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ENG-403

INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH



**Guru Jambheshwar University of Science &
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A.K. Ramanujan	

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1.1 Learning objectives

- To develop critical thinking among students towards Indian literature.
- To enhance their knowledge of literature.



- To let them enjoy different genres of literature.
- To make them good in the English language.

1.2 Introduction

A. K. Ramanujan is counted as one of the great Indian English writers. His poems are enormously famous among all of the poets. He has been counted as a famous figure in the Indian scholarly local area for quite a while. After leaving his imprint first as an Indian English poet during the 1960s, he gained popularity in India and abroad for his spearheading interpretations of old-style Tamil poetry and later of Bhakti poetry in Tamil and Kannada.

Ramanujan's poetry is a portrayal of human opinions, sentiments, and feelings in an immediate way with next to no gleam or complexity. There are no hints of outsider impacts on his poetry, regardless of his extended stay abroad. His poetry has specialized greatness and bears the stamp of his uniqueness. His poetry is rarely hyper-critical or verbose and is written in a language that is fresh, serious, and relaxed. These are finely created pieces, and the words sparkle with profundity and importance. The words have a beat and structure that upgrade the worth of his poetry. Ramanujan has laid equal weight on the importance as well as the plan of every poet. The planner poets of Ramanujan are a treat to the eye, yet in addition, they show a complex importance. To recognize the focal subject of Ramanujan's poems, one needs to continue with persistence and a creative mind.

Ramanujan's poetry has taken numerous forms. The volumes of his poetry 'The Striders' (1966), 'Relations' (1971), and Choose Poets (1976) have been lauded, for their compact articulation and inventiveness. Ramanujan has done a yeoman administration by deciphering the Tamil and Kannada old-style poetry into English. Individuals who read contemporary English poetry know all about the subtleties and passages of Ramanujan's poetry. His weight on the trap of day-to-day life and the mix of the person with it remains the conspicuous trait of his poetry. Ramanujan's poems are like a mirror where one can see the Indian practices of a large group of people. His poetry perceives the essentialness inborn in Indian culture and custom, and the progressions which have occurred in the design of Indian culture.

Ramanujan's inconspicuous incongruity colors his brief looks into conventional thoughts and ceremonies, which are trailed by individuals having a place with various layers of Indian culture. His



poetry has introduced the different parts of custom in clothing, which is additionally characteristic of the need to recognize the applicable and unimportant parts of changes in the contemporary world.

Ramanujan's poetry shows his magnificent handle on the utilization of pictures to portray encounters and feelings. He has drawn out his deepest sentiments and the evaluation of his character and the various realities in it. His two assortments of poetry, 'The Striders' and 'Relations', have an exceptional spot in the corpus of Indian poetry in English. The interest and profound connection of Ramanujan to previous occasions, as well as history, are portrayed in 'The Striders and 'The Relations'. The poets in these two works give a diagram of their methodology toward individuals and the problems faced by them before and in the realm of today. He recovers from the previous occasions.

He portrays the occasions of his initial years enjoyed with his father, mother, and grandparents. In a few poets, he references his part in the family and dissects his internal sentiments and feelings. For Ramanujan, the past is not a shapeless element, yet it is significant to associate with the rhythm of life in the ongoing scene. He expresses that without knowing the linkages with the past, one can't embrace the truth of the living present. While affirming the significance of following the standards of the contemporary world, Ramanujan likes to get comfort from the practices and convictions of the antiquated world.

Ramanujan's poetry mirrors his profound knowledge of the social examples of both East and West. The old insight of Indians acquires pertinence in the poetry of Ramanujan amid the contentions in the current world. He has broken down the human circumstance through the joined vision of the East and West. He portrays the occasions of his initial years enjoyed with his father, mother, and grandparents. In a few poets, he references his part in the family and dissects his internal sentiments and feelings. For Ramanujan, the past is not a shapeless element, yet it is significant to associate with the rhythm of life in the ongoing scene. He expresses that without knowing the linkages with the past, one can't embrace the truth of the living present. While affirming the significance of following the standards of the contemporary world, Ramanujan likes to get comfort from the practices and convictions of the antiquated world.

Main points

- Ramanujan's poetry mirrors his profound knowledge of the social examples of both East and West. The old insight of Indians acquires pertinence in the poetry of Ramanujan amid the



contentions in the current world. He has broken down the human circumstance through the joined vision of the East and West. The Indian point of view and experience towards human issues track down an unmistakable spot in his poems.

- It is through proper pictures that he has portrayed the human circumstances, inconsistencies, and intricacies experienced by individuals. His poetry is a blend of the best scholarly customs of the Indian and Western worlds. This blend of the Indian and Western components has added sheen to his poetry.
- His emphasis is on the few neglected areas of human existence that are, for the most part, disregarded today. His poetry focuses on the deepest opinions of individuals, both in the Indian and Western social orders.
- Ramanujan has called attention to the fact that a few writers have no compassion for the suffering of individual creatures. Ramanujan is a sharp observer of socio-political occasions and has uncovered the greedy dealings of legislators. The pictures of man-eaters and wriggling worms draw out the technique of certain legislators who have no second thoughts in eliminating the adversaries from their way and playing their evil games with no compassion toward the government assistance of the majority.
- Ramanujan has challenged the monopolists and despots who have no regard for human qualities. He likes to follow the qualities implanted in the Hindu perspective. He is against tolerating the socio-political frameworks that discredit the human qualities cherished in the civilizations of the world.
- That mankind is one family remains a significant principle of Hinduism. Ramanujan is captivated by the goals of Hinduism and has introduced its complex features. He has recognized that a few customs in it have outlasted their utility, and presently they have just a wistful worth.
- He has blended humor and incongruity while introducing the disastrous passing of a relative in the furthest corner of the world. He depicts how various individuals from the family needed to confront circumstances that impacted them profoundly.
- Ramanujan has given fundamental importance to things, occasions, and recollections associated with the family. The family develops; new contestants expand the supply of memorabilia with the progression of time. He tracks down the family ancestry social examples and customs. He



portrays the qualities of the Hindu family and society, which have endured numerous disasters through sheer solidarity and coarseness.

1.2 About the Author

Ramanujan is one of the most unmistakable Indo-Anglican artists. A few critics believe him to be one of the three extraordinary Indo-Anglican writers, the other two being Nissim Ezekiel and Kamala Das. Ramanujan's poetry is, to a great extent, self-portraying and interesting. Ramanujan has shown uncommon creativity in the utilization of words in his poetry. His poetry is brimming with delights of word and expression. His demeanor is recognized for greatness, epigrammatic quickness, grimness, and traditional straightforwardness. Ramanujan is generally perused in India and the West, and his Western impact is conspicuous in his cutting-edge Indian poetry. This startling combination of various roots in Ramanujan's poetry is valid for the perspective communicated by him.

He is an expert in words, and each word in his poetry is utilized thoughtfully, exactly, cautiously, and financially. They have gotten their idyllic strategies from old Kannada and Tamil poetry, and the present artists have combined oriental and Western models into new structures. A.K. Ramanujan's poetry is to put stock in the massive human potential. An unmistakable element of Ramanujan's poetry is that it is family-situated. The family possesses an unmistakable spot in his poems.

Another distinctive element of Ramanujan's poetry is the unavoidable Hindu standpoint. His Hindu legacy is a significant theme in this poem. His poetry is likewise described as having mental authenticity. The poetry of numerous other Indo-Anglican writers likewise has this quality; yet in Ramanujan's case, this quality is of unique significance. This quality is particularly validated in such poets as affection poets, biology, shows of misery, and self-pictures for a spouse.

Ramanujan's feeling of rhyming offers a fitting response to the people who accept that total closeness with language is conceivable just for a writer in his primary language. Even though Ramanujan composed transparently, his stanzas are unequivocally developed. Indian ethos saturates Ramanujan's poems, and the artist himself involves Indian ethos in his poetry. The truth of the writer's predicament is the truth of a general situation, that is, the quest for individual personality. The most endlessly fascinating mix of advancement and traditionalism.



Ramanujan is one of those poets who, in addition to continuing to emulate his ancestors' mannerisms and behavior, spent a great deal of time reflecting on his ancient history. It's been widely reported that one of Ramanujan's key conceptions is the family. His father, mother, family, women, relatives, nephews, aunts, and other people are frequently mentioned in his poems. His emphasis on his Hindu ancestry is equally significant in his poems. His roots are in the ancient religion of Hinduism, and he is unable to shake the profound awareness of his heritage, even though his fury, which he almost willingly developed from his extended exposure to American culture. Mixing Eastern falsehood with Western fustiness in Ramanujan's intellect gives his poetry depth and viscosity. The term "oriental" then refers to Hindus rather than Indians or the East in general. Ramanujan's skill sets him apart from the majority of Indo-Anglican poets. Ramanujan introduced poetry and harmony to his poems through his masterful combination of acute and crystallized imagery, colloquial brevity, and controlled language use. It is well known that Ramanujan has received much recognition for his skill.

1.3 Main Body of the Text

The study of A.K. Ramanujan's poetry shows him as a distinguished Indian English poet in whom there is a fusion of the rich tenets of his native culture and the detached outlook of Western thoughts.

S. S. Dulai states:

‘His poetry is born out of the dialectical interplay between his Indian and American experience on the one hand, and that between his sense of his self and all experience on the other. Its substance is both Indian and Western. Starting from the center of his sense of self and his Indian experience, his poetry executes circles comprehending ever-wider realities, yet maintaining a perfectly taut connection between its constant, and continuously evolving central vision and the expanding scene before it.’

His literary self-portrayal offers a singular fusion of the conventional and the contemporary. If his Indian ancestry is the source of his sensitivity, then his vision is unquestionably modernist. His accomplishment is attributed to his exceptional capacity to preserve a significant equilibrium between tradition and modernity.

A. K. Ramanujan's poems establish him as a notable Indian English poet whose unbreakable connection to his motherland, his legacy to the home and family, and its culture are interwoven to inspire the synthesis of his native culture's philosophical and ethical values with the detached



perspective of Western thought. His poetry emerges from the dialectic interaction between his concept of self and his experiences in both America and India.

