while not especially descriptive in itself, suggests that love is a power of divine proportions and that these “exiles from delight,” these people who do not feel joyous emotion, are simply waiting for love to appear in their lives and raise them from their small shells.

Stanza 2

In the second verse, the ramifications of love's arrival are explored more closely. There is no image of love, but it is described metaphorically as arriving on a train, which is likely to say that it is impossible to mistake its arrival. When love shows up, it thunderously roars into town, announcing its arrival to anyone who is nearby. Furthering the metaphor is the idea that the train is carrying cargo; the ecstasies, as they are described here, in the form of memories of both pleasure and pain. While love itself is generally accepted as a very good thing, it is true that its arrival can signal both pain and happiness in the coming future. Just as a train can carry cargo that is both good and bad, so too can love. The memories of pain are described as "ancient histories," but that does not make those memories any less real, or important. As the often-told saying reminds us, history is repeated by those who do not learn from it.

The final three lines speak to this idea, suggesting that those who are brave — keeping in mind that the individuals described in the previous verse are "unaccustomed to courage" — can be freed by the arrival of love. The chains of fear so-described are likely connected to the idea of being an exile from delight, as well as the very idea of love carrying with it ancient histories of pain. Against all of these factors, a person certainly would have to be brave to embrace the arrival of love, but this verse suggests that those who do are rewarded with freedom.

Stanza 3

In the concluding verse of the work, the narrators of the poem attempt to embrace the arrival of love, "daring" to be brave and feeling as though there is a light illuminating the things that they have feared or stayed away from throughout their lives. There is a moment of realization, an idea that love is not easy, nor is it a divine solution to the problems and woes of life, but is instead a challenge. It is something that requires, as the last five lines suggest, everything a person can give, but that rewards them with something more. The idea of freedom through love is repeated; only love can set a person who is exiled from delight free, but there is a steep cost to that submission that only the bravest of individuals will be willing to pay. For them, love is freeing and rewarding — and yet it once took everything they had to enter that flush of light.

Love in Poetry

Love is not an uncommon theme in popular poetry. Similar to hate, love brings out an extreme emotion that many find is most easily expressed through their desired art form — poetry, in this case. For Maya Angelou, love must have seemed like a fairly fickle creature at times, and maybe even as an unreachable divinity — it is known that she was married twice and divorced both times, but it is commonly theorized that those were not her only two husbands, and she certainly had a number of other strong relationships with men before, between, and after those marriages. Love was probably a significant aspect of Angelou's life, but not a simple one to describe or understand; it would have brought on, as described in the poem, memories of both joy and of pain.

Ultimately, the main theme of *Touched By An Angel* seems to be that love is a difficult thing to understand, and a difficult thing to find, but once it's found, it is not a divine solution to life's problems. It requires work, sacrifice, and devotion, and this is something that keeps many people away in a number of regards. When Angelou passed away in 2014, she was honoured by writers, artists, world leaders, and uncountable fans. How she felt this love, or how she felt the love of her husbands and family may be a somewhat abstract concept, but her feelings towards it all are very clear and made very lovely by her work of poetry here — that she felt touched as by an angel.

NIGHT POEM BY MARGARET ATWOOD

There is nothing to be afraid of,
it is only the wind
changing to the east, it is only
your father the thunder
your mother the rain

In this country of water
with its beige moon damp as a mushroom,
its drowned stumps and long birds
that swim, where the moss grows
on all sides of the trees
and your shadow is not your shadow
but your reflection,

your true parents disappear
when the curtain covers your door.
We are the others,
the ones from under the lake
who stand silently beside your bed
with our heads of darkness.
We have come to cover you
with red wool,
with our tears and distant whippers.

You rock in the rain's arms
the chilly ark of your sleep,
while we wait, your night
father and mother
with our cold hands and dead flashlight,
knowing we are only
the wavering shadows thrown
by one candle, in this echo
you will hear twenty years later.

Margaret Atwood

The title itself leads the reader to believe that the poem will be dark and eerie. The word "night" connotes to many things. During the night, creatures come out that would not normally show themselves in the day. It is hard to see at night so images and objects are distorted and can be mistaken for something else. The first line in the poem creates a sense that something not right is happening. Personally, when I hear someone say "there is nothing to be afraid of" then there is most likely something to be afraid of. Especially when a person comes out of the darkness of the night saying everything is ok. Whoever the speaker is seems untrustworthy. The speaker says it is only the "wind changing to the east" and the father which is thunder and the mother which is rain. The wind is changing its direction. This means that the wind could be unstable or the wind could be taking a new path. The father is thunder which is loud and strong. The mother is rain which can be light and cleansing or can be violent and harmful depending on the storm. These parents of the night are intertwined with nature. Meaning that nature can come to live at night.

The next stanza discusses all of nature. Nature seems to have a saggy or sullen mood. The moon is "beige". It does not glow a bright white like one would think of the moon. It resembles a "damp..mushroom". Nature takes on more creature like qualities during the night. One of my favorite lines in this poem is "and your shadow is not your shadow but your reflection". Such a great line! This implies that people are their shadows. People have both positive qualities during the daylight and negative qualities during the night. A shadow self is a negative energy that is completely opposite of a person. Yet the speaker is saying that this shadow is the reflection. You are who you are bad qualities and all. This all becomes evident at night.

The next stanza is equally creepy and equally awesome. The speaker is saying that they are the new parents. They are the parents that appear when you shut your door at night. When you are locked alone in your room, they come out to stare at you. They come from under the lake which means that they are damp and soggy. They probably look like they were dragged from the lake. They cover the child with "red wool". Red stands for violence and blood. Personally I find wool to be itchy and uncomfortable, so this piece of fabric is not comfortable or pleasant. The new parents cover the child with whispers and tears. Everything looks perfect during the day, but during the night, the real issues and problems emerge from the darkness. "You will rock in the rain's arms" means that the child will be rocked by his night mother. The child's night parents wait and watch. They have a "dead flashlight" which means they have no light to see. This could mean that the night parents are not enlightened. They are blinded by the darkness. They cannot truly see the child they hold. However, they know that they are only shadows. They cannot be seen in the full sunlight. They can only be seen with one candle light. They lurk in the shadows wanting what they cannot have. Nature itself must want to consume the child at night to have for its own. Nature cannot have the child during the day in the light. At night, nature becomes

distorted and people become their shadow selves. Their negative qualities are reflected just as nature's negative qualities are reflected.

You Fit Into Me - Poem by Margaret Atwood

You fit into me
like a hook into an eye

a fish hook
an open eye

Margaret Atwood

Margaret Atwood's "You Fit Into Me" portrays the helplessness and pain of feeling trapped in an unhealthy romantic relationship. The poem begins on a positive note. The speaker proclaims her lover a perfect "fit" in the opening line and title, suggesting a relationship that is both emotionally and sexually satisfying (1). She compares this fit to that of a "hook into an eye" (2). This simile suggests their relationship is secure, just as a hook and eye holds clothing securely in place; it is as if they were made for each other, specifically designed to work together, to "fit". However, a far more unpleasant side to their relationship is revealed in the following final stanza. The perfectly suited hook and eye become his "fish hook" in her "open eye" (3-4). This rather startling shift of imagery suggests the speaker's feeling of entrapment and helplessness. It is as if she has taken the bait on his hook and entered a seemingly loving relationship only to discover too late her inability to break free from the bond. The "open eye" makes it clear that she sees the situation; she is in pain and suffers, but has lost control of her autonomy; she is aware that the source of her entrapment is his snare bidding her to this unequal relationship, but there seems to be nothing she can do to regain her independence. In a larger sense, Atwood's poem might be viewed as paralleling the experience of many women in intimate relationships. A love that once seemed so perfect and promising begins to feel, for whatever reasons, like an overwhelming deception seemingly impossible to break free of.

Mary's Song

Marion Angus

I wad ha'e gi'en him my lips tae kiss,
Had I been his, had I been his;
Barley breid and elder wine,
Had I been his as he is mine.
The wanderin' bee it seeks the rose;
Tae the lochan's bosom the burnie goes;
The grey bird cries at evenin's fa',

‘My luvie, my fair one, come awa’.’
My beloved sall ha’e this he’rt tae break,
Reid, reid wine and the barley cake,
A he’rt tae break, and a mou’ tae kiss,
Tho’ he be nae mine, as I am his.

Marion Angus (1865-1946) was a key figure in the Scottish literary renaissance. A late starter, she did not publish her first collection of poetry, 'The Lilt and other poems' (1922), until she was 56. Heavily influenced by the Scottish ballad tradition and folk song, her work is mainly in Scots. She is one of the most important Scottish poets of the 20th century and her work deserves a wide audience.

As Colin Milton has written, "Marion Angus is a poet of the social and psychological margins: her poems hint and suggest rather than state, often conveying repressed or unreturned feelings and liminal states." Her exploration of the experience of women is in contrast to "the mainly male-dominated poetry of the 'Renaissance' movement." [1] Typical of the telling simplicity of her earlier work is this stanza from "Mary's Sang", which appeared in *The Tinker's Road*:

My beloved sall ha'e this he'rt tae break, Reid, reid wine and the barley cake; A he'rt tae break,
an' a mou' tae kiss, Tho' he be nae mine, as I am his.

The Soldier by Rupert Brooke

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

The Soldier by Rupert Brooke: Summary and Critical Analysis

The Soldier is a sonnet in which Brooke glorifies England during the First World War. He speaks in the guise of an English soldier as he is leaving home to go to war. The poem represents the patriotic ideals that characterized pre-war England. It portrays death for one's country as a noble end and England as the noblest country for which to die.



Rupert Brooke (1887-1915)

In the first stanza (the octave of the sonnet) stanza, he talks about how his grave will be England herself, and what it should remind the listeners of England when they see the grave. In the second stanza, the sestet, he talks about this death (sacrifice for England) as redemption; he will become "a pulse in the eternal mind". He concludes that only life will be the appropriate thing to give to his great motherland in return for all the beautiful and the great things she has given to him, and made him what he is. The soldier-speaker of the poem seeks to find redemption through sacrifice in the name of the country.

The speaker begins by addressing the reader, and speaking to them in the imperative: "think only this of me." This sense of immediacy establishes the speaker's romantic attitude towards death in duty. He suggests that the reader should not mourn. Whichever "corner of a foreign field" becomes his grave; it will also become "forever England". He will have left a monument of England in a forever England". He will have left a monument in England in a foreign land, figuratively transforming a foreign soil to England. The suggestion that English "dust" must be "richer" represents a real attitude that the people of the Victorian age actually had.

The speaker implies that England is mother to him. His love for England and his willingness to sacrifice is equivalent to a son's love for his mother; but more than an ordinary son, he can give his life to her. The imagery in the poem is typically Georgina. The Georgian poets were known for their frequent meditations in the English countryside. England's "flowers", "her ways to roam", and "English air" all represent the attitude and pride of the youth of the pre-industrial England; many readers would excuse the jingoistic them of this poem if they remember that this soldier's bravery and sense of sacrifice is far better than the modern soldier and warfare in which there is nothing grand about killing people with automated machine guns! The soldier also has a sense of beauty of his country that is in fact a part of his identity. In the final line of the first stanza, nature takes on a religious significance for the speaker. He is "washed by the rivers", suggesting the purification of baptism, and "blest by the sun of home." In the second stanza, the sestet, the physical is left behind in favor of the spiritual. If the first stanza is about the soldier's

thought of this world and England, the second is about his thoughts of heaven and England (in fact, and English heaven).

In the sestet, the soldier goes on to tell the listener what to think of him if he dies at war, but he presents a more imaginative picture of himself. He forgets the grave in the foreign country where he might die, and he begins to talk about how he will have transformed into an eternal spirit. This means that to die for England is the surest way to get a salvation: as implied in the last line, he even thinks that he will become a part of an English heaven. The heart will be transformed by death. All earthly “evil” will be shed away. Once the speaker has died, his soul will give back to England everything England has given to him- in other words, everything that the speaker has become. In the octave, the speaker describes his future grave in some far off land as a part of England; and in the sestet England takes on the role of a heavenly creator, a part of the “eternal mind” of God. In this way, dying for England gains the status of religious salvation, wherever he dies. Wherever he dies, his death for England will be a salvation of his soul. It is therefore the most desirable of all fates.

The images and praises of England run through both the stanzas. In the first stanza Brooke describes the soldier's grave in a foreign land as a part of England; in the second, that actual English images abound. The sights, sounds, dreams, laughter, friends, and gentleness that England offered him during his life till this time are more than enough for him to thank England and satisfactorily go and die for her. The poet elaborates on what England has granted in the second stanza; 'sights and sounds' and all of his "dreams." A "happy" England filled his life with "laughter" and "friends", and England characterized by "peace" and "gentleness". It is what makes English dust "richer" and what in the end guarantees "hearts at peace, under an English Heaven."

This is a sonnet based on the two major types of the sonnet: Petrarchan or Italian and Shakespearean or English. Structurally, the poem follows the Petrarchan mode; but in its rhyme scheme, it is in the Shakespearean mode. In terms of the structure of ideas, the octave presents reflection; the sestet evaluates the reflection. The first eight lines (octave) is a reflection on the physical: the idea of the soldier's "dust" buried in a "foreign field." They urge the readers not to mourn this death, though they implicitly also create a sense of loss. The last six lines (sestet), however, promise redemption: "a pulse in the eternal mind.... under an English heaven". The rhyme scheme is that of the Shakespearean sonnet: the octave and the sestet consist of three quatrains, rhyming abab cdcd efef and a final rhymed couplet gg. As in Shakespearean sonnets, the dominant meter is iambic.

[i carry your heart with me(i carry it in)]

BY E. E. CUMMINGS

i carry your heart with me(i carry it in
my heart)i am never without it(anywhere
i go you go,my dear;and whatever is done
by only me is your doing,my darling)
i fear
no fate(for you are my fate,my sweet)i want
no world(for beautiful you are my world,my true)

and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud and
the sky of the sky of a tree called life;which grows
higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart

i carry your heart(i carry it in my heart)

Analysis of "I carry your heart with me (i carry it in]" by E.E. Cummings

Syntax. This is what the entire poem is based off of. First though note that in this entire poem there is no other punctuation other than brackets or parenthesis. Here's the thing as well. With the title, the entire title is bracketed but there is an open parenthetical there as well. For me, I take the brackets as more of a conceptual overview with the parenthetical being more of an emotional encapsulation opened up with the repetition of "carry" focusing more on the verb than the contents.

Even though the content of the first stanza is pretty straight forward, the syntax pushes for something more:

i carry your heart with me(i carry it in
my heart)i am never without it(anywhere
i go you go,my dear;and whatever is done
by only me is your doing,my darling)

Note how the punctuation doesn't create space, but the words do. Here the idea of closeness is amplified by this lack of of space. Now the parenthetical shows more of an affirmation of love -- carrying and motivation.

The line by itself of "i fear" plays on the idea of the turn -- that there's something darker to this poem than it is. But this is a trick of loving through negation:

no fate(for you are my fate,my sweet)i want
no world(for beautiful you are my world,my true)
and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

The poem takes away "fate" and the "world" and introduces bigger more grandiose comparison -
- moon and sun = you.

and again the poet plays with the idea of something further hidden with the line, "here is the deepest secret nobody knows" which is explained in the parenthetical:

(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud and
the sky of the sky of a tree called life, which grows
higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart

The secret is very, well, first starts out with calling the obvious the obvious which can be inferred that love is love. Then the idea becomes a metaphor with "tree called life" -- a sort of investment made. And this is what keeps stars apart -- the lack of investment to grow something which is better than have something bright, and wanted, off in the distance.

The last line, which is the first line as a full line, "i carry your heart(i carry it in my heart) then goes back to the idea of the "root" and the "bud" something that grows from below and then above.

Analysis to poem: "[i carry your heart with me (i carry it in)]" by E.E. Cummings

In his poem "[i carry your heart with me (i carry it in)]," it is evident that Cummings is writing about love being an overpowering and unbreakable force. The title of the poem, suggests that the speaker depends on his or her lover and can not live without them. I think the use of parentheses connects the speaker to his or her lover even more so, it creates a unity and oneness among the two. The first two stanzas of the poem were pretty clear, but the last stanza was a bit confusing to me. This is where Cummings writes:

"here is the deepest secret nobody knows

(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud

and the sky of the sky of a tree called life; which grows

higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)

and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart" (10-14).

I think there is more than meets the eye in these lines. It took me a few readings to fully grasp what Cummings is trying to convey. Through the use of metaphor, I think Cummings is trying to convey that love is very complicated and it keeps growing. I arrived at this interpretation from the words "here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud..." It is apparent that Cummings is comparing love to a tree of life. He first talks about the roots and foundations and then how it develops into a bud which shows the tree developing. Love just like a tree has roots and then turns more complex just like a bud when it starts developing and heading towards another direction. I also assume that the secret the speaker is talking about is the complexity of love. The speaker may be trying to say, that unless one experiences a love like she or he has, they will never know what it's like.

I'm sure there are many different interpretation for these lines, but I think my interpretation can apply to the speaker of the poem since her or his love is so strong and unbreakable just like the roots of a tree. Also, just like a tree grows, people in their own relationships can grow and mature.

I really like this poem since it made me think and really read into each and every word. Every time I read it, I catch something I didn't see before. I like Cummings use of repetition, metaphor, and parentheses to get his point across to the reader. The poem constantly uses the words "I" and "You" reinforcing the theme of a person's closeness and oneness with another.

Once again, the poem ends restating the first line and the title, " i carry your heart(i carry it in my heart)." This line truly captures the essence of the poem both through the context and visually. The lack of capitalization and the use of parentheses further shows the need to be close to his or her lover. I also noticed that there is no period at all which also contributes to the effect that the speakers love is infinite and has no end.