He had also adopted many of the characteristics of the foreign culture. He was working and living as a citizen of the United States. In contrast to its traditional Indian equivalent, he was exposed to a foreign, radical, and unorthodox culture as well as an urbane lifestyle and liberal worldview. The principles of several civilizations allowed Ramanujan to transcend and value each. He reflects on his time spent living outside of his native country and reveals intimate tales of his upbringing and family. The majority of his poems, which may be found in the books "The Striders" (1966), "Relations" (1971), and "Second Sight" (1986), reflect his memories of his family as a metaphor for the many but influential ties between past, present and future.

Ramanujan was drawn to the home, and the family it consists of, as he strongly believed in the family that helps a person to imbibe values and culture. The bond of love and familial ties, as portrayed in his poems, do not merely reveal his inner self through a nostalgic journey down memory lane carrying an awareness of the typical Indian family with its huge web of relationships but also bring a sense of alienation. This realization makes him turn back to his childhood experiences, and relate anecdotes and consequently, it becomes a source of continuity with an older idea. The reality of being away pulls him back to the present from where his view of the distant past becomes more vivid, and more transparent relating to the values like morality, religion, and ethics taught in the premises of a Hindu Brahmin family. He is drawn back to the present by the actuality of his absence, which makes his perception of the distant past more clear-cut and colorful. In "Second Sight," the poem "Extended Family" illustrates the poet's ability to extend his family tree ahead to his grandpa and backward to an unspecified future time.

His concept of the self encompasses more than just his family's history and enduring memories, which provide a glimpse into the past or an origin without a defined beginning. It also speculates about an undefined future that will eventually emerge as it is ready. He claims to "look up at himself" in the same way as his unborn grandchild. The poet's image of a tremendously expanded and nebulously coiled web that he enjoins on an indeterminate, indefinable temporal stretch is the source of his idea of family and the rooted self in it. His search for the self dissolved.

1.3.1 About the Age (Modern English Poetry)



Within India's poetic traditions, contemporary Indian poetry written in English is a comparatively recent addition. But over 65 years, contemporary Indian poetry has made a name for itself with voices that are forceful, introspective, and illuminating—voices that are frequently representative of the difficulties that independent India has encountered. Indian poetry in English has inspired and educated many, revealing a unique ethos. Examples of this include the self-scrutinizing poetry of Jewish Indian poet Nissim Ezekiel, which led to greater insights, the paradoxical beauty of street life photographed in Arun Kolatkar's poems, and the explosive feminist poetry of Kamala Das.

Since 1947, when India won independence from British control, poets of Indian descent have been creating and publishing poetry in English, which is known as modern Indian poetry in English. The poetry created by poets of Indian descent who were born or resided outside of India is included in the poetry from the Indian Diaspora.

India has over 1500 different languages; therefore contemporary Indian poetry produced in English has the burden of being composed in the tongue of people who formerly controlled the country as well as the criticism that it is not "true" or "authentic" to the Indian experience. Labels like post-colonial, Indo-English, Indo-Anglian, Indian English, and Indian Anglophone contribute to the complexity of the situation while also serving as a reminder of how difficult it is to write contemporary Indian poetry.

1.4 Further Body of the Text

Prescribed Poems

1. Obituary
2. The Striders
3. Extended Family
4. The Last of the Princes
5. Anxiety

1.4.1 Critical Appreciation of Prescribed Poems

1. Obituary



A.K. Ramanujan wrote the poem "Obituary" in 1971. "Obituary" in this poem refers to (a newspaper announcement of death with a brief biography). The subject of the poem is his father's passing. The poet describes his father's life accomplishments and how his passing has impacted his family. The poem's key themes are the father's death, the repercussions that the boy and his family must deal with when his father passes away, and the mockery of rituals.

An obituary explains the full process of a father's death, including the emotional and physical legacy he left behind. The speaker informs the reader at the opening of the poem that his father passed away. He left a lot behind when he passed away. There are dust old papers and other pointless items. However, some customs and memories will last a lifetime.

The speaker relates how they burned the father and dropped his remaining bones into the river in the second half of the poem. He also talks about something he has heard of but hasn't witnessed. An obituary in a local paper appears to have been placed by his father.

**“Father, when he passed on,
left dust
on a table of papers,
left debts and daughters,
a bedwetting grandson
named by the toss
of a coin after him,
a house that leaned
slowly through our growing
years on a bent coconut
tree in the yard.
Being the burning type,
he burned properly
at the cremation**



as before, easily
and at both ends,
left his eye coins
in the ashes that didn't
look one bit different,
several spinal discs, rough,
some burned to coal, for sons
to pick gingerly
and throw as the priest
said, facing east
where three rivers met
near the railway station;
no longstanding headstone
with his full name and two dates
to hold in their parentheses
everything he didn't quite
manage to do it himself,
like his caesarian birth
in a Brahmin ghetto
and his death by heart-
failure in the fruit market.
But someone told me
he got two lines
in an inside column
of a Madras newspaper



**sold by the kilo
exactly four weeks later
to street hawkers
who sell it in turn
to the small groceries
where I buy salt,
coriander,
and jaggery
in newspaper cones
that I usually read
for fun, and lately
in the hope of finding
these obituary lines.
And he left us
a changed mother
and more than
one annual ritual.”**

Analysis of the Poem-

The poet began this poem by stating that his father left behind nothing but issues for the family—such as dust on a table full of paper debts, single daughters, and bedwetting a grandchild who bears his name because of the poetry "Toss of a Coin"—when he passed away. The poet's discontent with his father is evident in the poetry. He doesn't appear to be grieving over death. The poet is more worried about the tasks he has completed for his family. In addition to taking care of a small child who urinates in bed, he also has obligations to his father, including paying off his sister's debts.



Daughters were seen as a burden in the past since their families had to do more than just assume all financial responsibility for the marriage's costs while also providing the boy's family with a sizable payment. This suggests that the entire father left behind for his family to pay off were debts. These lines also illustrate the patriarchal ethos of the average Indian household. The poet's sister and mother are also unemployed. Now that he is the family's eldest male, the poet is given all responsibilities. The poet goes on to say that his father left behind a home that swayed gradually as he grew older. The lines indicate that they inherited a dilapidated house from his father, which is supported by a coconut tree. By referring to his father as the "burning type," the poet implies that he was an ill-tempered individual who would never act appropriately around him or the other family members. Because he lacked composure, he burnt through the cremation. The lines carry over from the last one. He burns readily from all sides, except his coins, which represent his fury and his thirst for money, which burned but didn't change appearance at all, as well as several spinal illnesses, some of which burned to coal.

The poet is by no means prepared to perform. His father was tossed into the river with his complete name in the ashes, thus there is no grave for him. The poet claims in the sixth poetry that his father was descended from Brahmins. The Brahmins are revered in Hinduism as "Avatars of Gods." But the poet demonstrates that his father's birth was surgical, just as Brahmin's, and that even his death was uncontrollable. He was unable to rescue himself while his father passed away from heart failure. Differently, these sentences indicate that he has accomplished nothing in this world. His birth involved surgery, and his actions throughout his life demonstrated his limitations.

The sixth stanza begins, Four weeks after his death, the poem notes that two lines were written for his father in a column of a Madras newspaper that street vendors were selling by the kilogram. In turn, these street vendors sell it to the little grocery stores. The poet purchases salt, coriander, and jaggery in newspaper cones from these groceries, and he uses them to read for pleasure.

In the last stanza, the poet says that he began to buy more of these things in the hope of finding these Obituary Lines which were written for his father. His father left for him a changed mother and more than an annual ritual. The poet is showing his dislike for the ritual which is celebrated in memory of his father for his peace.



Conclusion -The poet claims that his father accomplished nothing in his life other than those two sentences from the obituary that he was never able to discover in the newspaper. Therefore, the poem "Obituary" is a critique of the poet's father and his shortcomings.

Structure of the poem

The poem has been in eight stanzas divided into groups of seven lines each. Although there isn't a set rhyme system for these lines, the text nonetheless has instances of rhyme and rhythm. Ramanujan, for instance, uses slant or half-rhymes.

The recurrence of consonance or assonance indicates this. This indicates that a vowel or a consonant is repeated in a line or several lines.

2. The Spider

One of A.K. Ramanujan's most well-known poems, "Striders," introduces the concept of deconstructive study of Indian poets' sensibility. This poem describes a human being who possesses immense power in all facets of existence. The word "Strider" comes from a little water bug found in New England. Even though the insect is tiny, he presents it from a unique perspective. He provided the concept of his physical appearance and used it as a source of inspiration in the poem's first poetry. Despite the unfamiliarity of the bug, he made it a point of investigation. Subsequently, he defined a water bug as having a bubbling eye, which gave it movement but not rigidity. Human concepts are similar to the brief bubblers in that they arrive and depart. To walk on the water without sinking, he got the vitality of an insect through yoga, which he recounted while also explaining Indian tradition and drawing connections between ancient and modern times. Because they have not only conquered the light but also the sky, humans are extremely strong. This little poem only has fifteen lines—many of which are brief, with others including only one or two words—and it depicts the actions of a particular kind of water beetle. The poem demonstrates his keen observational skills and his fascination with animals.

Critical Analysis of the Poem

The poem is from Ramanujan's 1966 debut poetry collection, 'The Striders'. This poem is well-liked. The Illinois Arts Council selected his poem "The Striders," as one of the best poems. Ramanujan demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the physiognomy of the specific bug and a keen insight into its distinguishing features. The striders are a kind of water bug native to New England. Ramanujan



paints a beautiful picture of the striders. The insect's physiognomy, mobility, and behaviors are depicted with exact, perceptive, and provocative language.

“And search

For certain thin

stemmed, bubble-eyed water bugs.

see them perch

on dry capillary legs

weightless

on the rippled skin

of a stream.”

The following image evokes a spiritual dimension:

No, not only prophets

walk on water. This bug sits

on a landslide of lights

and drowns eye—

deep

into its tiny strip

of sky.”