MY LOVE BY E.E. CUMMING

My Love

my love

thy hair is one kingdom

the king whereof is darkness

thy forehead is a flight of flowers

thy head is a quick forest

filled with sleeping birds

thy ***** are swarms of white bees

upon the bough of thy body

thy body to me is April

in whose armpits is the approach of spring

thy thighs are white horses yoked to a chariot

of kings

they are the striking of a good minstrel

between them is always a pleasant song

my love

thy head is a casket

of the cool jewel of thy mind

the hair of thy head is one warrior

innocent of defeat

thy hair upon thy shoulders is an army

with victory and with trumpets

thy legs are the trees of dreaming

whose fruit is the very eatage of forgetfulness

thy lips are satraps in scarlet

in whose kiss is the combinings of kings

thy wrists

are holy

which are the keepers of the keys of thy blood
thy feet upon thy ankles are flowers in vases
of silver

in thy beauty is the dilemma of flutes

thy eyes are the betrayal
of bells comprehended through incense

Analysis of love is a place by E.E. Cummings

love is a place

by E. E. Cummings

love is a place

& through this place

of love move

(with brightness of peace)

all places

yes is a world

& in this world

of yes live

(skilfully curled)

all worlds

Here is a short little poem by E.E. Cummings. The poem stands out as an affirmation of life and love where the ideal qualities of life hold sway over the concrete.

It starts off with the metaphor of love as a place. The second line builds up anticipation about what will move through this place of love. The third line *love move* is a near rhyme with the O in love being a short O and the O in move being a long O. Here the two syllable line *love move* is one of those classic Cummings phrases that stand out apart from the pieces of the whole itself. The fourth line continues in brackets and colors the places that move through love, that they move with brightness of peace. And the last line of the first stanza explains that the places that move through love are all places. So love is the stationary place and the actual physical locations move through a place called love, *with brightness of peace*. The poem isn't exactly sensible in

This aspect on the first read through as idea of other places moving through love doesn't appear until the end.

The second stanza begins with *yes is a world*. It will follow the same pattern as the first stanza wherein an abstract concept will be given more concrete reality than reality itself. In this case the world of yes. The second line builds up to what lives within the world of yes, and the third line like as in the first stanza can be either taken alone in it's intensity to mean *yes live*, or as part of the whole in this case pertaining to what lives in the world of yes. The fourth line of the second stanza remains symmetrical with the first and is bracketed. It shades and colors how things live in the world of yes, which is skillfully curled. And the final line states that all worlds live in the world of yes.

I think continually by Stephen Spender

I think continually of those who were truly great.
Who, from the womb, remembered the soul's history
Through corridors of light where the hours are suns
Endless and singing. Whose lovely ambition
Was that their lips, still touched with fire,
Should tell of the Spirit clothed from head to foot in song.
And who hoarded from the Spring branches
The desires falling across their bodies like blossoms.

What is precious is never to forget
The essential delight of the blood drawn from ageless springs
Breaking through rocks in worlds before our earth.
Never to deny its pleasure in the morning simple light
Nor its grave evening demand for love.
Never to allow gradually the traffic to smother
With noise and fog the flowering of the spirit.

Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields
See how these names are feted by the waving grass
And by the streamers of white cloud
And whispers of wind in the listening sky.
The names of those who in their lives fought for life
Who wore at their hearts the fire's centre.
Born of the sun they travelled a short while towards the sun,
And left the vivid air signed with their honour.

Analysis :

“I think continually of those who were truly great” is an untitled poem that first appeared in *New Signatures*, a collection of poetry selected by Michael Roberts to offer an imaginative and intellectual blend that would deal positively with the problems of the twentieth century. This popular collection also represented the works of emerging poets such as W. H. Auden, C. Day Lewis, William Empson, John Lehmann, and Richard Eberhart, who collectively became known, for a time, as *New Signatures* poets. Spender contributed more poems than any of the others, and his seven poems promptly became part of his collected canon.

“I think continually of those who were truly great” is written in free verse with three stanzas containing eight, seven, and eight lines, respectively. The meter of the poem is highly varied, containing fine examples of most meters used in English poetry. While this poem settles into no regular meter, line length, or rhyme scheme, it is, nonetheless, highly musical with its syncopated rhythms and sharp images.

The opening line of the poem, which is typically used in place of its omitted title, sets a tone of reminiscing about the great; the verb “were” signals that those the poet admires are already dead. The second line declares that these noteworthy souls were born to greatness, having existed before birth and having had a history of the greatness they would realize in life on earth. The language is almost Neoplatonic as the poet discusses how these individuals have come from the light and are going back to the light or “Spirit.” Plato’s philosophy of learning maintained that education was a process of remembering what one already knows. Great people, as described in this poem, are those whose recollection of the lofty state from which they have come is fresh and vital like spring blossoms.

The second stanza continues this definition of greatness as a process of remembering not only human ancestry but also the spiritual ancestry dating before the creation of the Earth as humans know it. In one sense, the poem seems to be advocating a kind of reincarnation, but, in another sense, the poem is discussing the power of getting in touch with the ancient roots of culture that form the lifeblood of most great poetry. To continue this tradition introduced by great people, the

poet encourages people to never forget these individuals and “Never to allow gradually the traffic to smother/ With noise and fog, the flowering of the Spirit.”

The final stanza declares that creation itself celebrates the names of the great. This creation is alive and well aware of the noteworthy souls. The final four lines of the poem state elegantly how the great are “those who in their lives fought for life.” Such souls who keep the value and purpose of life in their hearts leave their signature across the sky like a vivid sunset that one can never forget. Those who have been true to the best in life are destined to be remembered well.

The Labourer In The Vineyard - Poem by Stephen Spender

Here are the ragged towers of vines
Stepped down the slope in terraces.

Through torn spaces between spearing leaves
The lake glows with waters combed sideways,
And climbing up to reach the vine-spire vanes
The mountain crests beyond the far shore
Paint their sky of glass with rocks and snow.

Lake below, mountains above, between
Turrets of leaves, grape-triangles, the labourer stands.

His tanned trousers form a pedestal,
Coarse tree-trunk rising from the earth with bark
Peeled away at the navel to show
Shining torso of sun-burnished god
Breast of lyre, mouth coining song.

My ghostly, passing-by thoughts gather
Around his hilly shoulders, like those clouds
Around those mountain peaks their transient scrolls.

He is the classic writing all this day,
Through his mere physical being focussing
All into nakedness. His hand
With outspread fingers is a star whose rays
Concentrate timeless inspiration
Onto the god descended in a vineyard
With hand unclenched against the lake's taut sail
Flesh filled with statue, as the grape with wine.

Stephen Spender Bio

20



The English poet who eventually became known as Sir Stephen Spender, CBE was a writer whose main themes concerned social problems and the class struggles found in both Europe and America. He also wrote novels and essays and became Poet Laureate to the United States in 1965.

He was born Stephen Harold Spender on the 28th February 1909 in Kensington, West London. His father was a journalist and his mother, Violet Hilda Schuster, a poet and artist. His education was a little patchy, with attendance at three different establishments before he found one that he liked. He called this last one, the University College School in Hampstead, “that gentlest of schools”. He was then sent to France to complete his education in Nantes and Lausanne before returning to England to study at University College, Oxford. His time there did not lead to the award of a degree and it was reported later in his life that he had never actually passed an examination anywhere.

He made useful literary contacts though at Oxford including the American novelist Christopher Isherwood, a man introduced to Spender by W H Auden. Through Auden he came into contact with the likes of Raymond Chandler, Dylan Thomas, Allen Ginsberg and Jean-Paul Sartre, plus many more who would become famous in their respective fields. He also fell in with the Bloomsbury Group which included Virginia Woolf so it was clear that Spender himself had sights on becoming a famous writer. He was spending a great deal of time in 1920s Germany and began a novel in 1929 called *The Temple* which gave the first indications of his bi-sexuality. The story was of a young Englishman finding freedom of expression in another country and a more liberal sexual attitude. How things would change as the National Socialist movement grew there. Throughout his life Spender appeared to be homosexual and heterosexual at different times, having intimate relationships with both men and women. A suggestion of his tendencies towards the appreciation of the male form is evident in his poem *The Labourer In The Vineyard*, a clear celebration of the young, tanned man on a hillside tending his grapes.

References: W.H.Auden (1928) :Selected Poems by Dr. S. Sen Paperback

SHS1209 CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

UNIT 2: PROSE (9 hrs)

1. Khaled Hosseini -The kite runner

2. Judy Brady-why I want a wife

Non-Detailed:

2. Ruskin Bond- In search of sweet peas

DETAILED:

1. The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini.

The Kite Runner is the first novel by Afghan-American author Khaled Hosseini.^[1] Published in 2003 by Riverhead Books, it tells the story of Amir, a young boy from the Wazir Akbar Khan district of Kabul, whose closest friend is Hassan. The story is set against a backdrop of tumultuous events, from the fall of Afghanistan's monarchy through the Soviet military intervention, the exodus of refugees to Pakistan and the United States, and the rise of the Taliban regime.

Hosseini has commented that he considers *The Kite Runner* to be a father–son story, emphasizing the familial aspects of the narrative, an element that he continued to use in his later works.^[2] Themes of guilt and redemption feature prominently in the novel,^[3] with a pivotal scene depicting an act of sexual assault that happens against Hassan that Amir fails to prevent. The latter half of the book centers on Amir's attempts to atone for this transgression by rescuing Hassan's son two decades later.

The Kite Runner became a bestseller after being printed in paperback and was popularized in book clubs. It was a number one New York Times bestseller for over two years,^[4] with over seven million copies sold in the United States.^[5] Reviews were generally positive, though parts of the plot drew significant controversy in Afghanistan. A number of adaptations were created

following publication, including a 2007 film of the same name, several stage performances, and a graphic novel.

Plot summary

Part I



Wazir Akbar Khan neighborhood in Kabul, setting of Part I

Amir, a well-to-do Pashtun boy, and Hassan, a Hazara who is the son of Ali, Amir's father's servant, spend their days kite fighting in the hitherto peaceful city of Kabul. Hassan is a successful "kite runner" for Amir; he knows where the kite will land without watching it. Amir's mother died during childbirth, she hemorrhaged to death while Hassan's mother simply abandoned him. Amir's father, a wealthy merchant Amir affectionately refers to as Baba, loves both boys. He makes a point of buying Hassan exactly the same things as Amir much to Amir's annoyance. He even pays to have Hassan's cleft palate surgically corrected. On the other hand, Baba jan is often critical of Amir, considering him weak and lacking in courage, even threatening to physically punish him when he complains about Hassan. Amir finds a kinder fatherly figure in Rahim Khan, Baba's closest friend, who understands him and supports his interest in writing, whereas Baba considers that interest to be worthy only of females. In a rare moment when Amir is sitting on Baba jan's lap rather than being shooed away as a bother he

asks why his father drinks alcohol which is forbidden by Islam. Baba jan tells him that the Mullahs are hypocrites and the only real sin is theft which takes many forms.

Assef, an older boy with a sadistic taste for violence, mocks Amir for socializing with a Hazara, which according to him, is an inferior race whose members belong only in Hazarajat. Notably Assef is himself only half Pashtun having a German mother and a typical blond haired blue eyed German appearance. One day, he prepares to attack Amir with brass knuckles, but Hassan defends Amir, threatening to shoot out Assef's eye with his slingshot mocking him by saying you will then be called "one-eyed Assef". Assef backs off but swears to take revenge one day.

One triumphant day, Amir wins the local kite fighting tournament and finally earns Baba's praise. Hassan runs for the last cut kite, a great trophy, saying to Amir, "For you, a thousand times over." However, after finding the kite, Hassan encounters Assef in an alleyway. Hassan refuses to give up the kite, and Assef severely beats him and rapes him. Amir witnesses the act but is too scared to intervene. He knows that if he fails to bring home the kite, Baba would be less proud of him. He feels incredibly guilty but knows his cowardice would destroy any hopes for Baba's affections, so he keeps quiet about the incident. Afterwards, Amir keeps distant from Hassan; his feelings of guilt prevent him from interacting with the boy. Hassan's mental and physical wellbeing begins to suffer as well.

Amir begins to believe that life would be easier if Hassan were not around, so he plants a watch and some money under Hassan's mattress in hopes that Baba will make him leave; Hassan falsely confesses when confronted by Baba. Although Baba believes "there is no act more wretched than stealing", he forgives him. To Baba's sorrow, Hassan and Ali leave anyway, because Hassan has told Ali what happened to him. Amir is freed of the daily reminder of his cowardice and betrayal, but he still lives in their shadow.

Part II

In 1979, five years later, the Soviet Union militarily intervened in Afghanistan. Baba and Amir escape to Peshawar, Pakistan, and then to Fremont, California, where they settle in a run-down

apartment. Baba begins work at a gas station. After graduating from high school, Amir takes classes at San Jose State University to develop his writing skills. Every Sunday, Baba and Amir make extra money selling used goods at a flea market in San Jose. There, Amir meets fellow refugee Soraya Taheri and her family. Baba is diagnosed with terminal cancer but is still capable of granting Amir one last favor: he asks Soraya's father's permission for Amir to marry her. He agrees and the two marry. Shortly thereafter Baba dies. Amir and Soraya settle down in a happy marriage, but to their sorrow, they learn that they cannot have children.

Amir embarks on a successful career as a novelist. Fifteen years after his wedding, Amir receives a call from his father's best friend (and his childhood father figure) Rahim Khan, who is dying, asking him to come to see him in Peshawar. He enigmatically tells Amir, "There is a way to be good again." Now enticed, Amir goes.

Part III

From Rahim Khan, Amir learns that Ali was killed by a land mine and that Hassan and his wife were killed after Hassan refused to allow the Taliban to confiscate Baba and Amir's house in Kabul. Rahim Khan further reveals that Ali, being sterile, was not Hassan's biological father. Hassan was actually Baba's son and Amir's half-brother hence why Baba was so adamant about treating Hassan well and reacted so strongly to Amir's jealousy and Hassan's departure. Finally, he tells Amir that the reason he called Amir to Pakistan was to rescue Sohrab, Hassan's son, from an orphanage in Kabul.

Amir, accompanied by Farid, an Afghan taxi driver and veteran of the war with the Soviets, searches for Sohrab. They learn that a Taliban official comes to the orphanage often, brings cash, and usually takes a girl away with him. Occasionally he chooses a boy, recently Sohrab. The director tells Amir how to find the official, and Farid secures an appointment at his home by claiming to have "personal business" with him.

Amir meets the man, who reveals himself as Assef. Sohrab is being kept at Assef's house as a dancer. Assef agrees to relinquish him if Amir can beat him in a fight. Assef then badly beats

Amir, breaking several bones, until Sohrab uses a slingshot to fire a brass ball into Assef's left eye, thus fulfilling his father's childhood promise. Sohrab helps Amir out of the house, where he passes out and wakes up in a hospital.

Amir tells Sohrab of his plans to take him back to America and possibly adopt him. However, American authorities demand evidence of Sohrab's orphan status. Amir tells Sohrab that he may have to go back to the orphanage for a little while as they encounter a problem in the adoption process, and Sohrab, terrified about returning to the orphanage, attempts suicide. Amir eventually manages to take him back to the United States. After his adoption, Sohrab refuses to interact with Amir or Soraya until the former reminisces about Hassan and kites and shows off some of Hassan's tricks. In the end, Sohrab only gives a lopsided smile, but Amir takes it with all his heart as he runs the kite for Sohrab, saying, "For you, a thousand times over."

2. WHY I WANT A WIFE BY JUDY BRADY

Judy Brady, writer, activist and leader of the second wave feminist movement, delivered "Why I want a Wife" in San Francisco on August 26, 1970 in a rally to celebrate the 50th anniversary of women's right to vote in the USA obtained in 1920. The article, later published in Ms. Magazine in the following year, illustrates the conventional attitude of patriarchal society towards women. At the beginning itself Brady introduces herself as a person whose role she later dissects one by one. Being a wife means a never ending list of chores and expectations, and she separates the duties of a wife as maternal, domestic, social, sexual, etc. The writer exposes the distinct difference and inequality between the roles of men and women in a patriarchal set up. A woman is portrayed as someone who has to give birth, support and look after her husband and children, earn livelihood, prepare the menu, clean the house, wash the dress, entertain the guests and carry out a lot of other duties. Brady makes use of rhetorical features such as irony, paradox and sarcasm to bring her points home. She mocks the attitude of men who treat wife as replaceable whenever they feel so and ends the article with a rhetorical question "My God, who wouldn't want a wife?" Even a wife like Brady may wish for a wife because wives carry that much burden in the family life making husbands free from all responsibilities. Short Answer Questions

1) What household duties did the wife have to accomplish?

The wife had to clean the house, look after the children, wash, iron and mend the clothes, plan the menu, do the necessary grocery shopping and prepare the meals. She had to serve the food to husband and guests in a pleasant manner and support the husband in job related matters.

2) What economic duties did the wife have to fulfil?

The wife had to work and send the husband to school, pay for the care of the children and support those dependent upon him.

3) What are the external supports expected from a wife according to Judy Brady?

According to Judy Brady a wife has to keep track of children's appointment with the doctor and husband's too. She has to make all arrangements for children's schooling, provide an adequate social life with their peers, take them to the park and zoo and accompany the husband and children during vacation.

4) According to the author, how can a wife help the husband in his social life? A wife has to help her husband's social life in many ways. She should take care of baby -sitting arrangements when they are invited by his friends and act as a perfect hostess when her husband invites his friends to the home by cleaning the house properly, preparing and serving a special meal and giving them enough freedom to talk without interrupting at any point of time.

Paragraph Questions

1) "Why I Want a Wife" and its contemporary relevance. The essay "Why I Want a Wife" addresses the issues surrounding the second wave of feminism which became popular in the United States in the late 1960s and 70s. The activists and writers of this movement fought for equality in all walks of life: domestic, social, political and economic. While addressing the women of her own kind, she brings forth the way women are treated in a patriarchal society. Herself a wife and mother, the author talks about the conventional roles of woman as a wife and mother. She portrays the pain and sufferings of women community in general while they carry out and fulfill the responsibilities and expectations as a wife and mother. With stark irony and sarcasm she exposes the indifferent attitude of men and patriarchal society towards women. The author lists multiple jobs and responsibilities a woman has to bear as wife and mother in different domains. She has to take care of the emotional and physical needs of her husband and children at every stage of their life through financial support, preparing food and serving it at the proper time, washing and ironing the dress etc. Though feminism has gone a long way since the publication of this article and succeeded in many of its goals, many issues addressed by Judy Brady are still relevant even today. There are still issues and problems women of the contemporary world struggle with even if they enjoy equality in different domains comparing with the society of the author.

2) Comment on the style of Judy Brady The style Judy Brady employs in her landmark essay "Why I Want a Wife" is equally significant as its theme. In order to depict the stark reality and the sufferings of women in society, the writer makes use of simple and lucid language which attracted her supporters and critics alike. The essay is notable for its constant use of irony, paradox, sarcasm and humour and she does not use complex vocabulary and ideas to delineate the

issue. Though the writer belongs to the classification of people known as wives, the desire to have a wife came to her mind on one evening when she thought about her male friend who divorced recently and looking for a new wife. Though her male friend had one child, he is with his ex-wife because looking after the child is conceived as the responsibility of the mother in a patriarchal society. In ironic and sarcastic way, Brady asks herself why does she want a wife and provides answers as if she were a man. Throughout the essay she repeats “I want a wife” and this hooks the readers to it and persuades the reader to agree with the evidence given by an actual house wife of the 70s. She satirizes the indifferent attitude of men and society to the pain and sufferings of women in their multiple roles and the irony reaches its height when the husband seeks the support of the present wife to marry again. Through the distinctive style and tone, Brady has succeeded in her attempt to make the readers-both male and female- understand the message clearly and specifically. By reading it women will be happy that someone has spoken on their behalf and men can approach women and their issues with a broad perspective. Write an essay in not more than 300 words.

- Discuss the essay “Why I Want a Wife” with a feminist perspective. Judy Brady in her well known essay “Why I Want a Wife” deals with the plight and sufferings of women in society. Women have been victims of different sorts of discrimination from time immemorial and the author addresses and vehemently criticizes the attitude of men who treat women as objects to satisfy their needs and pleasures. Feminism as a theory and movement examines the patriarchal structure of society all over the world and the unequal and unjust treatment of women in all spheres of life. Feminist scholars hold the view that gender and gender based differences are social and culturally constructed to treat women as inferior and the movement aims to eradicate the inferior status of women by bringing equality in all social spheres: political, economic and educational. Judy Brady has become famous through her writings and active involvement in the second wave of Feminist Movement that hit the United States of America in the 1960s and 70s. The article, packed with irony and sarcasm, satirizes the attitude of society in general and men in particular towards women. Brady begins her essay by saying that she belongs to the classification of group known as wives- mothers too- and throughout the piece she goes on to enumerate the multiple duties and responsibilities women are entitled to carry out as wife and mother. In ironic manner the writer says that she too would like to have a wife because wife sacrifices all her desires and aspirations for the sake of marriage and family thereby relieving husband from all such responsibilities. The men and society expect women to perform so many duties as wives and mothers. At home the wife has to carry out all the domestic works such as cleaning the house, washing the clothes of husband and children, ironing and mending the dress and the husband expects his personal things to be kept in the proper place. As a good cook, she has to plan the menu, do the necessary grocery shopping, prepare tasty meals and serve them pleasantly. She has to make her husband economically independent so that he can go to school and she should support him and those who dependent upon him providing economic assistance. As a mother the wife has to take care of the children and make sure that they eat properly and are

kept clean. As a good nurturing attendant she should take all necessary steps for the children's schooling and provide them required time and space for social life by taking them to the park and zoo etc. Judy Brady says that the husband doesn't want to miss his own things even when the children are sick as his wife supposed to give special care for them at such situations. She should accompany when the family takes a vacation so that she should take care of the husband and the children when they needed a rest and a change of scene. Judy Brady makes fun of husband's attitude towards their wife to perform as a social being and she has to give him enough freedom whenever they get invitation from his friends for a party. At such situations she should make baby-sitting arrangements so as to give him ample opportunity to converse with his friends. When he invites his friends to the home, there too she should prepare special meals and serve them pleasantly. Apart from all this wife should be sensitive enough to satisfy his sexual needs even if he is not ready to give her back the same when she is in need of it. If the man finds another suitable woman, he should be given enough freedom to discard her and children to lead a fresh marital life with the new woman. He assumes that the wife will take care of the children and be solely responsible for their well being because he expects a fresh, new life. Paradoxically, Brady ends her essay with the comment "My God, who wouldn't want a wife" so as to convince women of their plight and men to realize the way they treat the women folk. The author uses different sorts of rhetorical features throughout the essay to depict the pain and sufferings of women as wives and mothers. Patriarchal society often attributes all negative significations and images to women so as to continue the domination over them and Brady as vocal feminist portrays immemorial grievances of women through clear and unambiguous language.

NON DETAILED: 3. IN SEARCH OF SWEET PEAS BY RUSKIN BOND

Ruskin Bond begins his write up by narrating the effect of flowers on his senses. He says that the fragrance, scent, colour, and the lively design of the flowers keep him enchanted. As winter falls on the Himalayas, the plants have been dried up, the petals withered and all sign of life is lost. The narrator feels life without flowers dull and worthless. He thought of visiting gardens at the valley town of Dehra. The thought of Dehra made him nostalgic. He remembered his grandmothers' house in Dehra with full of sweet-peas in blossom. Following the directions given by Prem, who had been to the valley town Dehra, the narrator sets out. He dreamt of glorious gardens and landed at Dehra. He walked into the school where Prem had told him of seeing full blossomed sweet-peas. The gateman refused to admit him to the school garden. Desperate, he walked through the streets of Dehra and found a garden with full of blossomed Californian poppies (please google Californian poppies and see the flowers, beautiful). He was excited to see the strong yellow petals of the flower. He was circled by the colour, fragrance of the little flower. The narrator thinks of trees and says that trees make one feel younger. He remembers passing beneath an old tamarind tree standing in the middle of Dehra's busiest street crossing. The city has changed a lot but the tamarind has managed to survive. The writer feels

that as long as the roots of the tree clinging on Dehra's rich soil, his roots will also be embedded in the old valley town.

The narrator recollects the old Indian villages with their banyan trees. Under the generous shade of the tree, school teachers conducted open air classes and village elders discussed matters of the moment. It hosted all kinds of creatures. As villages grow into cities, these banyan trees are gradually disappearing. Mangrove is also a good place to stroll or an afternoon siesta. During the ripening season, there is a festival in the grove. Himalayan foothill cannot nourish banyan or mango tree. On the other hand, they support deodar (tree of God). According to the author, they resemble the cedars of Lebanon. The hills covered with deodar are an impressive sight. The narrator recounts pictures of different trees including the oldest tree in California. He adds that the saints of ancient India found suitable trees to meditate under it. Buddha preferred banyan tree and Hindu ascetics selected peepal trees. The author confesses that though he loves to spend time under trees, he cannot meditate as the commotion of the birds and animals distract him. He wonders how sages managed to concentrate while the birds chirp and flit.

Short Answer Questions

1) How did winter affect the life of the Himalayas?

During the winter season, trees shed leaves, flowers get withered and gardens are forlorn.

2) How did the gate keeper welcome the author?

Attracted by the lovely fragrance and colour of the Sweet -peas, the author goes to the gate, asks permission to enter which the gate keeper denies. The narrator's appeal that he is a former student of the school is not accepted.

3) Why does not the author meditate under the trees?

Though ancient saints found meditation under the trees comfortable, the author feels that he is attracted to the chirping sounds of birds.

Paragraph Questions

1. How did the author establish his strong roots in Dehra soil?

The author recollects an old tamarind tree standing in the middle of the city Dehra. The author feels that old trees make people young. He also consoles himself that as long as the tree is rooted in the rich root of Dehra, his roots are also be embedded in it.

2. Discuss Indian villages and their strong bond with trees?

The author writes that banyan trees are a part of Indian villages. Beneath the rich shade of the banyan tree, elders of the village met to discuss matters of the moment and teachers conducted open air classes under the tree. Since trees were favourite place for meditation, many trees were haunted by wandering sages. The narrator muses that some of the Indian villages have got banyan trees even today.

3. What was the response of the author when he saw the Californian poppies?

Disconsolate by the experience he had at the school gate, the author strolled into the park and found blossomed Californian poppies. He was excited to see the strong yellow petals of the flower, and was deeply moved. He felt that those flowers were waiting for his arrival.

Write an essay in not more than 300 words.

1 • Consider ‘In Search of Sweet-peas’ as a recollection of childhood memories.

Ruskin Bond is a well known writer of children’s literature in India. His stories are filled with children and their world. Most of his stories are located in the villages/towns on the foothills of the Himalayas. Bond attempts to recapture the lost childhood in his stories. His child heroes are endowed with their curiosity and innocence catches the imagination of children and adults alike. In this essay bond narrates the need of flowers even in winter. It seems that he cannot think of living without flowers around him. The child in him is out when he sets out in search of sweet peas in Dehra.

2. Do an adult of today go in search of blossomed sweet-peas?

It is this childish, innocent aspect of childhood which Bond weaves in his stories. The moment Bond thinks about Dehra, he remembers his grandmother’s house with a garden full of flowers. He feels sad that the grandmother who loved him so much is no more and hopes that he can see some other gardens in the city. It is interesting to see how Bond gets delighted when he sees the lovely, blossomed Californian poppies! He compares himself with Alice in wonderland. The excitement, joy and rapture of Bond are as fascinating as that of a child looking at a butterfly. It is childlike sensitivity of the writer that makes the write up impressive. In the second section of the essay, he talks about trees. The presence of a tamarind tree in the middle of the valley town Dehra reminds him of childhood days when he sat on the railings that circled the tree. Whatever the narrator sees around him evokes childhood memories in him. It seems that the writer has turned into a grown up child. When he describes the mango groves, he imagines children who are waiting to evade the watchman to enter the grove. It reveals a secret that old trees make human beings feel younger. The writer remarks that the older the trees, the younger one feel. The author is delighted to say that as long as the tamarind tree is rooted in the soil of Dehra, his roots are firm in the valley town. In short, the narrator has succeeded to recapture the fragrance of his lost childhood by describing those flowers and trees that he loved. The sight of blossomed flowers and trees has rejuvenated the writer. The author has expressed his musings on flowers, trees and childhood in this essay. Though it never explicitly comments on environment, he explains the intimate relationship human beings had with nature. The narrative is so striking that it helps us to fashion our attitude towards the environment. It enables us to listen to the cry of nature and to recapture our lost innocence.

References : The Kite Runner- Khaled Hosseini

UNIT 3: FICTION

DETAILED:

- 3) Yann Martel-Life of Pi
- 4) Margret Atwood-Handmaid's tale

Non-Detailed:

- Markus Zusak- The book thief
- Harper Lee- To kill a mocking bird

Yann Martel-Life of Pi

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_of_Pi

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQbto_DSmpI

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjqcBKsDGrA>

Full text of "Life Of Pi Yann Martel"

https://archive.org/stream/LifeOfPiYannMartel/Life+of+Pi+-+Yann+Martel_djvu.txt

Plot Overview

In an Author's Note, an anonymous author figure explains that he traveled from his home in Canada to India because he was feeling restless. There, while sipping

coffee in a café in the town of Pondicherry, he met an elderly man named Francis Adirubasamy who offered to tell him a story fantastic enough to give him faith in God. This story is that of Pi Patel. The author then shifts into the story itself, but not before telling his reader that the account will come across more naturally if he tells it in Pi's own voice.

Part One is narrated in the first person by Pi. Pi narrates from an advanced age, looking back at his earlier life as a high school and college student in Toronto, then even further back to his boyhood in Pondicherry. He explains that he has suffered intensely and found solace in religion and zoology. He describes how Francis Adirubasamy, a close business associate of his father's and a competitive swimming champion, taught him to swim and bestowed upon him his unusual name. Pi is named after the Piscine Molitor, a Parisian swimming club with two pools that Adirubasamy used to frequent. We learn that Pi's father once ran the Pondicherry Zoo, teaching Pi and his brother, Ravi, about the dangerous nature of animals by feeding a live goat to a tiger before their young eyes. Pi, brought up as a Hindu, discovers Christianity, then Islam, choosing to practice all three religions simultaneously. Motivated by India's political strife, Pi's parents decide to move the family to Canada; on June 21, 1977, they set sail in a cargo ship, along with a crew and many cages full of zoo creatures.

At the beginning of Part Two, the ship is beginning to sink. Pi clings to a lifeboat and encourages a tiger, Richard Parker, to join him. Then, realizing his mistake in bringing a wild animal aboard, Pi leaps into the ocean. The narrative jumps back in time as Pi describes the explosive noise and chaos of the sinking: crewmembers throw him into a lifeboat, where he soon finds himself alone with a zebra, an orangutan, and a hyena, all seemingly in shock. His family is gone. The storm

subsides and Pi contemplates his difficult situation. The hyena kills the zebra and the orangutan, and then—to Pi's intense surprise—Richard Parker reveals himself: the tiger has been in the bottom of the lifeboat all along. Soon the tiger kills the hyena, and Pi and Richard Parker are alone together at sea. Pi subsists on canned water and filtered seawater, emergency rations, and freshly caught sea life. He also provides for the tiger, whom he masters and trains.

The days pass slowly and the lifeboat's passengers coexist warily. During a bout of temporary blindness brought on by dehydration, Pi has a run-in with another blind castaway. The two discuss food and tether their boats to one another. When the blind man attacks Pi, intending to eat him, Richard Parker kills him. Not long after, the boat pulls up to a strange island of trees that grow directly out of vegetation, without any soil. Pi and Richard Parker stay here for a time, sleeping in their boat and exploring the island during the day. Pi discovers a huge colony of meerkats who sleep in the trees and freshwater ponds. One day, Pi finds human teeth in a tree's fruit and comes to the conclusion that the island eats people. He and Richard Parker head back out to sea, finally washing ashore on a Mexican beach. Richard Parker runs off, and villagers take Pi to a hospital.

In Part Three, two officials from the Japanese Ministry of Transport interview Pi about his time at sea, hoping to shed light on the fate of the doomed ship. Pi tells the story as above, but it does not fully satisfy the skeptical men. So he tells it again, this time replacing the animals with humans: a ravenous cook instead of a hyena, a sailor instead of a zebra, and his mother instead of the orangutan. The officials note that the two stories match and that the second is far likelier. In their final report, they commend Pi for living so long with an adult tiger.

Summary and Analysis Author's Note

Summary

Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* is a story within a story. The “frame” of the novel involves the true narrator, The Author, a novelist who while living in India is told an incredible story. This first, small section introduces the idea of the book and also solidifies the first part of the novel's frame. Its first-person narrator is a novelist who is trying to escape the failure of his second published novel—and his second failure to produce a third novel at all. A Canadian who has travelled to Bombay, India, to work on a book about Portugal, he has a conversation with Francis Adirubasamy, who promises to connect him with a man—Pi Patel—who has a story that will make him “believe in God.” The Author takes the bait and meets with Pi in Toronto, Canada. The Author then briefly describes the experience of meeting Pi and being told Pi's amazing story, as well as his decision to write it as a novel. He outlines how he decided what kind of style and point of view to use, and expresses great affection and gratitude for Pi.

Analysis

Because an author's note is a traditional literary device—in which a book's author briefly addresses his or her readers before proceeding to the main text—readers at first might believe that the “voice” of the note is Yann Martel's. In fact, the narrator of the author's note seems to have a background that is similar, if not identical, to Martel's. However, as the novel continues, The Author becomes more

and more of a character, intruding with both brief and lengthy passages to explain his ongoing relationship with Pi and his experience of listening to Pi's story. Eventually, readers realize that The Author is a fictional character who is relating a fictional experience.

The Author's Note adds an interesting element to the entire tone of the novel. First-person narrators, as a literary rule, are unreliable. Any person who is directly recounting his or her experiences will embellish, forget, lie, and misremember, and cannot be counted on for "truth." The presence of The Author—who is telling the story as it was told to him, for the purpose of writing a novel—creates a layer of fallibility. It elevates the story to the level of a fairy tale or parable and allows the literary text to become whatever is needed to communicate both events and beliefs about philosophy, religion, adventure, entertainment, and miracles.

2. Margret Atwood-Handmaid's tale

THE HANDMAID'S TALE SUMMARY

When the book begins, the narrator—whose real name we never learn—is being held with other women in an old school gym. We later find out this is called the Women's Center. When we see her again, she's been working for five weeks as a Handmaid.

The house where she works is run by a married Commander, whom the narrator must have sex with on a regular basis (in a standard Ceremony) in an attempt to become pregnant and provide the household with a child. The narrator has one uniform, assigned tasks, and very little freedom. She's confined to her room except for the times where she can go out, supervised, to do shopping or go to prescribed events. She frequently thinks about the Handmaid who preceded her, who killed herself.

The book's "present" action is the story of the narrator's time in this house, but throughout the book she has frequent flashbacks to various times in her life: her relationship with her husband Luke, their daughter, and her mother; the escape attempt she and Luke made; her friendship with Moira, the rebel; and her time at the Women's Center, where she is when the book starts.