The water bug sits with equal ease on land and in water; thus, it stands in striking comparison with the supernatural power of the prophets who walk on water. The vivid and picturesque diction adds to the beauty and precision of the style.

3. Extended family

Yet like grandfather

I bathe before the village crow



the dry chlorine water
my only Ganges
the naked Chicago bulb
a cousin of the Vedic sun
slap soap on my back
like father
and think
in proverbs
like me
I wipe myself dry
with an unwashed
Sears Turkish towel
like mother
I hear a faint morning song
(though here it sounds
Japanese)
and three clear strings
next door
through kitchen clatter
like my little daughter
I play shy
hand over crotch
my body is not yet full
of thoughts novels
and children



**I hold my peepee
like my little son
play garden hose
in and out
the bathtub
like my grandson
I look up
unborn
at myself
like my great
great-grandson
I am not yet
may never be
my future
dependent
on several
people yet
to come by owner provided”**

Critical Appreciation of Poem

This poem highlights memory and ritual as a means of bridging generations and identities. Due to Ramanujan's dual identities as an Indian and an American, the identity debate is particularly relevant. The poet is attempting to build a bridge between the dead and the unborn of his family through the bathing ritual, which is significant in the Hindu tradition of Ramanujan's forefathers.

The strong contrast of pictures, such as "dry Chicago light bulb" versus "Vedic sun," when his grandpa offered prayers to the sun while standing in a holy river, indicates that he approaches these issues with



humor rather than nostalgia. Memory and ritual as a link between identities and generations are two prominent topics in this poem. Ramanujan is a poet who identifies as both Indian and American, making the identity debate particularly relevant. The poet is attempting to build a bridge between his family's deceased and future generations using the bathing ritual, which is significant in Ramanujan's forefathers' Hindu culture. He approaches these subjects, nevertheless, with humor rather than nostalgia, as seen by the striking contrast of imagery, as the "dry Chicago light bulb" against the "Vedic sun," where the metropolitan poet wades in while his grandpa offered prayers to the sun while standing in a holy river.

Yet like grandfather

I bathe before the village crow

the dry chlorine water

my only Ganges

The poet had just the bathroom mirror as a witness, whereas the crow in the village observed the grandfather's ablutions. These sentences convey a sensation of being removed from a comfortable setting. The poet has been released into an unfamiliar metropolis after being taken from an uninterrupted line in a realistic, ritualized reality. However, because he made the final decision, he suggests using humor and kindness as a different strategy to preserve the family line. He ends with a Turkish-style towel that he purchased from an American store and replaces the Japanese morning song with an Indian raga, tenderly contrasting his past in his nation with the global realities of his life.

“I wipe myself dry

with an unwashed

Sears Turkish towel

like mother

I hear a faint morning song

(though here it sounds

Japanese)”



Declaring that the towel is "unwashed" is quite hilarious, considering his mother was a devout Hindu woman who would never engage in the ceremonial impurity of using a towel that wasn't quite fresh. However, the unclean towel has become the poet's new ritual in his Americanized city life. He playfully and lovingly imitates his children's actions, such as his small son playing garden hose and putting his "pee-pee" in and out of the tub. This is a ritual as well, and by creating it, he is creating a fresh memory for the family. The poet also implies that he is bound to his grandpa and his unborn "great-grandson" by certain rites, which are more universal than others, such as paying respect to the Vedic sun. At last, he speaks on the part memory plays in family customs. The poet will contribute to his grandchildren's recollections in the same way as his understanding of tradition is shaped by his grandfather's memories and his rituals. This type of concept is commonly revealed towards the end of a poem. A poet wants their topic to be the last thing you read and to have a lasting impression on the reader. The final image in this poem is of an unborn great-grandchild. One might read about the concept of "future generations." The poem focuses on examining how previous generations have influenced present and future generations.

4. The Last of the Princes

'The Last of the Princes' is one of those memorable poems ever written in the history of Indian English poetry that deals with irony, humor, wit, and fun. The poem is a recreation of a royal scenario dating back to pre-colonial times when the power got transferred naturally. The native kings took their time to totter and fall. The whole process of disintegration was worth seeing. To regale with his poetry and wisdom is the job of the comic poet so full of satiric overtones and undertones. The poet wants to show how an empire builds and falls when time runs out of favor. The poet describes the fall and disintegration of the Mogul dynasty from the time of Aurangzeb. Some of the heirs and descendants died of T.B. Some could not withstand English hegemony, manners, and climate. Some could not get away with the current trends and times. They could not get along with imported wine and women. The desire to keep European wives would have frustrated and maligned them to be placed in a badly shown light. So many brothers, sisters, uncles, aunties, nieces, and nephews, appeared to be embarrassing, the folklore brothers and sisters crowding the space with the idea of clan, royal heritage and lineage, ancestry and descent as per blood flowing into their veins and the relationship denoting connection. The poet hints towards the assemblage and maintenance of the countless, numberless kith and kin, near and



dear ones. Some of them would have been heroic indeed whose bravery they kept talking about. Some would have grown poor and they counted their days. The nobility, lineage, and ancestry stood it in a long queue of reference and acknowledgment which needed a ballad-singer or bard to tell.

A. K. Ramanujan makes a sorrowful remark on the pitiful pen picture of the current situation of once-powerful princes. History's law always takes its course. A great number of powerful rulers and enormous empires have arisen and gone throughout history. However, the number of surviving royal dynasty princes is rather low. They are completely miserable and live in extreme poverty. They used to be seated at the pinnacle of prestige, pelf, and grandeur. However, they suddenly have nothing to be happy about. They are overcome with longing for their former grandeur. These days, their sole assets are their crumbling structures and ancestors' titles. They look for a few remnants of their past beneath the rubble of history.

The author uses the Mughal Dynasty, which had the highest power, to illustrate the readers' sense of sorrow. The last great ruler of the Mughal Dynasty, Aurangzeb, passed away, and this powerful empire started to crumble. The former splendor has all vanished. The empire was split up into little areas. The British began gradually imposing their will on the then-rulers as well as on defenseless Indians. Their financial situation deteriorated. Even though the princes lived in extreme luxury in London, several of them perished from bone TB or the cold. Addiction to imported foreign spirits claimed the lives of a few of them. They were wedded with foreign girls. The native leaders saw having white women as wives as a prestige signal. There were sometimes quite a few rulers who met heroic. Their lovely sisters killed themselves by hanging them from the ceiling since they could no longer stand the mistreatment of some outlaws. In the past, the ladies kept parrots and mynahs in the harem. Each of them passed away and was only remembered in history.

However, only the final prince remains alive. The poet now skillfully depicts their bodily states. He gets the painting-like face, long fingers, and naive faith in snakes from his parents. He sneezes and coughs all the time. Phlegm flows from his lips. His liver is not working properly. He experiences constipation and loose movements sometimes. He is currently so impoverished that it is hard for him to provide his kids, Honey and Bunny, with a proper education. They pay barely half the tuition to attend school. His spouse places with a pearl nose ring, a reminder of their former splendor. Except for the nose ring, she has sold all of her treasures to get money. His oldest son is made to accept a low-paying trainee position



in the telegraph department. He's already sent three telegrams begging for money to his father. However, his impoverished father is unable to meet the demands of his hopeless situation.

An undercurrent of pathos runs through the entire poem. Ramanujan has ironically attacked the snobbish mentality of the last princes, their bad habits, their intoxication to imported wine and their wives, and their unpatriotic fervor.

Themes-

The poem examines how time passes and how the royal dynasty is affected by it. It explores the worsening circumstances and provides a window into the final prince's day-to-day existence, arousing emotions of despondency and disillusionment. The poem frequently employs pathos to elicit sympathy from readers for the situation of the last prince.

A.K. Ramanujan illustrates a recurrent pattern in the course of history in the poem. He portrays the princes' former splendor—their might, pelf, and extravagance—and then draws a comparison between that and their miserable current state.

The princes used to be wealthy and powerful. To brag, they visited the UK on several occasions. They employed pricey imports, particularly wine, as prestige symbols and felt pride in having English brides. Ballads were composed in their honor, and they perished valiantly against poverty and the enemy. In the harem, they housed many parrots and mynahs. They no longer have access to any of the things they formerly took pride in, like titles, palaces, and other privileges. They now have only a melancholy sense of nostalgia for their former brilliance, which stands in stark contrast to their current situation. They continue to exist because they inherited long fingers, a similar appearance, and superstitious beliefs from their forefathers. They now have firm sheep's pellets and alternate episodes of loose stools in addition to a cough and cold. These days, their income is insufficient to cover their kids' tuition. To make ends meet, all of the heirlooms have been sold, except the pearl in the wife's nose ring. The idea is that the offspring of the previous rulers, who employed a large number of people, are now compelled to take low-paid positions in government service involving telegraphy.

The poem illustrates the terrible relationship between the pain of current jobs, such as telegraphy in government service, and the magnificence of the past. The poem illustrates the terrible relationship between the Princes' current suffering and their former greatness among the Princes.



To conclude- ‘The Last of the Princes’ by great Indian poet A.K. Ramanujan is a depiction of the contrast between the past life and present life of princes in our country. It shows how the princes who were powerful once are thriving for their existence in the present life.

Historically many dynasties were glorified once but at present, many of them do not survive or they are leading their life in poverty and misery. They are now unable to carry their glorified titles and are looking for some instances of their past.

6. Anxiety-

The poem "Anxiety" describes the universal nature of anxiety and its actual nature. There are very few people in the world who do not experience anxiety. Everyone has become the prey of anxiety. The poet discusses the nature and characteristics of anxiousness in the poem. The poet notes that there are no adequate words to describe the nature of anxiousness. He displays his incapacity to provide insight into the essence of anxiety. He tries to paint a precise and coherent image of anxiousness by using several similes and metaphors, but he is unable to accomplish so.

He believes that all thinkers and poets who are not like him are incapable of doing it. Except for worry, everything and emotions may be described poetically using similes and metaphors or simply. The author expresses his melancholy disposition as well as his inner worries and concerns in this poem. In the poem, he uses sophisticated imagery. He makes his point in a few sentences.

“Not branchless as the fear tree.

It has naked roots and secret twigs

Not geometric as the parabolas

Of hope, it has a loose end

With a knot at the top

That's me.

Not wakeful in its white snake

Glassy ways like the eloping gaiety of waters,

It drowns, viscous, and fibers as pitch

Flames have only lungs. Water is all eyes



**The earth has a bone for muscle.
And the air is a flock of invisible pigeons
But anxiety
Can find no metaphor to end it”**

Critical Appreciation in poem-

The poet notes that the study of anxiety is outside the realm of comprehension even as she captures the genuine and authentic nature of anxiety. It is challenging to go down to the very core of uneasiness. The poet claims that it is inexplicable. Except for worry, everything and emotions may be defined either simply and in one word or poetically by using metaphors and similes. It has many different shapes and expressions, just like the tree of dread. Anxiety cannot be known or researched anywhere there is a question about fear; fear can only be defined, understood, examined, and evaluated. Despite its existence and obviousness, its cause is still a mystery. Also, there is no geometric method for knowing concerning anxiousness. It is possible to study happiness geometrically, whereas worry cannot be structured. In actuality, anxiousness never goes away. It has an impact on human thought, or the mind, which results in a condition of complete hopelessness, despair, and gloom. It appears that the poet is describing how depressing he feels.

Because anxiety may be summed up as an anxious emotion brought on by dread that something negative will happen, it is also referred to be the antithesis of optimism and cheerfulness. Anxiety constantly travels with fear as its constant companion. Fear is imperceptible, like the white-skinned serpent. Anxiety is only sensed, much like a white-skinned snake that is hidden but whose presence is yet detectable among the bushes. However, it is still dark. It is not presented in an obvious manner. It is challenging to comprehend an anxious mood. Its steady flow is similar to the water's unceasing flow. It doesn't change in nature from the other items. In actuality, the anxious person is always absorbed with himself, having previously shown little interest in anything else. Its consistency is thick and sometimes fairly sticky. It moves slowly along a viscous, fibrous fluid, or tar, instead of being transparent and active like water. It lacks a set shape and distinct movement, thus there is no metaphor to describe or



resolve it. It is sticky and slow like tar. It is therefore constantly ominous, enigmatic, and terrifying. In the end, everything may be identified, including anxiety, yet anxiety is only felt and experienced.

The poet instills fear in a continuous process in this poetry. His explanation is not straightforward, but indirect. He portrays fear as a related emotion to worry. So that's how he starts. He believes that each person is the root of all conflict. The poem may allude to some of the intricate issues facing India, such as population increase, poverty, illiteracy, poor hygiene, and unemployment. All of the poem's tension stems from "fear." Fear might stem from intercommoned strife, Maoism, and terrorism; these issues seem to remain unresolved. Additionally, the issues stem from a lack of personal awareness. The poet describes his fears as being "with a knot at the top / that's me" for this reason.

The poet emphasizes how anxiousness is an inexplicable emotion. Specific terminology can be used to characterize or describe things, either directly or via the use of metaphors and similes. However, anxiety is a mental condition that is difficult to express directly or through a metaphor. Ramanujan attempts to depict worry in the poem's first twelve lines using a variety of similes and metaphors, but he is not happy with them. In the poem's last two lines, he claims that anxiety cannot find a metaphor to finish it.

The poet's melancholy disposition, as well as his inner concerns and anxieties, are portrayed in this poem. For the poet, anxiousness is a constant mental condition. The poet is gloomy, as seen in many of his previous works. The passage where he states that anxiousness "has loose ends with a knot at the top that is me" amply illustrates his pessimistic outlook. He has figuratively described his pessimistic disposition.

Anxiety has an impact on human thought, which results in a condition of complete pessimism, despair, and gloom. Since anxiety is essentially an anxious sensation brought on by a concern that something negative may happen, it can be thought of as the opposite of optimism and joy. Fear and worry are always by its side:

“Not wakeful in its white - snake

Glassy ways like the eloping gaiety of waters,

It drowns, viscous, and fibreed as pitch.”

Both the saying "water is all eyes" and "flames have only lungs" are given human characteristics to heighten the impact, as does the image of the flames. "And the air is a flock of invisible pigeons"



suggests that hope and worry are constantly at odds with one another; although hope is always present, it is never fully realized; pigeons are a metaphor for hope that is in the air but invisible to the worried mind. Inevitably, this seems to indicate that Ramanujan was anxious himself. The poem's imagery is cleverly used by the poet. He seems to be holding something back and just uses a few words to make his point. He is also not particularly explicit.

Its "white-snake glassy ways" are opaque, black, and sneaky, unlike a white-skinned snake, making them impossible to look through. The poet compares this state to the exuberant emotion experienced by lovers when they elope and anticipate a bright future. The "eloping gaiety of waters" refers to the unbroken flow of water that is unaware of the state or other things. Similar to a "fear tree," anxiety is said to have bare roots and hidden twigs. Though its "twigs" or development and ultimate evolution are secret or unknown, its genesis may be observed or speculated about. Ramanujan draws a comparison between this characteristic of worry and the unrestricted flow of hope. For him, hope is embodied by the parabola's open-ended, loop-like curvature. Positive possibilities are perceived as arising from hope. "Fibreed as pitch," anxiousness is a complicated and tangled emotion that is difficult to understand. This metaphor has to do with both music and the outdoors.

1.5 Check Your Progress

Qus.-Discuss AK Ramanujan's poets "a great combination of Indianness and Western outlook".

Qus.-A K Ramanujan's poetry depicts psychological aspects of life. Discuss.

Qus.-Ramanujan is the great master of language craft ship. Discuss

1.6 Summary

Ramanujan published four volumes of poetry-

1. The Striders (1966)
2. Relations (1971)
3. Selected Poems (1976)
4. Second Sight (1986)



His poetry explores the interaction between the East and the West, as well as the past and present. He returns to his early recollections and his experiences of living in India in poem after poetry. One may detect a Western-trained intellectual who views oriental objects with disinterest in his poems.

In his poems, Ramanujan has a keen and profound textual awareness. One of the most skilled and renowned artisans in Indo-Anglican poetry is Ramanujan. The intellectual literalism of Ramanujan's poetry is one of its unsaid qualities. His poem is full of expressional and worldly blessings. Although punctuation is not as important to Ramanujan when writing in free poetry, he does occasionally use rhyme and assonance in his poetry.

Another noteworthy aspect is irony rises to the fore in Ramanujan's poetry. Nearly all Indo-Anglican poets utilize irony as a literary strategy, but Ramanujan uses it almost exclusively in his poems. The imagery of Ramanujan's poetry is unique and easily distinguished from that of other Indo-Anglican poets.

1.7 Keywords

- Compensate,
- Inadequacy
- Craftsmen
- Cerebral
- Distinguishable

1.8 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

Qus. 1 Ramanujan is the great master of language craft ship. Discuss

Among the most prominent Indo-Anglican poets is Ramanujan. He is a natural poet who has given English-language Indian poetry a fresh perspective. He writes poems with the same ease and proficiency in Kannada and English. His unparalleled capacity to convey his experiences makes him so wonderful. His poetic standing is comparable to that of Kamala Das and Ezekiel. However, it is Ramanujan's workmanship that truly makes him brilliant. He is far superior to the majority of Indo-Anglican poets in this regard. He is an exceptionally talented artist. He scores highly for using the English language to communicate himself, aside from his topic. His understanding of poetry and poetic



technique was informed by his interest in linguistics. The majority of detractors concede that Ramanujan has considerable influence over the English language.

K. N. Daruwalla says,

‘Ramanujan’s imagination is always focused and never diffuses. His language is rapier and sharp. His poetry is both delicate and intricate as the spiral line of a shell.’”

He has used language with remarkable inventiveness. In addition, he has demonstrated an extraordinary gift for crafting phrases. There are many felicities of words and phrases in his poetry. Ramanujan enjoys using common terms. He keeps his word choice economical. Dantes' terseness and distillation are offered by his appropriate and poignant phrases. His use of epigrammatic terseness, felicity of language, and classical austerity and simplicity distinguish his diction. It's not far to look for examples. The poems of Ramanujan show his love of words and metaphors.

Most of Ramanujan's vocabulary is monosyllabic. His diction is melodic due to his emphasis on vowel sounds. He consistently employs clever wordplay in his poetry. He makes use of a significant stylistic feature known as word repetition. The poet creates the effect by using this device. It makes us think of Dylan Thomas, Kamala Das, and Lawrence.

Most of his writing is in free poetry. He does, however, employ assonance and rhyme to produce melodic effects. In the majority of the poems, music, and meaning are subtly combined. He has unmatched mastery and flawless talent when using English idioms. In several poems, he produces effects reminiscent of a tableau. His use of imagery is unparalleled. Ramanujan's technical proficiency in Indian English poetry is therefore unmatched. A literary device practically all Indo-Anglican poets employ is irony. And Ramanujan is no different. It is a very noticeable aspect of his poetry. In nearly all of his poems, he has used this technique. The poem "Obituary" is a good one, full of sarcasm. Here, the speaker laughs teasingly at his father.

His poetry is rife with metaphor. His pictures are realistic, realistic, exact, accurate, and very intriguing. His artwork has striking impressions on the eye. Ramanujan is more akin to Keats than Shelley in this regard. He has made use of every picture category. The graphics are frequently intricate. His likeness might simultaneously evoke aural and visual senses.



To conclude- The technical achievement of Ramanujan is unquestionable. To be fair, he's gotten a lot of recognition for his artistry. He truly is a born poet who has given Indo-Anglican poetry a fresh perspective. He is an exceptionally talented artist. His literary style has been meticulously honed and polished by him. He has given poetic word choice and linguistic brilliance a prominent position.

In his words:

"Poetry is a language that has not been used before, intense, creative, and imaginative. And yet it is ordinary language, not a thing apart. It is this paradox that interests me. I want my poems ultimately to sound as though I spoke them."