Flashbacks to life before the Center: Before the narrator arrives at the Center, she is happily married to Luke (as his second wife) and they have a small daughter. She works at a library. Her best friend, Moira, and her mother are both active feminists concerned about changes that are happening: fewer children are being born, there's lots of disease, and the world is rapidly becoming polluted.

When a coup happens and the government collapses, the narrator loses her job and access to money, as do all women. Her life becomes more and more restricted, and her mother disappears. She and Luke decide to take their daughter and try to cross the border and run away. They get fake papers and almost make it across the border when they realize someone's onto them and have to make a run for it. The narrator and her daughter are captured and separated, and the narrator is drugged. When she wakes up people tell her she's not a good mother and take her to the Center. She doesn't know what's happened to Luke.

Flashbacks to the Center: At the Center, the women are stripped of their real names, their voices, and their rights. They're indoctrinated into the religious-based ideas of this new society, where they will be Handmaids. Their roles will be to have emotionless, non-erotic sex with high-powered men in order to provide society with children. Some women, like one called Janine, are totally broken by this demeaning experience. The narrator is happy when her friend Moira is brought in, just so she'll have an ally. But Moira tries to escape twice. The first time, she is unsuccessful and is brought back by force and beaten severely. The second time, it seems like she makes it... at least for a while.

As the narrator's memories and flashbacks take up more and more of her mental space, she slowly becomes more reckless and eager to act out, even if it means the

end for her. This is her third, final position as a Handmaid. If she doesn't have a child by this Commander she'll meet a tragic fate. On her daily walks with another Handmaid, Ofglen, the two women slowly open up to each other.

As the women's relationship develops they attend different events, such as a Prayvaganza (with marriage ceremonies) and the birth of a daughter to a Handmaid's household by Ofwarren (called Janine at the Center). The narrator eventually learns that Ofglen is working for the resistance. Ofglen tells the narrator the resistance's secret password, which is Mayday.

The Commander the narrator works for asks her to start meeting him secretly, and she does, even though it's super dangerous. At first he just wants to play Scrabble, but eventually he ends up smuggling the narrator to a brothel, Jezebel's, where she runs into her old friend Moira. Before the Commander makes the narrator sleep with him at Jezebel's (and therefore outside their Ceremony), the narrator gets to hear Moira's story.

Moira's story: Moira escapes from the Center a second time by turning a piece of a toilet into a weapon and holding a female guard hostage. Then she dresses like the guard and walks out without suspicion. She makes it to a Quaker safe house, and the people there smuggle her around from house to house for almost nine months. She almost gets to safety, but at the last stage of her journey something goes wrong and she's captured. We don't know exactly what happens to her after that, except that it's really, really bad. She chooses to end up working at Jezebel's rather than the alternative, which is to go work in the Colonies (which are completely radioactive and poisonous).

After the narrator and the Commander go to Jezebel's, things start to slip out of control. The Commander's Wife arranges for her to have sex with their chauffeur, Nick, in the hope that she'll get pregnant and bring a child into the house. In exchange, the Commander's Wife shows the narrator a picture of her abducted daughter. The narrator starts having sex with Nick first out of duty, then begins to have feelings for him. She tells him secrets about her past and starts to think that she may be pregnant.

One day the narrator and Ofglen have to go to a Women's Salvaging, a public execution where only women are present. While they are there, the narrator finds out Janine's baby didn't make it. The execution is run by Aunt Lydia, one of the people who ran the Center. Three women, two Handmaids and a Wife, are executed. Then Aunt Lydia brings out a man, accuses him of rape, and tells the women they are going to have a Particicution. Basically, this means the women can rip this man to shreds. The narrator is horrified, but Ofglen rushes in and kicks the man in the head. Afterward, she explains to the narrator that she was helping the man, because he was on the side of the resistance. They leave.

When the narrator goes to meet Ofglen later for their standard walk, she isn't there. Another woman like Ofglen is there in her place. The narrator tries out the password and this new Ofglen rebuffs her before telling her that the first Ofglen killed herself. Shocked, the narrator goes home, where the Commander's Wife has found out that the narrator was secretly seeing the Commander and chews her out.

The narrator goes to her room to await the punishment she knows is coming. She sees a black van coming—which is the sign you're about to get arrested or killed. Before the van arrives, Nick comes in and tells her that it's the resistance coming to

get her out. The narrator doesn't know whether to trust him or not, and when the men come in to get her she can't tell if they're on her side. They escort her out of the Commander's house, her fate uncertain.

While the narrator's story has concluded, the book has one more chapter. In this section, called "Historical Notes," we hear from a professor who has done research on the narrator's story and tries to figure out what happened to her. He reveals that the story was actually recorded onto tapes, which he and another professor transcribed and edited into a single narrative.

He says the tapes are probably legitimate, but he can't identify who the narrator or any of the other characters really were—with the exception of the Commander, whom he provides a potential alias for. The professor doesn't know how the narrator's story ended. He guesses she made it at least partially to safety, long enough to record these tapes, even if she was recaptured afterward.

Reference : <https://www.shmoop.com/handmaids-tale/summary.html>

3. THE BOOK THIEF by Markus Zusak

Plot Overview

Death introduces himself as the narrator of the novel. The first time he saw the book thief, he says, was on a train. The next time he saw her was when he came for a pilot who had crashed his plane. And the third time was after a bombing. He associates a color with each sighting: white, red, and black, the colors of the Nazi flag. Death then begins the story. Liesel, her mother, and her brother Werner are traveling on a train to Munich when Werner suddenly dies. Liesel and her mother get off the train to bury the body, and Liesel steals a book from one of the gravediggers. She and her mother continue their journey to a town called Molching, where Liesel will be raised by foster parents, Hans and Rosa Hubermann. At first Liesel doesn't like her foster parents, but Hans wins her over by teaching her to roll cigarettes for him.

Slowly, Liesel adjusts to her new life, though she is plagued by nightmares of her dead brother. She meets and befriends a neighborhood boy named Rudy, who worships the American athlete Jesse Owens and constantly pesters Liesel to kiss him. When Hans discovers that Liesel doesn't know how to read, he begins teaching her the alphabet, and together they make their way through the book Liesel stole from the gravedigger. Meanwhile, the political situation in Molching and throughout Germany is becoming serious, with war escalating and food and work shortages at home. When the town holds a book-burning to celebrate Hitler's birthday, Liesel steals another book from the flames.

Liesel begins delivering laundry for Rosa. One of Rosa's customers is the mayor's wife, Ilsa Hermann. One day Liesel is invited into Ilsa Hermann's study, where she marvels at the walls of books. Frau Hermann allows her to read in the study. Meanwhile, in Stuttgart, a German Jew named Max hides in a closet with no food, light, or water. A friend brings him false identity papers and a map hidden in *MKPF*, Hitler's autobiography. Max leaves the closet and takes the train to the Hubermanns' house. Hans, we learn, served with Max's father in World War I. After Max's father died, Hans promised Max's mother he would always help her. When Max arrives in Molching, Hans and Rosa hide him in the basement. As he recovers from his ordeal, he and Liesel become friends, and Max writes her a book on the painted-over pages of *MKPF*.

Frau Hermann tells Liesel she can't afford to send out the laundry anymore. Liesel is furious because her family is already struggling to survive and the Hermanns have so much. With Rudy's help, Liesel begins sneaking into the Hermanns' library and stealing books. For Christmas, Liesel builds Max a snowman in the basement. When Max gets sick and falls into a coma, Hans and Rosa worry about how they will dispose of the corpse if he dies. After months, Max recovers. Nazi soldiers arrive and inspect the basement to see if it is deep enough for a bomb shelter. Luckily, they don't see Max. Liesel continues stealing books from the Hermanns' library. Frau Hermann leaves her a dictionary and thesaurus with a note saying she knows Liesel has been stealing from her. At a Hitler Youth carnival, Rudy wins three races. The Allies begin bombing near Molching, and the people on Liesel's block must take shelter in a neighbor's basement. With each raid, Liesel reads to them until it's safe to exit. Max, meanwhile, has to stay in the Hubermanns' basement by himself.

As the war intensifies, Nazi soldiers begin parading Jewish prisoners through town on their way to the concentration camp at Dachau. When Hans sees an old man struggling to keep up with the group, he gives him a piece of bread. Nazi soldiers intervene and whip both the man and Hans. Hans realizes he has aroused suspicion and drawn attention to himself, and Max is no longer safe in the basement. That night, Max leaves Hans and Rosa's house. Hans waits for soldiers to come take him away, but none do. Instead, they come to Rudy's house, to recruit him for a school for future Nazi leaders. Rudy's father, Alex, refuses to let his son go. The soldiers leave, but a few days later both Alex and Hans are drafted into the German army. After Alex and Hans leave for duty, Rudy and Liesel go to the next parade of Jews and scatter bread in the streets. Rosa gives Liesel a book that Max made for her called "The Word Shaker." It is the story of Max and Liesel's friendship, and promises they will be reunited some day.

Hans is sent to Essen, where he is part of a squad that cleans up after air raids. Another member of the squad takes a dislike to Hans, and one day he insists they change places on their work bus. The bus crashes and the other man is killed, while Hans merely breaks his leg. Hans gets sent home to recuperate. Following another air raid, Liesel and Rudy find an Allied fighter pilot who has crashed his plane. They arrive just in time to see him die. Death sees Liesel for the second time when he comes to collect the pilot's soul. The Nazis continue to parade the Jews through Molching, and Liesel sees Max among the prisoners. Liesel tells Rudy about hiding Max. She had never told anyone before.

The mayor's wife gives Liesel a blank notebook so she can begin writing her own story. One night, while Liesel is in the basement editing her book, her neighborhood is bombed. Hans, Rosa, Rudy, and the rest of the neighbors are

killed. When rescue workers pull Liesel out of the rubble, she finds Rudy's corpse and gives him the kiss he always wanted. When the workers take her away, she leaves behind her finished book, called "The Book Thief." Death, who has been watching, rescues the book. Liesel goes to live with the mayor and his wife. After the liberation of the concentration camps, Max returns to Molching and finds Liesel. They hug and cry together. Liesel eventually grows up and moves to Australia, where she has a family and lives to an old age. When Death finally comes to take her soul, he shows her the book she wrote so many years before.

1. Who introduces themselves as the narrator of the novel?

- Liesel
- War
- Death

Hans

Ans : death

2. What is the name of the town where Liesel goes to live with her new foster parents?

- | |
|-------------|
| • Berlin |
| • Stuttgart |
| • Hamburg |
| • Molching |

Ans
molching

3of 5

When Max arrives at Hans and Rosa's house, what do they do with him?

- Report him
- Hide him
- Adopt him
- Reject him
- Ans hide him

4of 5

What do the Nazi soldiers do when Hans gives a piece of bread to a Jewish prisoner?

- Shoot him
- Whip him
- Spit on him
- Shake his hand
- Ans: whip him

5of 5

Why is Hans sent home from the war?

- He's injured
- He won't fight
- He's too old
- He goes blind

Ans: he's injured

4. TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD by

Harper Lee

Plot Overview

Scout Finch lives with her brother, Jem, and their widowed father, Atticus, in the sleepy Alabama town of Maycomb. Maycomb is suffering through the Great Depression, but Atticus is a prominent lawyer and the Finch family is reasonably well off in comparison to the rest of society. One summer, Jem and Scout befriend a boy named Dill, who has come to live in their neighborhood for the summer, and the trio acts out stories together. Eventually, Dill becomes fascinated with the spooky house on their street called the Radley Place. The house is owned by Mr. Nathan Radley, whose brother, Arthur (nicknamed Boo), has lived there for years without venturing outside.

Scout goes to school for the first time that fall and detests it. She and Jem find gifts apparently left for them in a knothole of a tree on the Radley property. Dill returns the following summer, and he, Scout, and Jem begin to act out the story of Boo Radley. Atticus puts a stop to their antics, urging the children to try to see life from another person's perspective before making judgments. But, on Dill's last night in Maycomb for the summer, the three sneak onto the Radley property, where Nathan Radley shoots at them. Jem loses his pants in the ensuing escape. When he returns for them, he finds them mended and hung over the fence. The next winter, Jem and Scout find more presents in the tree, presumably left by the mysterious Boo. Nathan Radley eventually plugs the knothole with cement. Shortly thereafter, a fire breaks out in another neighbor's house, and during the fire someone slips a blanket

on Scout's shoulders as she watches the blaze. Convinced that Boo did it, Jem tells Atticus about the mended pants and the presents.

To the consternation of Maycomb's racist white community, Atticus agrees to defend a black man named Tom Robinson, who has been accused of raping a white woman. Because of Atticus's decision, Jem and Scout are subjected to abuse from other children, even when they celebrate Christmas at the family compound on Finch's Landing. Calpurnia, the Finches' black cook, takes them to the local black church, where the warm and close-knit community largely embraces the children.

Atticus's sister, Alexandra, comes to live with the Finches the next summer. Dill, who is supposed to live with his "new father" in another town, runs away and comes to Maycomb. Tom Robinson's trial begins, and when the accused man is placed in the local jail, a mob gathers to lynch him. Atticus faces the mob down the night before the trial. Jem and Scout, who have sneaked out of the house, soon join him. Scout recognizes one of the men, and her polite questioning about his son shames him into dispersing the mob.

At the trial itself, the children sit in the "colored balcony" with the town's black citizens. Atticus provides clear evidence that the accusers, Mayella Ewell and her father, Bob, are lying: in fact, Mayella propositioned Tom Robinson, was caught by her father, and then accused Tom of rape to cover her shame and guilt. Atticus provides impressive evidence that the marks on Mayella's face are from wounds that her father inflicted; upon discovering her with Tom, he called her a whore and beat her. Yet, despite the significant evidence pointing to Tom's innocence, the all-white jury convicts him. The innocent Tom later tries to escape from prison and is shot to death. In the aftermath of the trial, Jem's faith in justice is badly shaken, and he lapses into despondency and doubt.

Despite the verdict, Bob Ewell feels that Atticus and the judge have made a fool out of him, and he vows revenge. He menaces Tom Robinson's widow, tries to break into the judge's house, and finally attacks Jem and Scout as they walk home from a Halloween party. Boo Radley intervenes, however, saving the children and stabbing Ewell fatally during the struggle. Boo carries the wounded Jem back to Atticus's house, where the sheriff, in order to protect Boo, insists that Ewell tripped over a tree root and fell on his own knife. After sitting with Scout for a while, Boo disappears once more into the Radley house.

Later, Scout feels as though she can finally imagine what life is like for Boo. He has become a human being to her at last. With this realization, Scout embraces her father's advice to practice sympathy and understanding and demonstrates that her experiences with hatred and prejudice will not sully her faith in human goodness.

2. INTRODUCTION

This 281-page novel was written by Harper Lee, and a publication done in 1960 by J. B. Lippincott & Co in New York. It won a prize, the Pulitzer Prize, shortly afterward and has now become one of the best references to classic modern American literature.

The characterization and storyline are lightly influenced by the author's childhood observations and memories of her neighborhood and family in Monroeville, Alabama. She relates the plot to the events that took place in her hometown at the age of 10 in 1936.

SETTING

Harper Lee highlights how poverty cements the duplicitous nature of society's race-based class system. She demonstrates how people who are caught up in the jumble of ignorance and poverty turn to racism to mask their shame and low self-esteem.

CHARACTERS

The following figures are some of the characters in the novel and are discussed as the main characters in this To Kill a Mockingbird book summary:

Jean Louise Finch (Scout): the protagonist and narrator of the novel. Scout comes to understand the goodness and the dark side of people.

Jeremy Finch (Jem): Scout's older brother who appears as a protective figure. In his shadow, Scout's youthful innocence is highlighted.

Atticus Finch: The proud, moral, and respected father, Scout's father.

Tom Robinson: The accused but seemingly innocent rapist who is shot dead trying to escape prison.

Arthur "Boo" Radley: The neighbor who is clouded and hidden in mystery.

CASTING JUDGMENT

Judgment is a major theme in To Kill a Mockingbird. The two notable instances where judgment comes out are:

Scout's burlesque towards "Boo" Radley till she, later on, discovers his kindness and bravery.

Most of the town's citizens already had their minds made up that Tom Robinson was guilty of raping Ewell's daughter, Mayella, contrary to the evidence that came out during the trial.

SYMBOLISM OF MOCKINGBIRD

The mockingbird is used to symbolize innocence in the novel. The symbolism is portrayed in the instances where the goodness and innocence of some characters were bruised and crushed. For instance, Jeremy and Scout's innocence is lost; Tom Robinson is tried and convicted of rape despite him being innocent; Atticus almost had his goodness broken; Radley is viewed by both adults and children as being weird overlooking his kindness and bravery.

PLOT

The story is told by the little six-year-old girl Jean Louise Finch nicknamed Scout.

She is a rebellious girl who has tomboy tendencies.

The storyline is based in Maycomb, a small town in Alabama in the 1930s where Scout lives with her elder brother Jem, and her father, Atticus, who is widowed. They have a housekeeper named Calpurnia, who is a stern kind-hearted African-American. They also befriend Dill, a small boy who comes to visit and stay with his aunt every summer.

The timeline is placed during the depression where the status of her father as a respected and successful lawyer alleviates the Finch family from the harshness of the depression gripping the small town.

The two major themes in the novel are judgment and justice. Scout and her brother get to learn some crucial lessons about judging others through the character of Boo, the cryptic and solitary neighbor. Early in the story, the children mimic and mock Radley, but they, later on, come to experience his goodness.

The judgment theme is depicted in the circumstances that befell Tom Robinson, a poor African-American field attendant who is accused and put on trial for rape. He was charged with trying to rape a white woman Mayella Ewell. Atticus is appointed by Judge Taylor as Robinson's defense against the disapproval of many of the town's citizens. Despite the apparent evidence that proves Tom's innocence, the jury convicts him. The racist nature of the white supremacy society places all odds against Tom.