Ramanujan's creativity is never spread and is constantly concentrated. His words have the edge of a knife. His poem has the same spiral line of complexity and delicacy as a shell. He infuses experience and honesty into his poetry. However, the event is filtered via his sardonic viewpoint, a configuration of familial bonds, and his historical perspective. Ramanujan is demonstrating an extraordinary talent for crafting phrases. There are many felicities of words and phrases in Ramanujan's poetry. Most of Ramanujan's vocabulary is monosyllabic. As a result, he concentrates on vowel sounds, giving his diction a melodic quality. He also employs assonance and rhyming to produce melodic effects.

Qus-2. Discuss AK Ramanujan's poetry a great combination of Indianness and Western outlook.

A K. Ramanujan is a distinguished Indian English poet whose poems demonstrate how his unbreakable bond with his motherland, his legacy to his home and family, and his cultural heritage combine to inspire a fusion of Western thought with the philosophical and ethical values of his native culture. His poetry emerges from the dialectical interaction between his experiences in India and America as well as between his sense of self and his life. He had also adopted many of the characteristics of the foreign culture he was working and living in as a citizen of the United States. In contrast to its traditional Indian equivalent, he was exposed to a foreign, radical, and unorthodox culture as well as an urbane lifestyle and liberal worldview. The principles of several civilizations allowed Ramanujan to transcend and value each. He reflects on his time spent living outside of his native country and reveals intimate tales of his upbringing and family. The majority of his poems, which may be found in the books "The Striders" (1966), "Relations" (1971), and "Second Sight" (1986), reflect his memories of his family as a metaphor for the many but influential ties between past, present and future.



A K Ramanujan's poems are skillful observations and perceptions of the Indian milieu as an Indian expatriate in America. His poems bear the idea that physical separation from his motherland with its precious familial, cultural, and traditional values kept him tied to his indigenous roots. His unforgettable poems throw light on his beliefs and philosophies which were influenced by the native air that brought to him all ideologies, morals, myths, legends, and even superstitions. Regarded as works of unequal genius, the poems reverberate in the minds of the readers.

In a nutshell, the poet is inspired to create nuanced expressions and a poetic vision that generate the idea of how self and society can be related to each other through the networks of home and family by the achieved sense of the Other as an expatriate and the inborn identity of the Self deeply rooted in the soil of his motherland.

Ramanujan had a strong belief that a family is the best place for a person to absorb culture and values, which is why he was drawn to the house and its occupants. His poetry depicting the bonds of love and family not only shows his inner self through a nostalgic trip down memory lane, but also conveys a knowledge of the traditional Indian family and its vast network of connections, but they also engender a feeling of estrangement. This insight prompts him to reflect on and share stories from his early years, which serves as a source of continuity with an earlier concept. His perspective on the distant past becomes more vivid and apparent about the morals, religion, and ethics taught in the premises of a Hindu Brahmin household as the reality of being away draws him back to the present. The poem "Extended Family" from "Second Sight" demonstrates the poet's capacity to follow his family's lineage both back to his grandfather and forward to an undefined future point. His idea of the self is not limited to the history of his family and timeless recollections, which offer a window into the past or an origin without a clear start. It also makes predictions about an unclear future that will materialize when the time is right.

According to him, he "looks up at himself" in the same manner as his future granddaughter. The poet's conception of family and the rooted self in it originates from his vision of an enormously stretched and nebulously coiled network that he enjoins on an indeterminate, indefinable temporal stretch. His quest for the self got caught up in the traditional and cultural values stemming from his Indian origin enabling him to overcome the uneasy feeling of alienation that makes him feel like the other".



The "Hindu Poems" of Ramanujan are excellent examples of how the poet addresses Hindu cultural subjects. His three well-known Hindu poems, "The Hindu: he doesn't Hurt a Fly or a Spider Either," "The Hindu: He Reads His GITA and Is Calm at All Events," and "The HINDU: The Only Risk," are expressions of his Hindu mindset.

The poem "The Hindu: He reads his GITA and is calm at the same time" well captures the elusive ideal of embracing both good and bad, joy and grief in an equal spirit and every event. The poet's approach in this poem is not to mock Hinduism or the holy texts; rather, it is directed at those Hindus who, as Ramanujan's early household culture taught him, grasp the text's content but fail to appreciate its spirit. The religious principles, he has internalized as a result of being exposed to the sacred texts and customs challenge his conventional understanding of the Hindu Brahmin mentality and instead appeal to his logical thinking. His family and the religious and traditional customs they uphold around him serve as his primary source of inspiration. He then turns these encounters into poems that function as charming snapshots of family dynamics, the values passed down through religious and traditional customs, and the close-knit fabric of Indian society.

A significant detail presented by his poetry reflects a thorough understanding of Indian mythology and customs. His experiences as an expatriate, which comprised his other personality, did not immobilize his instinct. When he talks about how Indian culture worships animals, especially snakes, since they are seen as Lord Shiva's decoration and emblem, his true nature comes through.

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Subject M.A	
Course Code: 402	Author: Dr. Nutan Yadav
Unit-02	
Jayant Mahapatra	

Lesson Structure

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2.1 Learning objectives

- To develop critical thinking among students towards Indian literature.
- To enhance their knowledge of literature.
- To let them enjoy different genres of literature.



- To make them good in the English language.

2.2 Introduction

Jayanta Mahapatra (1928-2023) is a multilingual poet known for his poignant poetry that evoked memories of his ancestors. He is considered a distinguished poet in Indian English. He is a gifted writer who created a completely new language. With a combination of sharpness and brevity that he gleaned from his study of physics and the gift of a robust language, this poet reached places and phases that one can only fathom. However, his poetry has been more than just words and emotions. They have served as silent protests and eye-openers for a lot of people.

One of the most important poets to emerge from Indo-Anglia is Jayanta Mahapatra. He is a well-known poet from India who writes in English. His command of the English language is comparable to that of Nissim Ezekiel, K N. Daruwalla, and Ramanujan. He was born in the state of Orissa in 1928 Ravenshaw College in Cuttack appointed him to be a physics instructor.

According to Vilas Sarang, “the story of Jayanta Mahapatra is among the most interesting in the Indo-Anglo-Saxon poetry. Amazingly, a renowned physics professor and an Oriya poet could write so dignifiedly and distinguishably in English”.

Mahapatra can, in fact, effortlessly "translate" a spirit that is deeply Indian into English. He began writing English poetry somewhat late, at the age of forty. Despite this, he wrote eleven volumes of poetry for foreign publications.

Some of his most well-known poems are

- Cloze the Sky, Ten by Ten (1971)
- Svayamvara and Other Poems (1971)
- A Father's Hours (1976)
- A Rain of Rites (1976)
- Waiting (1979)
- The False Start (1980)
- Relationship (1980)
- Burden of Waves and Fruit (1988)
- Temple (1989)



Not just in India, but all over the world, his poems became well-known. Among other places, Chicago, Victoria, Manchester, and Melbourne all gave his poetry positive reviews.

In his poems, Jayanta Mahapatra depicts a broad variety of topics. He tackled each of his numerous concerns with the dexterity of an experienced artist. His use of language and vocabulary in his poetry is worthy of the significance of the subjects.

He was the first Indian poet to win the Sahitya Akademi Award for English poetry. He also received India's fourth-highest civilian award, the Padma Shri In 2015. He did, however, return it as a protest against "rising intolerance in India." His most well-known works are poems like "Indian Summer" and "Hunger," which are considered modern Indian English literature classics. "Bare Face," "Shadow Space," and "Relationship" are some of his other well-known poems. In his poetry, both theme and technique go together as he experiments with language poem after poem in trying to acquire inwardness with it. He is capable of using the English language with passionate precision which helps him to establish his identity as India's foremost poet in English. In his writings, he never employs words that are unworthy, common, or unimportant. Only phrases of dignity and words pertinent to the matter appear in his poetry.

The numerous poems he penned naturally include aspects of Orissan culture. The crucial issue of his poetry is influenced by Orissa's topography, historical culture, social life, customs, and background. However, the way he handles language and applies topics is universal. His poetry is neither limited nor constrained in its subject matter. Mahapatra also covered a wide range of other topics in his poetry. This discusses relationships between people, Indian society, morality, human nature, marriage, sex, love, and Mother Nature. This makes it clear that Mahapatra's poetry covers a broad enough spectrums of themes to be considered universally admired.

2.3 Main Body of the Text

2.3.1 About the age

Indian English literature (IEL) also referred to as Indian Writing in English (IWE) is the body of work by Indian writers who write in English but whose mother tongue is any of the many Indian languages. Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, and R. K. Narayan contributed to the growth and popularity of Indian English literature in the 1930s. It is sometimes associated with the works of Indian diaspora writers who



later produced works in English. It is frequently referred to as Indo-Anglian literature. (The term "Indo-Anglian" does not mean "Anglo-Indian." Rather, it refers exclusively to writing. Although some works by Indo-Anglian authors may be classified as postcolonial literature, Indian English literature covers a wide range of topics and concepts from the late eighteenth century to the present, making it difficult to put it all in one category.

2.3.2 About the Poet

Jayanta Mahapatra is a name that needs no introduction in Indian English poetry. A study of Indian English poetry may not be complete if his lyrical works are excluded. He is acknowledged as the originator of contemporary and post-modern Indian English poetry. His poetry was published in numerous cities across the globe, including Chicago, Melbourne, Manchester, and Victoria, before his recognition by the Indian government with the Sahitya Akademi Award (1981) for his renowned book of poems, 'Relationship'

Mahapatra's poetry is notable in part because it demonstrates his growing concern for contemporary reality and all of its social ramifications. He puts everything in such a well-organized and composed manner. His main concern is the image of rejection, hopelessness, sadness, anguish, annoyance, and loss. Jayanta Mahapatra appears to employ the tragic awareness vision in a way that no other Indian poet writing in English seems to. He is a poet who yearns for the unreal and has a sick and hurting heart. Orissa is the focal point of Jayanta Mahapatra iconoclastic ambulation. His poetry transcends the soil of Oriya, his native land.

He depicts societal prejudice and the erosion of moral principles in his well-known poems Hunger, Myth, India, and The Accusation—all flawless and outstanding examples of magnificent poetry. Also, his worldview is evident in a good number of his poems. Poems such as Lost, The Logic, and A Whorehouse in Calcutta Street have an international following. His poetic viewpoint is undoubtedly melancholy, depressing, and systematically pessimistic. Even his most cerebral poems, like 'Total Solar Eclipse' and 'The Moon Moments' have a keen realism to them. In The Moon Moments, he discusses the necessity of socialism and the broad acceptance of the brotherhood of Man doctrine. The poet can only reflect on this world with the utmost compassion because he is powerless to alter it.

2.3.3 About the poems



Mahapatra was one of the three poets who laid the foundation for Indian English poetry, along with A. K. Ramanujan and R. Parthasarathy. Being a non-Bombay school poet made him stand out from the rest of the group. In time, he managed to develop a unique, serene poetic style that distinguished him from his contemporaries. Mahapatra composed 27 volumes of poetry, seven of which were written in Odia and seven of which were in English. Among his poetry books are 'Relationship', 'Bare Face', and 'Shadow Space'. In addition to poetry, he has dabbled in various forms of prose for a long time. Two of his published prose novels are *Door of Paper: Essay and Memoirs* and *Green Gardener*; an anthology of short stories. Mahapatra was well-known for his editing works also.

Mahapatra translated works from Odia into English; some of these translations were published in the literary bimonthly *Indian Literature*. A few anthologies have featured his translations as well. Jayanta Mahapatra's book 'Relationships' was given Sahitya Akademi Award in 1981. He was the first writer in English history to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi award. He is an extremely perceptive poet whose poems cover a broad spectrum of emotions, most of which are related to the relationships between men and women. Orissa's influence is evident in his poetry.

His poems have addressed a wide range of emotions, including love, grief, sorrow, death, faith, and more. He is an incredibly sensitive poet. Mahapatra's early feelings of alienation from his mother are also expressed in his writings.

Poetry is an emotional and mental expression, and Mahapatra accepted it as a way of expression. His desire to change society is evident in poems like "Hunger," which shows how poverty robs one of all human emotions, and "Dawn at Puri," which reveals the monk's deceit, and others. As a result, Orissa's influence can be found in all of his poems. His poetry can be interpreted in a variety of ways. This is the way of the true poet. He is a poet who focuses on human relationships; man-woman relationships are the subject of the majority of his poems. His writings also have an Indian quality to them.

Mahapatra's writings also convey the sense of estrangement he experienced from his mother as a young child. Mahapatra used poetry as a means of self-expression because it is an emotional and mental expression.

His poems, such as "Hunger," which illustrates how poverty strips one of all human emotions, and "Dawn at Puri," which exposes the hypocrisy of the priests, and others, demonstrate his desire to alter society.



According to K.A. Paniker-

In "Hunger," the protagonist is also the speaker; in the other two, the poet presents the protagonist rather than having him speak in the first person. The woman reacts to the guilt in a mechanical, worn-out, and boring manner and lacks even professional grace. She is passive and does not actively participate in it. She stands out for her insensitivity in "Hunger," unless we consider the other hunger to be a positive reaction on her part, and her blatant matter-of-factness in "Man of His Nights" and "The Whorehouse in a Calcutta Street." She is a heartless instrument. Mahapatra presents a realistic picture of a woman as a whore, but he has also written poems in which he idealizes women, such as "The Indian Way."

2.4 Further Body of the Text (Prescribed poems)

1. The Whorehouse on a Calcutta Street
2. Extended Family
3. Indian Summer
4. A Missing Person
5. Lost

2.4.1 Reference of poems

1. The Whorehouse in A Calcutta Street

The speaker invites a client into a whorehouse in the first verse. He assures him that he believes he owns the property. A new client appears to be the reason for the whorehouse's smile. The speaker asks the client to list all the women he has always wanted to know but was unable to. The consumer had seen numerous attractive women's faces displaying sensual gestures on posters and public billboards promoting different products. They are portrayed in this way to stimulate men's libidinal urges and thereby increase merchandise sales. Mahapatra exposes the efforts of commercial and industrial houses to present women as sex objects to promote the sale of their products in a tone of mordant irony.

“Think of the women

you wished to know and haven't

The faces in the posters, the public hoardings

And who are all there together,



**those who put the house there,
for the startled eye so fall upon,
where pasts join, and where they part.”**

The customer may hope to see faces in the whorehouse that resemble those he had seen in the posters and that he was desperately in love with. For clients who are coerced into coming here for sex, which is devoid of sentiments of affection and tenderness, the whorehouse is a hub of intense conspiracy. It's just a mechanical endeavor with no room for human thought. A whorehouse is a notorious and exploitative place for sex. A customer's refusal to engage in sexual activity with a whore, even if their conscience awakens, is viewed as an obvious contradiction. The client is interested in finding out more about the inner workings of prostitutes. Their unhappy conversation conceals their unmet longing for home.

**“Then think of the secret moonlight of women
left behind, their false chatter,
Perhaps they're reminding themselves
of looked-after children and home
the shooting stars in the darkness of return.”**

The hope of having children is a distant dream for them: “Dream children, dark, superfluous.” They experience unbearable pain in the depths of their hearts:

**“the faint feeling deep at a woman's center
that brings back the discarded things
the little turnings of blood
at the far edge of the rainbow.”**

The customer enters a completely silent, dimly lit room. The prostitute who enters the room shows no regard for his feelings, even though he cherishes his curiosity about the nature and psychology of women. She follows the rules set forth by her profession mechanically. She uses every trick in the book to satisfy the client's sexual needs:

**“you fall back against her in the dumb light,
trying to learn something more about women**



**While she does what she thinks is proper to please you,
the sweet, the little things, the imagined.”**

The client is shown a glimpse of the prostitute's inner self through his professional demeanor. He believes that he had always been against this form of sexual fulfillment and that he had an intense desire "to pull down" the brothels, the places of corruption, shame, and the flesh trade. He is taken aback when the whore angrily requests that he leave quickly since the work is finished and she needs to leave right away to accommodate a new client:

**“ as though the renewing voice
tore the remembrance of your half-woken mind**

When, like a door, her words close behind:

**“Hurry, will you? Let me go”
and her lonely breath thrashed against
your kind.”**

The poem's distinctiveness lies less in its artistic elements and more in the way the protagonist, who is "trying to learn something more about women," is denied his typical sexual reaction, possibly as a result of the whore's harsh and vulgar demeanor. Indian English poetry has never portrayed the realistic side of male sensuality or the blatant attitude of whores. Mahapatra is credited for expressing it.

2. Indian Summer

The three poems—Indian Summer, A Missing Person, and Dawn at Puri—all fall under the category of poetry that gained popularity in the early decades of the 1900s. 'Indian Summer' is a relatively brief poem but has a lot of vivid and detailed images. The poem's title alone determines the content, and Jayanta Mahapatra depicts the picture of Indian summer.

The wind is blowing melancholy. The temple priests are reciting their holy passages in a higher tone than they typically do. The crocodiles have retreated into the depths. One can see piles of trash that were set on fire smoking in the early morning light. None of these images are related, and none of them one of these images are connected to the others in any way; they are all separate images. One can



only hope that these images help us visualize some of the most notable aspects of an Indian summer or introduce us to its essence.

However, the poem's final five lines show an intimate picture. It shows the speaker's "good wife" lying in bed all afternoon, dreaming unceasingly and unperturbed by the loud, deep noises emanating from the neighboring cremation pyres.

“Over the sougning of the somber wind

priests chant louder than ever;

the mouth of India opens.

Crocodiles move into deeper waters.

Mornings of heated middens

smoke under the sun.

The good wife

lies in my bed

through the long afternoon;

dreaming still, unexhausted

by the deep roar of funeral pyres”.

3. A Missing Person

The main focus of this poem is an anonymous Indian woman living in a non-descript Indian village where people live in substandard conditions, with little access to modern amenities like light or literature, and with only an agricultural livelihood. The village descends into darkness quickly due to a lack of supplies and availability of goods. People who have never lived in a village would never understand how difficult life is there. It is accurate to say that she is an Indian woman devoid of a unique personality, identity, or thing. How is it possible to see her face in the mirror in the pitch-black room without any light? However, one must remember that she is a body as well as a soul. She is a unique person as well.

“a woman

cannot find her reflection in the mirror



**waiting as usual
at the edge of sleep
In her hands she holds
the oil lamp
whose drunken yellow flames
know where her lonely body hides”.**

The poem ‘A Missing Person’ is entirely visual, like a photograph that has been taken, edited, and projected onto paper. A woman cannot see herself in the mirror in the dimly lit room. She is waiting and experiencing drowsiness and sleepiness, which is normal for a woman. She is holding an oil lamp that is weakly glowing, and the yellow flames indicate where she is hiding her body and resting. This is the main idea of the poem expressed in an imagistic and symbolic manner. Throughout the poem, a lady—an Indian woman, a rural woman—is shown, along with numerous other things that are spoken or not expressed. This is the main idea of the poem expressed in an imagistic and symbolic manner. Not only that, but the villagers could not light oil lights. From whence would they get kerosene? Somehow, they used to burn. The majority of the dwellings used to be shadowy. In buildings thatched and made of mud, what would one do? An Indian woman would only be able to know her master, not consider anyone else. To her, he was practically divine. It was forbidden for her to even mention her husband's name. She used to live her days as a quiet figure, unknown or unnoticed. Occasionally, the tattoo would reveal her husband's name while her hand was visible.

The subject of discussion is an Indian country woman who leads a life devoid of personality and individuality. The poem depicts the life of Indian women who lived in unremarkable villages, going about their lives in complete disregard, hunger, poverty, underdevelopment, and a lack of resources and food. She is a body, but she is also a spirit and a soul. She possesses a soul and a spirit of her own and is unaware of it.