After being humiliated in court, Bob Ewell sets out on a revenge mission against the Finch's as he spits into Atticus' face; he tries breaking into the Judge Taylor's house; he menaces Robinson's widow, and he later attacks Scout and her brother as they walk home at night. Boo comes to the rescue of the children where Jem is injured, a fight erupts, and Bob is killed.

STYLE

The dominant element of style the author applies in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is storytelling. Her talent has been described in several reviews as "tactile brilliance." She narrates her story in a visual and cinematographic fluid prose merging scene after scene without jolts of transition.

The narration style adopts two perspectives; one that of the young girl growing up in hardship and problematic era and that of a grown-up woman reflecting on her

childhood memories. The method of narration applied allows the author to fuse the simplicity of childhood observations with the adulthood situations intricate with veiled motivations and unquestioned custom. By adopting a child's perspective, the author efficiently applies satire, parody, and irony.

GENRE

The novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been classified as both a Southern Gothic Bildungsroman. The weird and near-supernatural traits of Boo and the aspect of racial injustice concerning Tom Robinson underwrite the quality of the gothic in the novel.

ATTICUS FINCH AND THE LEGAL PROFESSION

One of the most profound effects *To Kill a Mockingbird* has had is to create a model of integrity for the legal profession in Atticus Finch's characterization. Several practicing professionals have cited the influence Atticus had on their decisions to join law school or shaped their ideology during school days and afterward during practice.

Despite the heroic depictions, some critics have come up to maintain the assertion that his figure is irrelevant in the modern profession as he existed in a past era where racism and injustice were the order of the day. They draw their assumptions from the notion that he does not put his skills to use against the racist status quo in Maycomb.

A controversial earlier draft of the novel, which was titled *Go Set a Watchman*, was released on July 14, 2015. The draft was completed in 1957 and is set in a timeline 20 years after the time depicted in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The plot is based on the adult Scout Finch who has traveled to Alabama from New York to visit her father. She is then confronted by the intolerance still existing in her society. The novel was intended to be the first in a trilogy with a smaller novel in between the two.

CONCLUSION

To Kill a Mockingbird was introduced in the classroom as early as 1963. It has been featured in several other lists that describe its impacts, for instance, it was voted as the “Best Novel of the 20th Century” by readers of the *Library Journal*. It is placed in the fifth position on the list of Modern Library’s Readers List of the 100 Best Novels in the English language since 1900. This *to kill a mockingbird* summary is an insight of the general impacts the novel has had on the society.

References : *The book thief*. Markus zusak.(2006) Published by Knopf Books .

UNIT 4: DRAMA**DETAILED:**

- 1. Girish Karnad- The fire and the rain**
- 2. Cedric Mount- The Never-Never nest**
- 3. Fritz karinthy- The Refund**

- 1. Caryl Churchill- Top Girls**
- 2. ken urban- sense of an ending**

THE FIRE AND THE RAIN GIRISH KARNAD**PLOT SUMMARY**

This is the story of wronged and misunderstood Arvasu, a brahman by caste, who has become a performing actor. He loves Nittilai, who reciprocates his love, but seeks approval of her father and her village's elders before marrying him. Arvasu's brother is Parvasu who has been conducting a major prayer ceremony to appease Devraj Indra so that their region may get rain. Arvasu's father is Raibhya, who dislikes both his sons, and wishes that he cremate them before his death. Raibhyu, suspects Vishaka Parvasu's wife, of having an illicit affair with Yavaki, and detests her. Yavarki loves Vishaka, but left her to

worship and pray to Devraj Indra for 10 years, and on his return found her married to Parvasu. Parvasu married Vishaka, lived with her happily for 3 years, before leaving her to conduct the prayer ceremony for Devraj Indra. On finding that Vishaka has met with Yavarki, an enraged Raibhya summons a Brahm Rakshas, a demon to kill Yavarki. The demon does so, and Arvasu has to cremate him; this delays his appointment with Nittilai's dad and her village elders, and as a result she is married to someone else. When Parvasu hears of the death of Yavarki, he kills his father, and subsequently blames Arvasu for this and has him badly beaten up and left for dead. When Nittilai hears of this, she comes to the rescue of Arvasu, and finds that she is being hunted by her husband and her brother, who will kill her on sight. Sutradhar arranges an act to entertain the Devas, and as a result Arvasu goes berserk, Nittilai exposes herself and is killed by her husband; Parvasu admits failure and cremates himself. Thus one by one, whoever, was close to Arvasu is dead. Finally appeased, Devraj Indra appears, and Arvasu is allowed a wish of his choice. The only thought in Arvasu's mind is to bring Nittilai back to life, but will Devraj Indra turn history around and help Arvasu?

The land has been in the grip of a ravaging drought for 10 years. In order to appease the Lord of Gods Indra, custodian of rain, a grand fire sacrifice is being conducted at the palace under the guidance of the Chief Priest, Parvasu. As this sacrifice draws to its close, our story begins. Parvasu is the elder son of the great sage Raibhya. For 7 years he has watched over the holy fire, forsaking his wife, family and every earthly pleasure. Parvasu's young brother Arvasu is in love with a tribal girl, Nittilai. Arvasu prepares to marry outside his Brahmin caste - but for this, according to the tribal custom, he has to present himself before Nittilai's village elders. Parvasu's cousin and bitter rival Yavakri has just returned triumphant after 10 years of practicing austerities in the jungle, with

the gift of universal knowledge from the gods. To seek revenge, Yavakri seduces Paravasu's lonely wife Vishakha. This sets off an irrevocable chain of events that lead to Aravasu losing his love, Paravasu desecrating the great sacrifice, the creation of a demon and the deaths of Yavakri and Raibhya. Finally, the purity of Arvasu and Nittilai's love brings salvation to the land. This film is adapted from the play *The Fire and the Rain* by one of India's foremost playwrights, Girish Karnad. The story is derived from the myth of Yavakri, which is a part of the great Indian epic, the Mahabharata.

[http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/143078/12/12_chapter%207.p df](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/143078/12/12_chapter%207.pdf)

ANALYSIS

The story is taken from the *Vanaparva* (Forest Canto) of Mahabharata. As it can be guessed the actions in this story happens at different places like the place where the Yajna is conducted, The Ashram of Raibhya, a place near the forest Ashram of Yavakri's father, the Forest, etc. So the location changes very quickly.

Traditionally what is done is that when the action at one place is completed, the curtain falls and then the play continues from a new scene. But when this happens, the continuity is lost and the visual experience is obstructed and the spectators' consciousnesses murmur that they are watching a play and not a reality. They get a realistic experience when the actions are presented at a stretch without the interference of the curtain. For that the dramatist employs the simple technique of dividing the stage into two parts. One part is kept darkened while the light is focused on the other part. When the

scene changes, the darkened part will brighten and the other part will darken.

Thus the shift in place is made natural to a certain extent.

This is a common technique that we can see in many other plays such as “The First Manned Flight To Venus” where scenes from Earth and Venus are shown on the same stage without a curtain fall. In Girish Karnad’s play also there are no curtain falls (except that in the end). However it should be re-stated that this stage technique is not an invention by Karnad. But he uses it to good effect.

The structure of the play also contributes to the realistic experience. The structure is such that there is a play within the play. Girish Karnad is a master craftsman and he had made the plot a well-knitted one. The story begins from and moves around the Fire sacrifice.

It is possible to have a main plot and an under plot. But here it seems that there are many plots. This is a chapter from the epic Mahabharatha and it contains some of the epic elements and we cannot expect Aristotlean “Unity of Action” here. The fire sacrifice seems to be the main plot. But there are equally or more important sub plots like the love between Arvasu and Nittilai. One will be tempted to take this as main plot. Yavakri’s thirst for revenge is another chapter in this drama. Even the Brahma Rakshasa has his own issues. And he comes and destroys the expectations of the spectators when they were eagerly waiting to see Nittilai coming back to life. And Arvasu gives priority to this burning soul than Nittilai.

Arvasu and the others perform a play in the stage while all other characters watch. So there happens to be one more stage (within the stage). Then this gives the impression that what was previously happening in the stage was real. And it is this element of 'play within the play' that transcends this in to a hypermediated play. The spectators may think that the real drama is the drama within the drama. However this is very common in the Indian mythology and works like 'Kathasaritsagaram', 'Panchatantram' and 'Aesop's Fables', but never in Indian or any other dramatic traditions. And this is what Karnad does in this play. And makes it look real not by a lot of technological back-up but by his craftsmanship and good narrative techniques.

Girish Karnad is often praised for his stance on social issues like caste. This play is supposed to be an anti-Brahminical play. This anti-Brahminical elements are mostly expressed through the speech of some of the characters especially Nittilai. Like

"These high-caste men are glad enough to bed our women but not to wed them." (Nittilai, Page.8).

Nittilai also expresses her scorn for Brahmanical culture when she speaks about Yajna and Knowledge (Page.10 and 11) . This continues when she takes care of Arvasu also.

The dramatist never considers the tribal culture better than the Brahmanic culture. There are only two major characters from the non-Brahmanical background (Nittilai and Andhaka). A Brahmin youth is in love with a tribal girl. But they could not get married. Here in this play it is not the Brahmanic culture that is responsible for this. But it is the tribal tradition that is responsible for this! Even the heroine is brutally murdered by her husband and brother. (So

they really deserve to be called as villains). It seems that the playwright wishes to criticize some of the elements in the existing Brahmanic ideology, just like the wrong way of gaining knowledge by Yavakri has been criticized (which can be replaced by a better one).

However the real criticism to the Brahmanical culture comes in the play within the play where Indra and Vritra are the characters. Apart from the account given in the play, there is more significance for the Indra-Vritra rivalry. In Rigveda, there is a part where Indra kills Vritra. Some historians interpret this as the Aryan conquest over the Dravidians. However Vritra really wins the applause of the spectators. Also Arvasu expresses his contempt for the gods of the elites. However it is Indra who in the end solves all the problems. So it seems that the fire of criticism against the caste system has been put out by the rain god of the elites.

Girish Karnad's plays are meant for the middle class audience. And he gives importance to novel narrative techniques rather than mere social commentary. Perhaps these are the reasons why the play doesn't take a strong anti-Brahmanic position.

THE NEVER- NEVER NEST (CEDRIC MOUNT)

CEDRIC MOUNT

Cedric Mount is a playwright of a considerable distinction. During his brief literary career (1932 - 1940) he produced some very thought provoking

plays, which include “Dirge without Dole”, “To cut a long story short”, Nature abhors a vacuum” and “Twentieth century Lullaby”. Mount’s one act plays are satirical, witty and insightful. These one act plays expose the shams of the contemporary society besides delicately admonishing the guilty.

PLOT SUMMARY

3. The Never Never Nest " is a comic one-act play about a young couple. They make full use of the buy-now-pay-later marketing system. This comedy is very relevant today, because we can buy almost anything now on the instalment basis.

Jack and Jill were a young married couple who had a small baby. One day Aunt Jane visited them. She was surprised to find that even though Jack's salary was not very high, they lived in a beautiful house with all comforts, such as a radio, a car and a refrigerator. She began to wonder whether, as a wedding gift she had given them 2000 pounds instead of the 20 pounds she had wanted to give them. Otherwise how did Jack and Jill buy all these things? she suggested that the rent for such a house must be very high. Jack replied that they owned the house.

Then Aunt Jane understood that though Jack and Jill had everything, nothing really belonged to them. They bought everything they had on the instalment basis. Only a steering wheel of the car, a wheel and two cylinders had been paid for. And only one leg of the sofa that Aunt Jane sat on, belonged to them. The total amount to be paid towards instalments per week came to more than seven pounds. Jack was earning only six pounds a week. Jill was a

housewife. When aunt jane asked how he could pay seven pounds a week when he was earning only six pounds, jack said that they could take a loan. Aunt jane was shocked at the way jack and jill ran their family. Before she left, she gave ten pounds to jill and told them to make at least one article completely theirs, using that money. While jack went with aunt jane to the bus stop, jill sent the money to Dr.Martin. Jack came back and said that he wanted to pay two months instalments on the car using that money. But jill said that by paying the money to Dr.Martin, their baby would become completely theirs!

TITLE ANALYSIS

One- Act Play –

“The Never- Never Nest”

“The Never- Never Nest”, whose playwright is Cedric Mount, is a one-act play, depicting a naive couple Jack & Jill, who bought each & every luxury of life on installments & are living cheerfully without even being aware that they would be struggling under the burden in the near future.

The title of the play — “The Never- Never Nest” has two ‘never’ in it, ensuring that the nest would never be built. The double negative is emphasizing the impossibility of home.

The ‘nest’ in the title, literally refers to the home of birds.

Birds make their home by collecting straws & twigs of various trees. The nest acts as their temporary home as they do migration with respect to the changing

weather conditions. Also, they are not safe, as different animals might attack their nest anytime. The same is the case with Jack & Jill.

The word 'nest' is a suggestion of instability. It is suggesting a temporary home. The couple can be attacked by the money-lenders anytime if the installments are not paid on the designated time.

Moreover, they have not just purchased home on installments, rather they brought each & every thing of the house like furniture, piano, radiogram & even the car on installments. At the end of the play, humor takes on wings when we got to know that the couple had their baby on installments.

“Jill :just one more installment & BABY’S REALLY OURS !”

Since every opulence of their life is based on

buy- now-pay-later marketing system, they were not secure at all. The family’s income is very low as compared to the total installment which is to be paid every week.

“Aunt Jane :How can you pay seven pounds eight & eight pence out of six pounds”

This situation tells that if anytime they would be unable to pay the installments, they might have to leave the house

, which simply shows the insecurity of the luxuries of their life.

The word 'nest' in the title may also be interpreted as a source of humor, especially satire, which the playwright tried to bring. Birds take a lot of time to

build their nest as they have to collect several straws & twigs from different places. They work very hard. But, in this play, both Jack & Jill show their instant gratification for luxuries & had brought them on installments without saving any money. That is, the word 'nest' acts as a contrary word for such a house.

Therefore, the title of this act is appropriate as it connotes the theme of the act — the pathetic condition of the couple, leading a luxurious life on installment basis under their charming nest, which is too on easy monthly installments.

THE REFUND FRITZ KARINTHY

FRITZ KARINTHY, a Hungarian author, playwright, poet, journalist, and translator, was the first proponent of the six degrees of separation concept, in his 1929 short story, *Chains* . Karinty remains one of the most popular Hungarian writers. He was the father of poet Gábor Karinty [hu] and writer Ferenc Karinty.

Among the English translations of Karinty's works are two science fiction novellas that continue the adventures of Swift's character Gulliver. *Voyage to Faremido* is an early examination of artificial intelligence, with a pacifist theme, while *Capillaria* is a polished and darkly humorous satire on the 'battle of the sexes'.

PLOT SUMMARY

The play refund is full of humour which deals with an extraordinarily ludicrous situation. The main character in the play is Wasserkopf. He is forty years old. He could not get any employment and wherever he went the people told him that he is fit for nothing and nothing worth while he has learnt when he was studying.

One day he met a Lederer and asked him about his business. When the Lederer told him about foreign exchange and Hungarian money, he was not able to understand anything and started asking questions about foreign exchange to the Lederer. For which the Lederer said when you don't know the silly thing what have you studied, you better go to your school and get your tuition fees back. Wasserkopf who was jobless and didn't have any finance, this idea sounded something beneficial to him and so he went to the school where he studied once.

When he asks for the refund of his tuition fees, the principal is shocked because after eighteen years he has come to the school thinking that he has learnt nothing worthwhile and so he can get his tuition fees back.

The principal is in a peculiar situation now and he calls for an urgent meeting with all other staff members. They decided to keep a re-examination for Wasserkopf and agreed that whatever answers he gives weather it is right or wrong they will prove him right. One by one each teacher questions him and justified his wrong answer to be correct one and they mark him excellent. Though Wasserkopf gives wrong answers and use abuse words to each teacher, they don't show their anger because they have to prove him as an excellent student to chuck him out.

At least the mathematics master asks him a difficult question and an easy question. For the easy question he gives wrong answer and the master gets angry and says that he has failed on his examination so he should be given his tuition fees back. The master says that we have decided to give you your tuition fees back and now can you tell as the exact amount which we have to give you. Wasserkopf without knowing that he is going to fall into their trap gives them the list of exact amount. So the mathematics master says that was my difficult question to give the exact amount of your tuition fees for which you gave the right answer.

Now he is proved excellent in the entire subject and they throw him out without allowing him to say anything further. The play is full of humour and full of ludicrous situation. It also shows the ability of the teachers to manage the situation and how they tackle Wasserkopf without spoiling the reputation of their school.

IMPORTANT

QUESTION

Q<https://sakshieducation.com/Inter/Material/IstYearTM/English/Prose/6Refund.pdf>

TOP GIRLS (CARYL CHURCHILL)

Caryl Churchill (born 3 September 1938, London) is a British playwright known for dramatising the abuses of power, for her use of non-naturalistic techniques, and for her exploration of sexual politics and feminist themes.

Her early work developed Bertolt Brecht's modernist dramatic and theatrical techniques of Epic theatre

to explore issues of gender and sexuality. From *A Mouthful of Birds* (1986) onwards, she began to

experiment with forms of dance-theatre, incorporating techniques developed from the performance

tradition'. This move away from a clear *Fabel* dramaturgy towards increasingly fragmented and

surrealistic narratives characterises her work as postmodernist.