Jayanta Mahapatra's poetry has some truly remarkable qualities, but he also subtly highlights the flaws and vices of Indian culture. Women do not now enjoy the rights that they are entitled to as human beings. Their rights have been taken from them by society. For ages, they are repressed and mistreated. However, they are also humans. They, too, possess distinct bodies, souls, and spirits. Being a feminist



and a realist, he can shed light on the darker aspects of our society and its peculiar and awkward morals that are out of date and completely inhumane.

4. 'Lost'

This poem captures Jayanta Mahapatra's feelings of love that surface during sexual activity. In addition, he observes the intimacy between couples and knows the dangers of frequent infidelity.

The poet mentions his partner, whom he can vaguely identify, in the first few lines of the poem. He claims that because she has known him for a long time, he will be able to recognize her even in the room's darkness. In addition to love and sex, the poet is interested in human relationships and their issues. He claims he is curious about his partner's feelings of pleasure and pain during sex. He is desperate to discover the sexual act's secret. Jayant Mahapatra calmly monitors his partner's body throughout the year in this love poetry. The poet spreads her body beneath his breath.

One of the partners is the poet, yet his ideas are "going nowhere" and have a vibrant flow.

The poet feels as though dreams from a previous life are coming true when he tenderly touches his partner's body. It takes joy in remaining in the recollection. He closes his eyes softly, not sure if it's from the pleasure of his memories or its physical presence.

The poet goes on to describe the two lovers' physical connection, adding that there comes a point in their relationship when routine and familiarity make their interactions monotonous and dull. Similar to how a toddler loses faith in a mechanical toy when it breaks; the poet loses faith in his partner when he notices that her body is diminishing. The poet is ignorant of the repercussions of such a connection. With the aid of a simile, he claims in the poem's final two lines that he finds his misplaced watch in the room's darkness. He is unsure of his whereabouts when he lost her.

The poem 'Lost' is written in free verse and has no regular rhyme or rhythm. The poet was greatly influenced by T.S. Eliot. The poet gives his poem some power by asking a question in the last line of the poem. This poem also has a symbolic meaning and has an undercurrent of love and sex.

2.5 Check your progress

Qus-1. Discuss the various themes in the poems of Jayant Mahapatra.

Qus.2- Write a note on the writing style of Jayant Mahapatra.



Qus. 3 Write the critical appreciation of the poem 'The Whore House in a Calcutta Street'.

Qus-4. Write the critical appreciation of the poem 'Indian Summer'.

2.6 Summary

Jayanta Mahapatra is one of the most important poets. He has made a significant contribution to literature, particularly Indo-Anglo-Saxon poetry. In terms of the issues he writes about and how he approaches them, he is among the greatest Indo-Anglo poets in the world. Alongside other notable Indo-Anglo-Saxon poets like Nissim Ezekiel, Ramanujan, and Keki N. Daruwalla, he carved out a niche for himself. It is because of his impressive mastery of the English language.

For a learned, intelligent physicist like Jayanta Mahapatra, who also dabbled in photography and novel writing before producing twenty-seven priceless volumes of poetry, entering the world of muse was something like to a life-altering event. His poetry is a collection of infinite thoughts and feelings drawn from his surroundings and experiences. He was born into a misfortune-plagued Oriya Rice Christian family, lived through a volatile age when India was reclaiming its identity, witnessed the most devastating events of the 20th century, and saw the aftermath of the struggle for independence and World War I. He is deeply embedded in a massive gruesome bloodbath. He understood the psychological repercussions of horrors, observed cruelty, felt the suffering of women, and gave voice to their miserable situation. He experienced profound shifts in tradition, noticed loneliness in relationships, and chose the color of sorrow as a means of expression. All of these realizations enabled him to transcend boundaries and ultimately achieve universal importance.

His poetry is the result of his hopes for the betterment of humanity, his memories, and his inner voice. His passion for using the Imagist approach to convey his emotions gives his poems their absolute individuality. He uses concrete, concise, and exact imagery taken from his surroundings to communicate his implicit concepts and messages since he is against paraphrasing ability and flat words.

2.7 Keywords

- Representative
- Alliteration
- Assonance
- Repetition



- Melody
- Victorian

2.8 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

Qus-1 Discuss the use of The Orissa and English language in the poems of Jayant Mahapatra.

Qus.-2 The Themes of Sex, Sexuality, and Social Concerns are the common concern of Mahapatra's poems. Discuss.

Qus-3 Jayant Mahapatra is a master of psychological and philosophical themes. Discuss.

Qus. 4-Write a note on the writing style of Jayant Mahapatra

Qus. 5 Write the critical appreciation of the poem 'The Whore House in a Calcutta Street'.

2.9 Answers to Your Progress

Qus-1 Discuss the use of The Orissa and English language in the poems of Jayant Mahapatra.

In his numerous poems, Jayanta Mahapatra discusses the landscape of Orissa. Dawn at Puri, Taste for Tomorrow, Slum, Evening Landscape by the River, and Events are a few of these poems. 'Dawn at Puri' is the most noticeable, realistic, and captivating one. It shows a skull resting on the hallowed sands, incessant crow sounds, etc.

**“White-clad widowed Women past the centers of their lives
are waiting to enter the Great Temple”(Dawn at Puri,)**

Similarly, a scene at Puri with crows making noise is depicted in 'Taste for Tomorrow'. Lepers and worshippers swarm the temple entrance, creating a fairly broad thoroughfare. Mahapatra includes Puri in many of his poems. In his poems, the temples of Puri and Konarak also hold a significant position. His various poems are set against the backdrop of Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, and Puri. Mahapatra has a difficult time deciding on a language for his poems because of this.

He once expressed this conundrum:

“I am in love with English. And then, my schooling was in English and I learned my language from British English masters – mainly from English novels; so, blame H. Rider Haggard and Edgar Rice Burroughs and Ballantyne from whom I caught the first delight of words gravid with meaning.



Further, I feel I can express myself better in English than in Oriya. And, I have done a lot of translations in verse from the Oriya” (Mahapatra 21).

In some other poems, Mahapatra deals with the Orissa landscape, its culture, and the ancient history of Orissa. These poems are *The Orissa Poems*, *Orissa Landscapes*, and *Evening in an Orissa Village*. M.K. Naik rightly asserts:

“Mahapatra’s poetry is redolent of the Orissa scene and the Jagannatha temple at Puri figures quite often in it” (Naik 207).

His skillful word choice and vivid picture leave the readers with the sensation that they have visited Orissa and are familiar with all of the places, people, and scenes there. Readers are given the impression that they are in that part of the nation by Mahapatra's handling of the landscape imagery.

Mahapatra's poem ‘Evening Landscape by the River’ uses images. This poem describes a situation when people are cremating their deceased next to a river in Puri. Here, death is all around, underscoring the pointlessness of existence. The whole mood is depressing in this place, and the poet may be envisioning his demise.

“This is the kind of sadness which closes the eyes. Here the memory for faces of the dead never appears” (*Evening Landscape by the River*).

This is a sad poem by Mahapatra but it has sharply constructed imagery.

Qus.-2 The Themes of Sex, Sexuality, and Social Concerns are the common concern of Mahapatra's poems. Discuss.

In the earlier phase of his poetic career, Jayanta Mahapatra deals with the themes of Sex, Sexuality and later on he diverted himself toward social concerns.

M.K. Naik points out in this connection:

“His most characteristic note is one of quiet but often ironic reflection mostly concerning love, sex, and sensuality in the earlier poetry and the social and political scene in some of the later poems.”

‘Hunger’ is among his most important poems in this regard. Poverty and sexuality are the main themes of this poem. Here, poverty and sexuality are related. The subject of this poem is a fisherman who feeds his hungry daughter. The daughter is forced to turn to prostitution to support the family's hunger,



poverty, and financial situation. A client comes to see her because he is driven by intense sexual cravings. Even the fisherman makes up the fact that her daughter turned fifteen.

“I heard him say: My daughter, she's just turned fifteen... Feel her.

I'll be back soon; your bus leaves at nine.

The sky fell on me, and a father's exhausted wile.

Long and lean, her years were cold as rubber.

**She opened her wormy legs wide. I felt the hunger there,
the other one, the fish slithering, turning inside.”**

In addition to encouraging the client to "feel" his daughter, he asks them to wrap up their business quickly because the bus leaves at nine. The girl exposes her "wormy legs" as soon as the fisherman departs, and the customer gets hungry there. This is a place where there are two types of hunger: the hunger of the belly and the hunger of the sexual desires. This poem depicts the actual plight of poverty and a horrible life and is based on a true story.

Sexuality and Prostitution in ‘The Whorehouse in a Calcutta Street’

The issue of prostitution and sexuality is presented in greater detail in ‘The Whorehouse on a Calcutta Street’. The client wishes to indulge in his fantasies here. He has been observing the attractive women on billboards and posters in public spaces and on roadways, which makes him, feel attracted to them sexually. To satisfy his cravings, he goes to a whorehouse on Calcutta Street. He is hoping to find several attractive prostitutes here, whose faces reflect the attractive posters he has been seeing on hoardings and posters. He is delighted to have the chance to see those stunning girls. He feels guilt-ridden at the same time because he is going to a well-known residence and a renowned location. But he decided to go inside the house to satisfy his lust. In addition, he's interested in learning more about women. Regarding the prostitute, she behaved like a professional and went above and beyond to satisfy her client. She also deceives her.

**“Hurry, will you? Let me go,
and her lonely breath thrashed against your kind.**

(The Whorehouse in a Calcutta Street)



The most accurate portrayal of a customer and prostitute's interaction can be found in this poem. Mahapatra also addresses the psychological problem in this poem. The poem's setting and surroundings are well-known. Even yet, this poem's approach to the issue is incredibly intriguing. The poetry also has some social ramifications at the same time. Even in the absence of poverty concerns, prostitution would remain a viable profession. However, from a health perspective, as this poem illustrates, it may become more hygienic and secure.

Qus-3 Jayant Mahapatra is the master of psychological and philosophical themes. Discuss.