PLOT SUMMARY

Act I of *Top Girls* takes place in a hip London restaurant where Marlene is gathering five other women to celebrate her promotion to managing director of Top Girls, the employment agency where she works. This scene is surreal, because Marlene's 5 dinner guests are female figures from different historical eras: Isabella Bird; a 19th century writer and traveler, Lady Nijo; a 13th century courtesan and later, Buddhist

nun, Dull Gret; the subject of a Brueghel painting who led an army of women into hell to fight the

devils, Pope Joan; a 9th century woman who disguised herself as a man and became Pope, and Patient Griselda; the obedient wife from The Clerk's Tale in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. These women are bound together by their struggles against patriarchy and oppression - and Marlene relates to each of them differently.

Act 2 is set at the Top Girls employment agency. Marlene is interviewing a woman named Jeanine who wants a new job because there are no prospects for advancement at her current position. Through her questions, Marlene reveals that she looks down on Jeanine for her desire to get married young, have children, and her uncertainty about her professional future. Marlene only offers Jeanine two openings, one at a company that makes knitwear and the other lampshades - neither of which fulfill Jeanine's request for opportunities and travel. Regardless, Marlene tells Jeanine to be confident and present herself well, because her performance reflects on Marlene and the agency.

Act 2, Scene 2 is set in Joyce's backyard, where two young girls, Angie and Kit, have built a shelter out of junk. They tease and challenge each other, and make a plan to see an X-rated film in town. Angie speaks in a blunt and monosyllabic manner, and vocalizes her desire to kill her own mother. Angie also reveals secret plan to visit her aunt (Marlene) in London. Later, Joyce (Angie's mom) makes Angie clean her room before she can go to the movies. Angie returns wearing an old best dress that is slightly small for her. It begins to rain and Joyce and Kit run inside while Angie stays put. Kit comes out of the house and shouts at Angie to come inside, then goes down to Angie. Angie tells Kit "I put on this dress to kill my mother."

Act 2, Scene 3 is set in the Top Girls Employment Agency on a Monday morning. Win and Nell have just arrived to begin work. They are drinking coffee and chatting about the men they dated or had affairs with over the weekend. Marlene arrives and Nell and Win applaud and whistle for her after being promoted over Howard, but Nell also indicates that she envies Marlene's success.

Later, Win interviews Louise, who is 46 and feels that it's time to move on from her long-term job. Louise is frustrated at her lack of a personal life due to her sustained commitment to the job, and has watched as younger men are consistently being promoted to better positions while she is never considered. Win tells Louise the reality of the situation: that some companies may value her experience but they are more likely to hire younger men.

After the break, the setting reverts to the main office at Top Girls. Angie comes to see Marlene - who does not recognize her niece at first. Angie reveals that she has come to London on a one-way ticket without telling Joyce and will be needing a place to stay. Angie idolizes Marlene and starts asking

questions about her job. While Angie is in Marlene's office, Mrs. Kidd enters. She is the wife of Howard Kidd, who lost the promotion to Marlene. Mrs. Kidd tells Marlene that the news has left Howard a nervous wreck and requests Marlene to give up the promotion - since Howard is a man and he has a family to support. Marlene brushes off Mrs. Kidd and her absurd request - and in response, Mrs. Kidd calls Marlene "one of those ballbreakers" and tells her she'll end up "miserable and lonely."

After the break, Nell is interviewing Shona, who claims to be twenty-nine and working at her current sales job for four years. Nell, impressed, suggests that Shona might be a good employee for the Top Girls employment agency. Nell then presses Shona a bit on her current job and personal life, collecting details to present to potential employers. Shona delivers a far-fetched story about driving a company Porsche and staying in hotels on the company's expense account. Nell realizes that Shona is lying and calls the interview a "waste of time". Shona finally admits that she is only twenty-one and has no experience.

After a scene break, Win enters the main office to find Angie seated at her desk. She introduces herself and praises Angie's aunt Marlene. They start talking and Win tells Angie about her professional trajectory. She offhandedly mentions getting married but indicates that her husband has been imprisoned. However, Angie falls asleep during Win's story. Moments later, Nell comes into the office and tells Win that Howard's Kidd has had a heart attack. Marlene comes into the office and sees Angie asleep. Win tells Marlene that Angie aspires to work at Top Girls, and Marlene says bluntly, "Packer in Tesco more like." Win says she thinks Angie is a nice kid, but Marlene says she's "a bit thick...a bit funny" and that she's "not going to make it."

Act 3 is a flashback scene set at Joyce's home on a Sunday evening, three years earlier - the last time Marlene visited Joyce and Angie in Ipswich. One of the gifts Marlene has brought is the dress that Angie wears in Act 1. Joyce grumbles that Marlene's surprise visit has caught her off-guard, and we learn that Angie has orchestrated the visit and invited Marlene without telling Joyce. In this scene, we learn more about Joyce and Marlene's past as the sisters begin sharing a bottle of whisky. At one point, Angie asks her aunt to tuck her in, and Marlene does.

When the sisters are alone, Joyce scolds Marlene for leaving town when she was younger and leaving Joyce to look after their mother and Angie, who is actually Marlene's biological child. The sisters continue to argue, and it comes out that Marlene got pregnant with Angie at age seventeen, but didn't tell anyone about it until it was too late for an abortion. Joyce and her husband Frank offered to take the child, after being married for three years and having no children of their own. However, Joyce blames the stress of raising Angie for her subsequent miscarriage. Marlene and Joyce begin to argue about British politics, with Marlene taking the pro-Thatcher conservative side, and Joyce siding with the socialist left wing. The two change the subject and begin talking about their parents' working class struggles and difficult marriage.

Marlene tells Joyce that she doesn't "believe in class." Anyone ought to be able to pursue their desires if they "have what it takes." Marlene does not feel that she should be expected to help "stupid or lazy or frightened" people find jobs. Joyce thinks that Angie falls into the "stupid, lazy, and frightened" category, but Marlene brushes off her concerns. Joyce, meanwhile, expects Angie to have a wasted life so long as England is run by "them" meaning Thatcher's conservative party. Joyce accuses Marlene of

being one of "them". Later, Marlene tries to tell her sister to relax and says she did not mean everything she said. Joyce does not accept the gesture and holds onto her claims. She does not want to be friends with her sister - it is clear that their opposite life choices have driven a wedge between them. Joyce goes to bed.

Alone, Marlene sits wrapped in a blanket and pours herself another drink. Angie comes into the room and calls out "Mum?" Marlene says "Angie? What's the matter?" and again Angie calls out "Mum?" Marlene replies, "Not, she's gone to bed. It's Auntie Marlene." Angie then says "Frightening" and when Marlene asks if she's had a bad dream and suggests things are fine now because she's awake, Angie again says "Frightening" and the play ends.

ANALYSIS AND THEMES

<https://www.gradesaver.com/top-girls/study-guide/quotes>

SENSE OF AN ENDING (KEN URBAL)

Ken Urban is a playwright, screenwriter, director and musician whose plays have been produced in the

US and the UK. He became a senior lecturer at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 2017,

leading the playwriting program at the school. Urban was born in New Jersey in 1974.

During the 2017-18 Season, Urban had two world premieres: *A Guide for the Homesick*, which ran at

the Huntington Theatre Company in Boston (directed by Colman Domingo) from October 6 to November 4, 2017; and *The Remains*, which received its world premiere at Studio Theatre in Washington, DC (directed by Artistic Director David Muse) from May 16 to June 24, 2018. Ken

Urban's previous plays include *Sense of an Ending*, *The Correspondent*, *A Future Perfect*, *The Awake*, *The Happy Sad* and *Nibbler*, which was produced off-Broadway February 23 to March 18, 2017 by The Amoralists.]

Urban's work has also been produced by Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, 59E59 Theatres, The Summer Play Festival at The Public Theater, and Studio 42 (all New York), Theatre503 in London, First Floor Theater in Chicago, and SpeakEasy Stage Company in Boston. His plays have been developed at

Playwrights Horizons and The Civilians' R&D Group (both New York), Donmar Warehouse (London), Huntington Theatre Company (Boston), Williamstown Theatre Festival (Williamstown, Mass.), and the Theatre @ Boston Court (Pasadena, Calif.).

He is a Resident Playwright at New Dramatists and an affiliated writer at the Playwrights' Center. He was the Founding Artistic Director of The Committee, a New York-based theatre company that produced "catastrophic theatre" including the first workshop production of Sarah Kane's *Cleansed*.

ANALYSIS

The Sense of an Ending is a 2011 novel by British author Julian Barnes. Narrated by a retired man named Tony Webster, the book centers around his friendship with a young man named Adrian Finn back when he was in school, and the events that eventually tore them apart. When the past catches up with Tony, he is forced to confront the paths that he and his friends have taken in life. Exploring

themes such as death, regret, and reminiscence, *The Sense of an Ending* is noted for its

unconventional narration: both parts are narrated by Tony, but they skip back and forth

between Tony's teen years with Adrian and the arrival of a mysterious document during his

twilight years. *The Sense of an Ending* was

critically acclaimed by the majority of reviewers, although some found its bleak tone off-putting. It was short-listed for the Man Booker Prize in 2011 and nominated for the Costa Book Awards that same year. *The Sense of an Ending* has been adapted into a 2017 movie directed by Ritesh Batra and starring Michelle Dockery, Jim Broadbent, and Charlotte Rampling.

The Sense of an Ending begins as Tony Webster reminisces, revealing certain images that have stuck with him over his long life. They are all themed around water, including steam, a drain, a river, and a bathtub. The actual story begins with his childhood in a British prep school. He describes his group of friends but focuses especially on the newest boy in their group, Adrian Finn. Adrian is a smart, clever boy who is good friends with the exacting Professor Hunt, and that makes him an asset to the other boys in Tony's group. They befriend him hoping to get an advantage with the professor, but Tony soon strikes up a genuine friendship with Adrian. Adrian is a kind, idealistic boy, which is a contrast to the more cynical way Tony and his friends view the world. As Tony discusses this period of his life, it becomes clear that while all the other boys have troubled relationships with their parents, Adrian is close with his separated parents. Adrian believes in living a principled life, while the others believe that their society is fatally flawed.

During their school years, a student named Robson commits suicide. Rumors circle that he did this after his girlfriend became pregnant, and the boy's suicide becomes a topic of discussion among the friends. Tony and his two friends fear living a non-spectacular life more than anything else, but Adrian is content to simply be happy and live a good life, not caring whether he is remembered in stories. The boys eventually graduate and go their own ways. Adrian earns a scholarship to Cambridge, while Tony starts dating a girl named Veronica Ford. Although he and Veronica are happy for a time, they argue

over his taste in music and he gets a bad impression of her family. When he visits Veronica's house at one point, her mother vaguely warns him about her daughter. When Veronica comes to London to meet Tony's friends, she hits it off with Adrian immediately, and the two form a close connection. Tony resents this, and it leads to a breakup. Soon afterwards, he and Veronica have casual sex, but she becomes enraged when he doesn't want to get back together. He later receives a letter from Adrian asking for permission to date Veronica. Tony writes a harsh letter in reply, condemning Veronica's personality and accusing her of being dangerous. He never hears back from either of them after that, and his friendship with Adrian seems to be over.

Tony travels to the US, where he meets a young woman named Annie and falls for her. When he returns to London, he learns that Adrian has committed suicide. He finds out from his friends that Adrian seemed happy with Veronica, but apparently rejected the gift of life. He mourns Adrian with his friends, and the group separates again. He soon meets a woman named Margaret, marries her, has a daughter, and gets divorced. This is when the book shifts to the present day. Tony is now a retired hospital library assistant when he receives a letter from the estate of Veronica's mother, who has left him 500 pounds and two documents. The first is a letter explaining the money, and the second document wills Adrian's diary to Tony. The diary is still with Veronica, but when he emails her to try to get the diary, she responds with the words "blood money." She eventually sends him a page of the diary in which Adrian had been trying to turn relationships into mathematical formulas. Tony and Veronica eventually agree to a meeting.

The meeting is contentious, and Veronica gives Tony the letter he had sent them. He's shocked in hindsight at how harsh it is, and begins to blame himself for Adrian's death. They set up another meeting at a subway station, and Veronica shows Tony a mentally ill man who seems to know Veronica by her middle name. Tony believes that this man is Adrian and Veronica's son; it confuses him that Adrian would commit suicide knowing he had a son. Tony emails Veronica to apologize, and Veronica tells him that he has misunderstood. He follows the young, mentally ill man to the pub, and learns that while Adrian is indeed the father, the mother was actually Veronica's mother, and that her advanced age led to Adrian's son's mental illness. Tony ends the book, unnerved, and states that life is full of responsibility, but even more full of unrest.

Julian Barnes is a critically-acclaimed British novelist. In addition to *The Sense of an Ending*, he has

been shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize three times, for *Flaubert's Parrot*; *England, England*; and *Arthur & George*. Over a nearly forty-year career, he has written sixteen novels, three short story collections, and an array of non-fiction works ranging from memoirs to cooking journalism. In 2004 he became a Commandeur of L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. He is politically active, particularly on the issue of assisted dying, and released his latest novel in 2016.

PLOT SUMMARY

The novel begins with a series of images, as the central character lists memories from his youth that have stuck with him. These details are not at all organized, but carry a common theme of water, as he describes steam, a drain, a river and bathwater. The author begins his tale in school, when he was in high school. He is British, and so the style of education and such is also British. He opens by

describing his friends, and the addition of their newest member to the group, Adrian Finn, a decidedly intelligent boy whose tact for banter with Professor Hunt makes the boys eager to add him to their numbers. The narrator introduces himself, both to Adrian and to the reader as Tony Webster. Adrian assimilated to the group rather easily, although his attitude is a polar opposite to the skeptic nature of the other three. They all hate their parents, except Adrian although his parent's separated when he was younger. The others assume that social constructs are inherently flawed, but Adrian believes in living by principles.

During their time at school a student, Robson, dies from suicide. Rumors circle around the school that he committed this act after his girlfriend became pregnant. The friends discuss the philosophical meaning of suicide, coming to the conclusion that Robson did not die for the right reasons. As a group these boys feared living life as a non-epic, living life simply as an ordinary individual, someone no book would ever be about. They are somewhat disappointed by Adrian's lack of desire to pursue his life based on these literary ideals, they believe that he has been given the gift of a broken home, and he must pursue it.

The boys graduate and separate. Adrian earned a full ride to Cambridge. Tony got a girlfriend, through no effort or skill of his own, simply through his existence. Her name was Veronica Ford. She was a diminutive girl who disliked his taste in music, but appreciated his taste in books. He assumed she was a virgin, but had no information to back up that claim. After some time she took him to meet her family. Her father was large and a little crude, her brother typical and her mother aloof. He had an awkward conversation with Mrs. Ford, where she warned him about Veronica, but quite vaguely.

Tony returned to Bristol, and a week or so later Veronica came to London to meet Tony's friends, Adrian included. She had an instant connection with Adrian, something that Tony noticed and resented. They discussed their relationship a year or so later, and broke up. Quickly after the breakup the two had sex, after which Tony decided not to get back together with her, making it almost rape in the mind of Veronica. Strangely enough, Tony received a letter from Veronica's mother more or less congratulating him for ending the relationship. He later received a letter from Adrian requesting his permission to date Veronica, to which Tony reacted strongly. He decided to respond positively at first. He then wrote a new response letter, harsh and unrelenting, speaking of Veronica being damaged, but without any real reasoning behind this accusation. He never heard back from either of them.

Tony graduated from his university and went backpacking in the U.S. where he met Annie and spent three months with her, marveling at the ease of their relationship. As soon as he returned from the states he was informed that Adrian had committed suicide, with the reason that he had rejected the gift of life. Tony found out from Alex that Adrian had been happy and in love, presumably with Veronica. Tony decided to admire and respect Adrian's reason as philosophically and logically sound. He met with his friends a year later on the anniversary of Adrian's death, but it was clear that remembering Adrian would not be enough to keep the group together. He met Margaret, got married, had a daughter and got divorced.

It is now the present tense of the book and Tony has finished, more or less, with his reminiscing and begins to speak about his current life as a retired hospital library assistant. He receives a letter from the estate of Mrs. Sarah Ford, Veronica's mother who had passed away. He is left 500 pounds and two documents, the first a letter somewhat explaining the unwarranted gift. The second document is still with Veronica Ford. He then finds out that the second document is Adrian's diary. He goes to talk to his own lawyer to see if there is any legal way to force Veronica to return the diary, but of course there really is not. He does receive the email of Jack, Veronica's brother and attempts to use Jack to get to her. He receives Veronica's email from Jack and writes to her, requesting the diary and an explanation. Veronica responds with the phrase "Blood Money", which only confuses Tony even more. They email sparingly until Veronica sends him one page of a diary in which Adrian is trying to turn relationships into a mathematical formula, with variables that Tony cannot understand. They continue to email until Veronica sets up a meeting.

They talk, or more spar, until Veronica gives him an envelope and leaves. A day and a half later he reads the letter and finds out that it contains the harsh letter than he had written to Adrian and Veronica. Tony realizes how bad this letter really had been in the past. He begins to blame himself for Adrian's suicide. He emails Veronica about her family, and learns that her father died from his drinking and cancer, and her mother started smoking and losing her memory. He emails her again and they set up another meeting. Tony speaks about his life story since their breakup, and after she hears it she leaves.

They set up a third meeting, this time at a subway station. They drive, and Tony tries to converse but can't as Veronica deigns not to respond. She shows him a man, clearly mentally behind who calls Veronica by one of her middle names, Mary. Tony tries to find the man on his own and succeeds, but the man reacts negatively. Tony believes he has come to the correct conclusion that the man is Adrian and Veronica's son. This signifies that Adrian's suicide had not been the perfect logical one, but rather unremarkable like that Tony emails Veronica to apologize, but receives a response that he has again misunderstood the situation. He returns to the pub where the man he believes to be Veronica's son spends his Friday nights and talks with his handler, who informs him that his name is Adrian, and that he is Veronica's brother. He infers from this that Adrian is indeed the father, but Sarah Ford is the mother, and his mental illness was caused by her advanced age at the time of the pregnancy. The variables of the mathematical formula also now make sense. He closes the story by stating that life is full of responsibility, but even more unrest.

UNIT-5 SHORT STORIES

DETAILED:

4. Kate Chopin - The Story of an Hour
5. James Thurber- The secret life of Walter

Non-Detailed:

3. William Carlos- the use of force
4. Katherine Mansfield- Miss Brill
5. Hernando Tellez- Lather and Nothing else

KATE CHOPIN - THE STORY OF AN HOUR

INTRODUCTION:

Kate Chopin born Katherine O'Flaherty; February 8, 1850 – August 22, 1904) was an American author of short stories and novels based in Louisiana. She is now considered by some scholars to have been a forerunner of American 20th-century feminist authors of Southern or Catholic background, such as Zelda Fitzgerald. Kate Chopin began her writing career with her first story published on St. Louis Post Dispatch. By the early 1890s, Chopin forged a successful writing career, contributing short stories and articles to local publications and literary journals.

"The Story of an Hour," is a short story written by Kate Chopin on April 19, 1894. It was originally published in *Vogue* on December 6, 1894, as "The Dream of an Hour". It was later reprinted in *St. Louis Life* on January 5, 1895, as "The Story of an Hour". The title of the short story refers to the time elapsed between the moments at which the protagonist, Louise Mallard, hears that her husband is dead, and when she discovers that he is alive after all. Featuring a female protagonist who feels liberation at the news of her husband's death, "The Story of an Hour" was controversial by American standards of the 1890s. In *Unveiling Kate Chopin*, Emily Toth argues that Chopin "had to have her heroine die" in order to make the story publishable". (The "heroine" dies when she sees her husband alive after he was thought to be dead.)

Plot Overview:

Louise Mallard has heart trouble, so she must be informed carefully about her husband's death. Her sister, Josephine, tells her the news. Louise's husband's friend, Richards, learned about a railroad disaster when he was in the newspaper office and saw Louise's husband, Brently, on the list of those killed. Louise begins sobbing when Josephine tells her of Brently's death and goes upstairs to be alone in her room.

Louise sits down and looks out an open window. She sees trees, smells approaching rain, and hears a peddler yelling out what he's selling. She hears someone singing as well as the sounds of sparrows, and there are fluffy white clouds in the sky. She is young, with lines around her eyes. Still crying, she gazes

into the distance. She feels apprehensive and tries to suppress the building emotions within her, but can't. She begins repeating the word Free! to herself over and over again. Her heart beats quickly, and she feels very warm.

Louise knows she'll cry again when she sees Brently's corpse. His hands were tender, and he always looked at her lovingly. But then she imagines the years ahead, which belong only to her now, and spreads her arms out joyfully with anticipation. She will be free, on her own without anyone to oppress her. She thinks that all women and men oppress one another even if they do it out of kindness. Louise knows that she often felt love for Brently but tells herself that none of that matters anymore. She feels ecstatic with her newfound sense of independence.

Josephine comes to her door, begging Louise to come out, warning her that she'll get sick if she doesn't. Louise tells her to go away. She fantasizes about all the days and years ahead and hopes that she lives a long life. Then she opens the door, and she and Josephine start walking down the stairs, where Richards is waiting.

The front door unexpectedly opens, and Brently comes in. He hadn't been in the train accident or even aware that one had happened. Josephine screams, and Richards tries unsuccessfully to block Louise from seeing him. Doctors arrive and pronounce that Louise died of a heart attack brought on by happiness.

Summary:

"The Story of an Hour" follows Louise Mallard as she deals with the news of her husband's death. When the news is broken to her, Mrs. Mallard begins weeping

into her sister, Josephine's, arms. She then goes to her room to be alone and sits down in an armchair. She finds she feels relieved that she is free of her husband. She begins looking forward to living her life for herself. Mrs. Mallard keeps whispering to herself, "Free! Body and soul free!" and as Josephine listens in to her sister from the other side of the door, she tells Louise to open the door.

After a few minutes, Mrs. Mallard gets out of her chair and opens the door for Josephine and they both walk downstairs together. Upon arriving to the bottom of the staircase, the front door opens and Mrs. Mallard's husband, Brently Mallard, appears, alive and well. Josephine and Richards try to hide the sight from Louise, but it is too late. When she sees that her husband is still alive, she lets out a startled cry and dies from a heart attack.

Analysis:

The heroine of Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour", Louise Mallard, is known to be suffering from a weak heart. After the death of her husband, Mrs. Mallard was unable to shake the thought of being free from her husband. The word "free" began to haunt her mind, free from oppression. Daniel P. Deneau mentions about a continuous debate about Mrs. Mallard's personality. "Is Louise a normal, understandable, sympathetic woman, or is she an egocentric, selfish monster or anomaly?" What is understood is that Mrs. Mallard's reaction to her husband's death allowed readers to view the "selfish monster" side of her. After being released of her husband's grasp, she began to find relations to the world. Normal women would have gone into grief and weep in sorrow; however, Mrs. Mallard's reaction towards her husband was a passionate reaction that had caused the

audience to question her personality. However, what 'normal' is can also be argued. Mrs. Mallard could very well be an ode to all those women who are trapped in unhappy marriages, but are held back by unfair social rules and standards. Mrs. Mallard's irregular reaction caused readers to question her emotions towards the husband's death. Throughout "The Story of an Hour", her constant baffle on freedom had led readers to confusion whether her heart condition has anything to do with her reaction. Selina S. Jamil exclaims to her audience that, "Mrs. Mallard's "heart trouble" (193) is not so much a physical ailment... as a sign of a woman who has unconsciously surrendered her heart (i.e., her identity as an individual) to the culture of paternalism." in which she goes through a stage where she appears "optimistic" towards life. Then, in result, Mrs. Mallard's weak heart, which is supposed to be frail, and her fear soon transforms into joy that is uncontrollable to begin with. Chopin's interpretation of Louise Mallard is not similar to most women at all. "As her body responds to her emotions, she feels a rhythmic connection to the physical world" (Jamil), by repeating words like "free" in her head has shown that her emotions towards the loss of her husband has enhanced her connection to world.

Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" presents the heroine as a heartless person who does not fear the death of her husband, but instead is filled with glee and joy. Nicole Diederich questions the "focus on the challenge the ending poses to the reader" (Diederich 117) about how the audience sees her death. Her husband's death was another way to escape the marriage she was bound to whereas her death was also another escape that was expressed at the end of the short story. Heidi Podlasti-Labrenz also supports that Mrs. Mallard was under Brently's influence by stating, "...her strength of character and willpower are apparently mostly controlled

and absorbed by Brently Mallard's well-meant but forceful dominance" and claims that her actions as this "crazed" human being was just a reaction after being freed from marriage. Mrs. Mallard, as a character, shows that she was aware of her actions through Brently's arrival. "But, for one climactic hour of her life, Louise does truly taste joy," (Jamil) which happens to cause her frail heart to collapse. Louise Mallard's personality in "The Story of an Hour" was understood to portray an unthoughtful image of what a wife should be. Her actions were to "illustrate the dangers of making assumptions" (Mayer) and in result, her weakened heart had taken her life. Her sister thought of her behavior as nothing but a sickness. Josephine had not thought that her sister's actions were to match her personality, but to think that Louise's reaction was her reaching existentialism. It was not her mind going crazy, but Louise "reaching existentialism" is her finally realizing her time and place as this new awakened being. When the thought of being free in mind and soul, existentialism, that's when she began to act as if she were not normal.

Mrs. Mallard was so immensely shocked at the sight of her husband that her weak heart gave out right then and there. "When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills". The cynicism of this sentence can be detected almost immediately, and as explained by ThoughtCo, "It seems clear that her shock was not joy over her husband's survival, but rather distress over losing her cherished, newfound freedom. Louise did briefly experience joy—the joy of imagining herself in control of her own life. And it was the removal of that intense joy that led to her death." To further express the meaning of this "joy", Selina S. Jamil explains in the article, "Emotions in the Story of an Hour", ". . . the "joy" that kills Louise is the joy that [doctors assume to

be joy of finding out that Brently was not actually dead] she refuses to surrender, as the patriarchy would require her to do at Brently's return. But, for one climactic hour of her life, Louise does truly taste joy. For one hour of emotion, Louise does glimpse meaning and fulfillment. To be fully alive, then, is to engage in heightened consciousness, to observe and connect with the world around one's self." This helps to show just how powerful the emotion was that Louise had felt. For one hour, Louise had a sense of freedom and was so ecstatic to begin her new life, but that was stripped away from her far too soon and her heart was unable to bear the shock that she felt about seeing her husband alive.

The article "Marriage and The Story of an Hour" suggests that Chopin's short story demonstrates that marriage is not always what it appears to be, and that the journey to freedom can be dangerous. Chopin shows her readers that the love of only one partner in a marriage is not indicative of a mutual relationship. In the story, Louise says that she loves her husband sometimes, and in the article it suggests that maybe her husband was cruel; so even though she did indeed love him, she also loves her prospective freedom from him.

The open window through which Mrs. Mallard gazes for a majority of the story is a sign of the freedom and opportunities that await her through her newfound independence. "She hears people and birds singing and smells a coming rainstorm. Everything that she experiences through her senses suggests joy and spring—new life." Mrs. Mallard can look into the distance and see nothing but a clear bright future ahead of her.

Essay questions (The Story of an Hour by Kate Chopin)

- 5) Mrs. Mallard is described as descending the stairs “like a goddess of Victory.” In what ways does she feel herself victorious?

Mrs Mallard has been quite enjoying her time sitting alone in the room and watching the view outside the window. When Josphine repeatedly implores her to open the room through the key hole believing that she was going to kill herself out of sorrow, Mrs Mallard opens the door half-heartedly. She slowly walks out of the room, and comes down the stairs like a Goddess descending from the heavens. She had been resting in paradise while she was alone, planning how she was going to spend the rest of her life. The author compares her with a goddess of victory because she bore a satisfaction in her heart that is felt after having found victory. For the first time had she felt such contentment in her heart. It was like a war had ended in her life and she had emerged the winner in her game. She is feeling victorious because she would not have to act like the wife of a man she only half loved. She was no more bound by the shackles every wife is. Being a widow was not her pain; instead she was pleased that she would be free to live her life like she wants.

2. The last line of the story is this: “When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills.” In what ways is this an ironic statement? What is gained by having the doctors make such a statement rather than putting it in the mouths of Josephine or Richards?

Mrs Mallard is dead and even the doctors are not aware of what killed her. They predict that she must have died of too much joy because she had a heart condition. Chopin shows how even science has failed before the social traditions and customs. Every wife is expected to be overjoyed to know that her husband has escaped death. The doctors too think the same. They too cannot understand what underlies Mrs Mallard’s heart condition. The author has used the doctors instead of Josephine and Richards to deepen the sarcasm in the story. In an age of scientific thinking people adhered to old norms and customs. Even the doctors are not an exception. The situation is both ironic and comic because on the one side, it is not the truth and on the other no one finds out the truth in Mrs Mallard’s heart. It just dies with her.

5) What view of marriage does the story present? The story was published in 1894; does it only represent attitudes toward marriage in the nineteenth century, or could it equally apply to attitudes about marriage today?

The view of marriage that the story presents is not that of marriage as a bond, but marriage as bondage. In the nineteenth century, the society was largely patriarchal and the women were expected to behave like their husband's shadow and follow their wish and will. When Mrs Mallard gets the news of her husband's death, she feels like she has been released from bondage. Society and people's attitude towards marriage has changed a lot since then. The situation has changed but not very much. Except for the women that are well educated and belong to the upper class, those who are not self-dependent, still lead a similar life as in the nineteenth century. Marriage is not bondage anymore because divorces have become common, but the irony related with marriage is still the same. The male partner still comes first. Women are more empowered in the 21st century and even law is there to help them but for the society's mindset to change completely, it might still take ages.

- If this is, in some sense, a story about a symbolic journey, where does Mrs. Mallard "travel"?

Mrs Mallard is on a symbolical journey to a different world where her soul can find eternal peace and liberty. She has been yearning for liberty and love. For an hour she has transitioned to this world where she finds solace and takes a fresh breath of freedom. This symbolical journey means a transition from bondage to liberty. As a wife she has been leading a bounded life where she has had to live under her husband's control and per his will. Now, that her husband is dead she

will enjoy the rest seasons of her life in freedom. Her journey also represents a transition to safe and free existence. However, the irony is that for a woman to find such freedom in life was not possible in the 19th century. She transitions to another world where soul is as free as she wants.

JAMES THURBER - THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER

INTRODUCTION:

James Grover Thurber (December 8, 1894 – November 2, 1961) was an American cartoonist, author, humorist, journalist, playwright, and celebrated wit. He was best known for his cartoons and short stories published mainly in *The New Yorker* magazine, such as "The Catbird Seat", and collected in his numerous books. He was one of the most popular humorists of his time, as he celebrated the comic frustrations and eccentricities of ordinary people. He wrote the Broadway comedy *The Male Animal* in collaboration with his college friend Elliott Nugent; it was later adapted into a film starring Henry Fonda and Olivia de Havilland. His short story "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" has been adapted for film twice, once in 1947 and again in 2013.

"The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" (1939) is a short story by James Thurber. The most famous of Thurber's stories, it first appeared in *The New Yorker* on March 18, 1939, and was first collected in his book *My World and Welcome to It* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1942). It has since been reprinted in *James Thurber: Writings and Drawings* (The Library of America, 1996, ISBN

1-883011-22-1), is available on-line on the New Yorker website, and is one of the most anthologized short stories in American literature.¹ The story is considered one of Thurber's "acknowledged masterpieces". It was made into a 1947 movie of the same name, with Danny Kaye in the title role, though the movie is very different from the original story. It was also adapted into a 2013 film, which is again very different from the original.

Summary:

"The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," Thurber's best-known story, is, like most of his fiction, short, requiring only five or six pages. As Mitty and his wife are on their way to do some errands, he indulges in a daydream in which he is a brave military commander piloting a hydroplane, but his wife interrupts by exclaiming that he is driving too fast. This pattern is repeated several times. When she urges him to make an appointment with his physician, he becomes an eminent surgeon at work, until a parking-lot attendant's contemptuous commands call him back temporarily to reality. In reality, Mitty does not do anything very well.

Very little actually happens in Thurber's story. Mrs. Mitty has an appointment at a hairdresser's; Mitty himself buys a pair of overshoes. While trying to remember what his wife has asked him to buy, he becomes a cocky defendant in a murder case. He manages to buy some dog food and sinks into a chair in a convenient hotel lobby and imagines himself a bomber pilot under fierce attack. His returning wife wakes him with the admonition that she is going to take his temperature when

they get home. At the end of the story, Mrs. Mitty goes into a drugstore, and he becomes a “proud and disdainful” man facing a firing squad.

Part of Thurber’s technique is to present Mitty as a man who fails even as a dreamer. His daydreams are cluttered with clichés. Whether he is a murder defendant or an Army officer, he bears the same “Webley-Vickers automatic.” In both of his military dreams he is an officer who can lead his men “through hell.” In reality, he is a man trying to deal with the fears and difficulties of a drab and disappointing life. As such, he is only an exaggerated version of a person whom everyone will recognize.

Analysis:

Mitty is very much a Thurber protagonist, so much so that he has been called "the archetype for dreamy, hapless, Thurber Man". Like many of his male characters, such as the husband in "The Unicorn in the Garden" and the physically unimposing men Thurber often paired with larger women in his cartoons, Mitty is dominated and put upon by his wife. Like the man who saw the unicorn, he escapes via fantasies. A similar dynamic is found in the Thurber story "The Curb in the Sky", in which a man starts recounting his own dreams as anecdotes as an attempt to stop his wife from constantly correcting him on the details.

In his 2001 book *The Man Who Was Walter Mitty: The Life and Work of James Thurber*, author Thomas Fensch suggests that the character was largely based on Thurber himself. This is consistent with Thurber's self-described imaginative interpretations of shapes seen with his "two-fifths vision" in his essay "The

Admiral on the Wheel". Neurologist V.S. Ramachandran suggests that Thurber may have had Charles Bonnet syndrome, a neurological condition that causes vivid and bizarre hallucinations even in blind patients.

Thurber's love of wordplay can be seen in his coining of several nonsense terms in the story, including the pseudo-medical jargon "obstreosis of the ductal tract", "streptothricosis", and the recurring onomatopoeia of "ta-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa." The medical nonsense that "coreopsis has set in" uses the name of a flower which sounds vaguely like a horrible medical condition.

Essay Questions

1. To what extent does Walter Mitty's inferiority complex contribute to this fantasy life?

To suggest that Walter Mitty merely has a lively fantasy life is to miss the psychological center of the narrative. It is not merely that Mitt lives a deep and profound fantasy life; in all of his fantasies he is a hero. Or, at the very least, he is the heroic protagonist. Walter Mitty is often described as an "Everyman" who is merely unhappy with reality and seeks relief through the rearrangement of that reality. That is not nearly the case. If Walter Mitty really was an Everyman, his fantasies would be fueled by sexual desire, ambition or merely whimsy. The very fact that Mitty's fantasies situate him in roles in which he can be heroic is highly suggestive that were Mitty, in

fact, a heroic figure in real life, he would not be given to such lush fantasies. Which, perhaps, says something about the fantasies of Everyman.

2. How is Mitty's final fantasy coincident with his overall view of himself?

The firing line represents Walter's view of himself as trapped; a prisoner at the mercy of the world around him. This view extends beyond his wife's domination. It is enough to suggest merely that Walter is henpecked and thus this is the epicenter of escape into illusion. Walter in this case does represent the ordinary everyday citizen who feels powerless and trapped within a society in which decisions affecting every aspect of his life are in the hands of others. Mitty's final fantasy of facing down the firing squad is extremely suggestive of his view of his life as a prisoner whose fate is determined by outside sources well beyond his henpecking spouse.

3. "The attendant vaulted into the car, backed it up with insolent skill, and put it where it belonged.

Explain how the italicized words represent Thurber's way of communicating of Mitty's personality through prose description of the actions of other non-fantasy characters.

This one sentence illuminates why Thurber should be considered a master of the short story form. The actions of the garage attendant are described through the third-person observational perspective of Walter Mitty. All that really happens is that the attendant backs up the car that Walter was having some slight difficulty handling. In Walter's way of seeing this action, however, the attendant does not merely get into the car, but leaps into like an athlete. His skill at backing up a car is portrayed using the quite unusual descriptive term "insolent" which is another indication of just how deeply ingrained is Mitty's sense of inferiority. Then there is the fact that—as Walter views things—the attendant does not merely back up the car into the appropriate spot...he puts it where he belongs, thus hinting that Walter does not even have the sense to know where, much less how to do what the attendant does with such verve. In just one sentence, the reader really does learn everything there is to know about the secret life of Walter Mitty

NON DETAILED

WILLIAM CARLOS - THE USE OF FORCE

INTRODUCTION:

William Carlos Williams (September 17, 1883 – March 4, 1963) was an American poet and physician closely associated with modernism and imagism.

In addition to his writing, Williams had a long career as a physician practicing both pediatrics and general medicine. He was affiliated with Passaic General Hospital,

where he served as the hospital's chief of pediatrics from 1924 until his death. The hospital, which is now known as St. Mary's General Hospital, paid tribute to Williams with a memorial plaque that states "we walk the wards that Williams walked".

"The Use of Force" is a short story by the American author William Carlos Williams. It was first published in his short story collection *Life Along the Passaic River* (1938); it is also available in *The Doctor Stories* (1984), a collection of Williams' fiction that is still in print.

Summary:

A doctor makes a house call to the Olson family because the daughter is very ill. When the doctor arrives, he sees the little girl sitting in her father's lap in the kitchen; the parents, who are new patients to the doctor, are distrustful and do not tell him more than they have to. The doctor knows that since they are paying him to tell them what is wrong with the child, the parents feel no responsibility to assist him.

The child is particularly attractive, with magnificent blond hair. The doctor says she looks like one of those pictures of children often reproduced in advertising leaflets or in the photogravure section of the Sunday newspaper. The doctor can tell immediately from her flushed face that she has a high fever, which her parents say she has had for three days. The doctor, suspecting diphtheria, which has broken out in the school where the child attends, asks if the little girl has had a sore throat. The parents say she does not seem to have a sore throat, but that she has refused to

let them look to see if she has. The doctor tries to examine the little girl, but she will not open her mouth. Strong and silent, she only stares at him coldly.

When the parents try to reassure the child that the doctor is a nice man who will not hurt her, he grinds his teeth in disgust at their use of the word “hurt,” which he knows only further frightens her. When he moves his chair closer, the child claws at his eyes and knocks his glasses to the floor. Embarrassed, the parents once again call him a nice man. The doctor, angry, tells them not to call him that—that he is not a nice man, that he is here to see if she has diphtheria, which might kill her. The battle has just begun.

The doctor insists on getting a throat culture, for the girl’s own protection. The father tries to hold the little girl, but his shame at her behavior and his fear of hurting her makes him let her go at the crucial moment. The doctor, meanwhile, thinks to himself how he has fallen in love with the “savage brat,” whereas her parents are contemptible to him. During the struggle, while the doctor and her parents have become crushed and exhausted, the girl rises to magnificent heights of insane fury.

The child screams that the doctor is hurting her, that he is killing her, and the mother becomes upset; she asks if the little girl can stand all this. The husband tells the wife to get out of the room, that the child might indeed have diphtheria. He holds her down, and the doctor grasps her head and tries to get the wooden tongue depressor in her mouth. When he finally gets it behind the girl’s back teeth, she bites down and shatters the depressor to splinters. Determined, the doctor asks for a spoon. Although the child’s mouth is bleeding and she is screaming hysterically,

the doctor persists with his examination, for he says to himself that it is for her own good. He says he has seen two children lying dead because their parents had neglected the disease.

The doctor says to himself that he is now getting beyond reason, that he could have torn the child apart, and would have enjoyed doing so. His face is burning with pleasure at attacking her. He rationalizes that she must be protected from her own idiocy and that others must be protected from her, but he knows that what he feels is a longing for muscular release.

The doctor finally forces open the girl's mouth and sees that both tonsils are covered with membrane. He knows now that she has been hiding her sore throat for days, lying to her parents to avoid the discovery of her secret. At the end, the child is so furious she tries to get off her father's lap to attack the doctor, while her eyes fill with tears of defeat.

ANALYSIS:

The story *The Use of Force* by William Carlos Williams shows a conflict between the doctor and a determined child patient who has been suffering from fever for three days. The narrator of this story is a doctor who is called to check a new patient Mathilda by her mother Mrs. Olson.

Mrs. Olson, the patient's mother, takes him into the kitchen where the fully-dressed child is sitting on her father's lap Mr. Olson. The doctor looks things over and finds that all of them are very nervous and looking at him doubtfully. They expect him to tell everything because they are spending three dollars on him.

The child stares at the doctor. She looks as strong as a heifer. Her face is red. She is breathing rapidly and has a high fever. Her hair is blonde. She is very attractive. She has had a fever for three days. Her parents gave her some medicine. It did not do any good, so they have called him. Then the doctor asks them if she has a sore throat. They reply that their child says her throat does not hurt her. The mother tried to look, but could not see.

They have had a number of cases diphtheria in the child's school. So the doctor wants to take a look at her throat first. He smiles and asks the child to open her mouth, but the child; Mathilda, does not respond. He shows her his empty hands and says that he just wants to take a look. When the mother tells her that the doctor will not hurt her, he begins to hate her. He does not like the word 'hurt'. But slowly he goes near the child. The child suddenly attacks his eyes with her nails. His glasses fly and fall on the floor, but they are unbroken. Both the parents feel sorry and abuse the child. When the mother calls him "a nice man", he does not like it. He just wants to look at her throat because she may have diphtheria and die of it. The child is old enough to understand what the doctor says. So the doctor warns that if she does not open by herself, he will have to open it forcefully for her. She does not move at all. Her breaths are faster. He has to have a throat culture for her own protection. If the parents take the risk he will not examine her throat. The mother scolds her severely and threaten that she will have to go to the hospital.

The doctor has fallen in love with the child, but he hates the parents. At the following events they are more hopeless, defeated, weak, but she rises to greater heights of anger. The father can't hold her. He releases her when the doctor is about to look into the throat because he thinks that the doctor may hurt his daughter. But

he asks the doctor to examine the throat fearing that she might die of diphtheria. The mother also is restless thinking that her daughter might not stand the force.

Then the doctor orders him to put her on his lap and hold both her wrists. The child begins to cry uncontrollably. She says that they are killing her. The mother does not like the use of force. The doctor then grasps the child's head and tries to get the wooden tongue depressor into her mouth. She closes her teeth tightly. The doctor becomes angry and can't control himself. He gets the depressor into the mouth, but she breaks it with her molars. Next, he asks for a spoon. The child's mouth is already bleeding. If he stopped now and came back in an hour or more, it would be better, but such a neglect might cause her death. Also, he himself is more uncontrollable. He wants to tear the child and enjoy it. He enjoys attacking her. His face looks happy. Moreover, the child must be protected, although she is stupid. It is his social responsibility. Therefore, his anger, his shame and his desire to use force inspire him to attack her unreasonably. He forces the spoon back of her teeth and throat. He finds that she has a sore throat with both tonsils covered with membrane. She has fought bravely to keep it secret and she has been lying to her parents for three days because she does not like to be examined by a doctor. Now she feels that she is defeated and is more furious. Instead of defending herself, now she is willing to attack. But she can't see clearly because of tears in her eyes.

The story tells that the use of force for benevolent purposes is justifiable. Mathilda has had a fever for three days. The doctor has examined a number of cases of diphtheria in the school to which the child goes and she may die of it. The doctor has to have a throat culture for her own protection. But the child does not allow him to look at her throat. In such a condition, he has no choice. He must examine

her immediately. She can't be persuaded, so the use of force is the only way to look at her throat. The child must be protected against her own stupidity. If the child dies of diphtheria, people will not say anything against the dead person. They will blame the doctor. In such a condition the use of force is right.

It appears rather unkind to use force upon a little child. But the story may be trying to say that it is justifiable to use force for a right cause. Using force to upset or hurt someone is really bad. But if the same force is used for a right purpose, it can be justified. Finally, the doctor's behavior upset the child for a short time, but its long term effect will certainly be good.

KATHERINE MANSFIELD - MISS BRILL

INTRODUCTION:

Kathleen Mansfield Murry was a prominent New Zealand modernist short story writer who was born and brought up in colonial New Zealand and wrote under the pen name of Katherine Mansfield. At the age of 19, Mansfield left New Zealand and settled in England, where she became a friend of writers such as D.H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. In 1917, she was diagnosed with extrapulmonary tuberculosis, that claimed her life at age 34.

"Miss Brill" is a short story by Katherine Mansfield (1888–1923) It was first published in *Athenaeum* on 26 November 1920, and later reprinted in *The Garden Party and Other Stories*.

Plot summary:

"Miss Brill is an English teacher living near the Public Gardens in a French town. The narrative follows her on a regular Sunday afternoon, which she spends walking about and sitting in the park.

The story opens with Miss Brill delighting in her decision to wear her fur. She notices that there are more park-goers than there were last Sunday, and that the band is more enthusiastic because the Season has commenced. Miss Brill observes facets of the lives around her, "listening as though she didn't listen, ...sitting in other people's lives just for a minute while they talked round her". She sees the world as a play: as though her surroundings are a set and she and her fellow park-goers actors. She imagines that the band's performance corresponds with and highlights the park's happenings. When the band strikes up a new song, Miss Brill envisions everyone in the park taking part in the song and singing. She begins to cry at the thought.

A young couple arrive and share Miss Brill's bench. Miss Brill believes they are nicely dressed and warmly pictures them as the "hero and heroine" of the play. However, she overhears the boy make a rude remark about Miss Brill being a "stupid old thing", and the girl agrees, "It's her fu-fur which is so funny."

On a typical Sunday, Miss Brill would stop by the bakery, but on this particular day, she goes straight home to a dark room. As she returns her fur to its box, Miss Brill "[thinks] she [hears] something crying".

Summary:

"Miss Brill" brings to life one of Mansfield's many lonely women, and the reader lives through this story in the main character's mind without the author's making any obvious comment. As the story opens, it is a Sunday afternoon in the autumn; a chill is in the air. In her room, Miss Brill, a lonely English teacher, prepares to go as usual to the Public Gardens in what appears to be a French city. She happily unpacks the fur she will wear for the first time this season, a piece that includes the head of a small animal, perhaps a fox. Miss Brill strikes the reader as imaginative, for she pretends she hears what the dead animal is thinking after being in storage for many months. She then feels a tinge of sadness. In her introductory paragraph, Mansfield's details evoke the fragility of Miss Brill's happiness.

At the Gardens, Miss Brill listens to the band play and watches the people. It is her idea of bliss. Though she yearns to talk to them, she must be content to listen. An old couple disappoints her, for they are silent; last week she heard a memorable conversation about eyeglasses—memorable to her, but trivial to the reader. Then Miss Brill takes her first step away from the superficiality of the afternoon. She reflects that most of the people she sees at the Gardens are old and strange. She hopes for their happiness.

In a surprise ending typical of the author, Mansfield then includes two very short paragraphs. The first points beyond the gardens to the sky and sea, as if to suggest that there is a wider world than what the reader has experienced so far. The second brings the reader back to the banality of the park, as it reproduces the sound of the band.

Miss Brill's experience deepens. She does not simply listen; she imagines what the people she sees are saying. Mansfield employs dramatic irony when she hints that the woman who Miss Brill thinks is innocently chatting is actually a prostitute. Then Miss Brill stumbles on a kind of truth: They are all acting in a play. She (Miss Brill) is in the play too, with a role that she plays every week. Miss Brill has turned her understanding of how drama underlies public events into a consolation for her state. Even so, she knows all people are not happy. She has a vision of them all singing together.

Mansfield has artfully brought the reader to sympathize with Miss Brill as her love flows out to all she sees. Then comes a shock. A young couple, rich and in love, sit down on the end of her bench. They wonder aloud why she is sitting there, wonder who would possibly want her company, and compare her prized fur to a fried fish.

The reader has lived through the story within Miss Brill's mind. Now Mansfield backs away and asks the reader to imagine what this shock is like. Miss Brill silently goes back to her lonely room. She says nothing. When she puts her prized fur piece away in its box, she imagines she hears a cry. Her imagination has projected her own sorrow. The dead, unfashionable fox has become a symbol to her of her own life, and a symbol to the reader as well.

“Miss Brill” is a typical Mansfield story in that it has little action. It dwells in the mind of a lonely person, as she deepens her understanding and receives a shock. The reader is drawn into sympathy with the brave, sad, central character.

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1.What is unusual about the stream of consciousness technique employed by Mansfield in Miss Brill?

Stream of consciousness is a Modernist literary technique that provides insight into the mind of a character so that the reader gains access to thoughts that are often expressed in a means that seeks to replicate the unedited and loosely structured flow of perception. At its extreme exhibition, stream of consciousness may seek such a realistic replication of the process of thoughts entering the mind that punctuation and other grammatical signposts are abandoned. Mansfield clearly does not employ the extremities of experimentation, but she does take the reader into Miss Brill’s head so that everything that occurs is seen through perspective. What makes Mansfield’s employment of the technique here unusual is the use of irony in the ultimate portrait of Miss Brill which the reader is left with. A variety of literary techniques are employed external to the character’s thought process to give an interpretation of her that is directly at odds with the image she has of herself.

2. Though neither the word “lonely” nor any of its most commonly used synonyms ever appear in the story, there is a pervasive sense of that Miss Brill is a lonely woman. How is this sense of loneliness conveyed?

The lack of a first name obstructs a personalized connection and the repetition of reference to her as Miss Brill confers a detached formality to the character. In addition, even though the reader gains access into her thoughts, those thoughts never make mention of family members or any intimate friendships. The fact that she spends Sundays in the park creating personal little narratives out of her observations of others indicates a very deep-seated sort of loneliness that mere description of the feeling could never match.

3. What is tragically ironic about Miss Brill’s observational skills?

Miss Brill seems to have finely tuned her talent for observing the behavior of others for the purpose of creating imaginary narratives to be played out for an audience of one. Her attention to detail is striking such as noticing not only that the woman who used to have blonde hair now has hair the color of her ermine hat and, what’s more, the ermine hat is of shabby quality. Not only is keenly aware of obvious physical details like the new coat on the conductor of the band is sporting a new coat, she is also attuned more subtle abstractions like the fact that the band is playing more confidently. The tragic irony of this level of attention to details normally associated with

writers or consulting detectives is her utter inability to notice how others observe her. The story climaxes with a revelation about the sad and pathetic picture her behavior paints for others that comes as nothing less than a shock to her soul, indicating that in this one most important area, Miss Brill's observational skills have failed her miserably.

4. Miss Brill's fur coat is obviously the most important symbol in the story, but it is just one of many different references to clothing. What is the symbolic significance of clothing in the story?

Clothing is always an indicator of social class, but in the 1920's more so than today, clothing also hinted at a person's standing in the eyes of others. The current state of Miss Brill's fox becomes fodder for the cruel description of her current status in the eyes of others and contrasts sharply with the nostalgic blindness that she herself possesses toward the item. Likewise, the shabby quality of the ermine hat worn by the former blonde is for Miss Brill a window into the woman's current social standing. Elsewhere, a man in a velvet coat is described as "fine" and, naturally, the "beautifully dressed" boy and girl are portrayed in Miss Brill's interior theater as sitting at the top of the social standing hierarchy as nothing less than a hero and heroine fresh off the yacht.

HERNANDO TELLEZ - LATHER AND NOTHING ELSE

INTRODUCTION:

Hernando Téllez (22 March 1908 – 1966) was a Colombian journalist and author. Born and educated in Bogotá, Téllez entered very early the world of journalism, with which he is primarily identified, having been on the staff of some of Colombia's most popular newspapers and magazines. It was not until 1950 with the publication of his short story collection *Cenizas para el viento* (Ashes for the Wind), that his name became more widely known. His tragicomic tales evidence his keen and extremely sensitive observations of contemporary life and, more particularly, the anguishing reality of his native country.

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SUMMARY:

Set in a barbershop in a small Colombian town, the narrator of "Lather and Nothing Else" by Hernando Tellez is a barber tasked with shaving a man who turns out to be the leader of the opposing political party. Holding a razor, the barber faces the dilemma of whether he should kill the man, Captain Torres or let him go free. He chooses to allow Torres to live.

The story begins with Captain Torres entering the shop and hanging up his gear before getting into the chair for a shave. The barber and Captain Torres speak briefly, and Torres reveals how brutally he has treated the revolutionaries fighting his regime. The barber is one of those revolutionaries, so this exchange sparks an inner monologue where the barber weighs killing Captain Torres with allowing him to live. If the barber does not choose to kill him, his fellow rebels may question his commitment to the cause. Choosing to kill Torres while he is vulnerable in the barber's chair, however, would make the barber as much of a murderer as Torres.

In the end, the barber decides to have "just lather" on his hands instead of blood, letting Torres survive. Torres then reveals that he knew the barber was a revolutionary and wanted to see if the barber would kill him.

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