Jayanta Mahapatra has demonstrated his ability to think clearly and his creative talent by creating a variety of poems on a wide range of subjects. In addition, he has composed other poems that are philosophical, introspective, and psychological. The Logic, Grass, The Exile, The Abandoned British Cemetery at Balasore, Total Solar Eclipse, and The Moon Moments are the poems that make up this collection. These are his most striking psychological poems. Total Solar Eclipse illustrates both methods: the superstitious approach and the scientific one. The moon's motion between the Earth and the sun indicates the scientific method. Additionally, a terrifying Brahmin priest's reference suggests a superstitious approach:

“Like the fearsome Brahmin priest in the temple....using darkness to be a portent of the gods who had just revealed a last occasion to hide the disrobing of human values by rabid civilization”.

Here, the black sun is being interpreted as a "portent of the gods" by the superstitious Brahmin priest. He is attempting to appease the gods who, in their wrath, would be wreaking havoc on humanity. It will serve as humanity's penance for their transgressions. The poet additionally feels that

One could consider the solar eclipse to signify "a rabid civilization's disrobing of human values."

There are numerous intellectual and psychological scenes throughout the poem. Aside from these complex concepts, this poem features a wealth of animal imagery, including the symbols of life and death—the snake, the hyena, the vultures, the sparrows, and the crocodile.

Philosophical Aspect of *The Moon Moments*

The Moon Moments also have some philosophical and realistic elements.

It has a realistic effect in the lines such as:

“Those women talking outside clouds passing their eyes”(The Moon Moments)



These lines have the feeling of social concern which is related to socialism and the doctrine of brotherhood and love. These ideals are difficult to attain. The poem has a psychological value also as the poet says,

“How can I stop the life I lead within myself--

The startled, pleading question in my hands lying in my lap

while the gods go by, triumphant, in the sacked city at midnight?”(*The Moon Moments*)

The inner soul of the poet is asking him questions and he is walking alone in the street trying to find the answers to these questions. While he is alone his mind philosophizes:

“Always there is a moon that is taking me somewhere.”(*The Moon Moments*)

The goals of a philosophic mind are clear in this instance. Humans never speak from the heart while discussing social ideals and concepts. The poet expresses genuine and admirable thoughts from his heart in this poem. The poem's style and approach to the subject matter perfectly complement the theme's dignity. Complete Solar Eclipse and The Moon Moments are two poems with extensive vocabulary in which the poet demonstrates his intellectual brilliance and status as a premier scholar.

Realistic Elements in *The Exile* - The Exile is a philosophical poem, yet it is most recognized for its realistic aspects. This poem depicts a variety of well-known as well as actual common objects. The poem's realistic features, which are universally recognized and true to life, include the distance of the land, the hills scorched by the sun, the bodies burning on funeral pyres, the elderly and sick parents, the filthy town, and the long-haired priest of Kali.

The best philosophical line of the poem is:

“It is an exile

Between good and evil

Where I need the sting of death.”

Where a country’s ghosts

pull my eyes toward birth. (*The Exile, A Rain of Rites* 12)

In the poems of Jayant Mahapatra, the philosophical atmosphere is created by the antiquated idea of the struggle between good and evil. This poem demonstrates both surrealism and realism in its aspects. In



fact, 'The Exile' falls into the same genre as poems like 'Total Solar Eclipse' and 'The Moon Moments' because of the way these two themes are combined.

His use of appropriate language and uniqueness in the subject matter are additional factors in his success. He disproves the widespread notion held by English writers that writers of Indian descent shouldn't use the language. Jayanta Mahapatra is the only poet who was raised entirely in India and has an extremely successful body of work in the English language.

The most significant contributions made by Jayanta Mahapatra to Indo-Anglican poetry are his creative handling of the subject, his imaginative way of expanding themes within his poetry, his choice of appropriate words and phrases, and his exquisite use of imagery. His imagery might be realistic, surrealist, or symbolist at different points in time.

M. K. Naik rightly says-

“An intensive scrutiny of Mahapatra’s imagery reveals that his images are drawn from two worlds viz., the exterior world of phenomenal reality and the surrealistic world, and the way these two worlds are related equally significant. The image is for Mahapatra not merely what Wyndham Lewis called, the primary pigment of poetry; it is almost his characteristic way of reacting to experience, ordering it, and recording it”

Qus. 4-Write a note on the writing style of Jayant Mahapatra

Ans- As a highly committed and prolific poet, Jayanta Mahapatra is distinguished in the field of contemporary Indian-English poetry. In a comparatively short amount of time, he created a distinctive and original addition to Indian-English poetry. Mahapatra translated books from Odia into English to demonstrate his skill as a translator. Indian Literature, a bimonthly literary magazine, published a number of his translations. His translations were also published in anthologies. His individuality was what distinguished him from other Indian-English poets. Mahapatra did not acquire his impact by reading a lot of poetry, in contrast to those who took inspiration from international poets. His poetry exuded sincerity; it might be conversational, dramatic, lyrical, or prosaic depending on the situation, and it was always profoundly striking without being arrogant.



Mahapatra's methodical and genuine approach demonstrated his commitment to his writings. He showed a very remarkable degree of maturity and creativity, exhibiting a deep aesthetic concern for the linguistic diversity and structural integrity of his composition

Several of his poetry also contains elements of sensuality and sexuality. But he never dehumanizes them. Through the integration of these significant elements, he enhanced and broadened the purview and array of Indo-Anglian poetry.

He has added so many abstract ideas into the lyrical texture of *Relationship*, a work that delves deeply into Oriya land, cartography, history, art, culture, society, tradition, belief, heritage, and life. He shows the way they live, the way the terrain looks, the way they speak, their belief system, etc.! His use of metaphor and myth in this passage makes us think of William B. Yeats' Irish mythology and mysticism. His poems show his love and appreciation for his birthplace. Orissa is his dream and his images, and it is Orissa that he falls asleep, wakes up, and wakes up from. Orissa is his love.

**“Once again one must sit back and bury the face
in this earth of the forbidding myth,
the phallus of the enormous stone”**

As a poet, he can demonstrate the details of local history and how we have neglected our past. Mahapatra, like Tennyson, is plucking the blade of green grass to pipe his emotions.

The last lines of the poem take us to a different pedestal of make-believe dream sequence-

**“Is there anything beyond me that I cannot catch up?
Tell me your names, dark daughters
Hold me to your spaces
In your dance is my elusive birth, my sleep
that swallows the green hills of the land”.**

Jayanta Mahapatra as a poet likes to silhouette and in his poetry imagery plays an upper hand with faith being so shaky and frail. The pencil images do not remain the same as they change from time to time.

Qus. 5 Write the critical appreciation of the poem ‘The Whore House in a Calcutta Street’.



'Hunger' and 'The Whorehouse in a Calcutta Street' are two of Mahapatra's most well-known poems. The two poems have many things in common, yet they also differ greatly from one another. Although sexuality is the central issue in both poems, there are significant differences in the two poems' settings, characters, and internal monologues. Because Calcutta is one of the most notorious towns in India for prostitution, Mahapatra refers to a "Whorehouse in a Calcutta Street" in this poem. In this poem, Mahapatra assesses the customer's mental state during his visit to a whorehouse and sheds some light on the workings of the mind of a whore. The word "whore" means, of course, a prostitute or a harlot or a strumpet.

The phrase "Walk right in" greets us when the whorehouse on Calcutta Street opens. The poet might want us to believe that the whorehouse is saying these things to someone who is going to enter it, or that it is the whorehouse itself stating these things. The whorehouse would have said these words or other phrases that meant the same thing if it could speak like a human.

This poem focuses more on the customer's mental processes than it does on the sexual experience between the client and the whore. Therefore, the poem's psychological interest outweighs all other considerations. One of the most innate human desires is sexuality, which is especially strong in men. There are many stimulants available in the world to maintain this interest most of the time. The images of women that are published in newspapers, magazines, journals, posters affixed to walls, and paintings on hoardings are all triggers that might arouse a man's latent sexual urge or amplify an already present one. For this reason, the poem's client suggests, or is given the advice, that he should think of the women he wished to "know" but has not been able to know.

2.10 Suggested Readings

- Das, Bijay K. *The Poetry of Jayanta Mahapatra*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2009.
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Subject M.A	
Course Code: 403	Author: Dr.NutanYadav
Unit-03	
The Namesake by Jhampa Lahiri	

Lesson Structure

- 3.1 Learning Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 Main Body of the Text
 - 3.3.1 About the age
 - 3.3.2 About the author
 - 3.3.3 About the Novel
- 3.4 Further Body of the Text
 - 3.4.1 Character list
 - 3.4.2 Original Text
 - 3.4.3 Analysis of Major Characters
- 3.5 Check Your Progress
- 3.6 Summary
- 3.7 Keywords
- 3.8 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)
- 3.9 Answers to Your Progress
- 3.10 Suggested Readings

3.1 Learning objectives

- To develop critical thinking among students towards literature.



- To enhance their knowledge of literature.
- To let them enjoy different genres of literature.
- To make them good in the English language.

3.2 Introduction

Jhumpa Lahiri, an American novelist, published her first book, 'The Namesake' in 2003. It was developed into a full-length novel after appearing in 'The New Yorker'. The story which alternates between incidents in Boston, New York City, and Calcutta, explores the complexities of being torn between two opposing civilizations that have sharply different social, religious, and intellectual views. It shows the struggle of American-born Indian American who found it difficult to comprehend the ties to the past held by the previous generation. Lahiri does not mention any Indian writers or works on the immigrant experience that have a direct influence on her, even though her writing has a thematic focus on the Indian immigration experience.

In interviews, Lahiri has cited Chekhov, Tolstoy, and Thomas Hardy in particular as influences from earlier generations because of his ability to construct worlds that are both intricate and full, as well as his ability to strike a balance between "human drama and the world around it." She adds that this generation of writers teaches her factual information, such as past agricultural techniques.

In a 2008 interview in *The Atlantic*, Lahiri says about her writing style, "I like it to be plain. It appeals to me more...

My writing tends not to expand but to contract." Unlike many of her contemporaries, Lahiri's language is unadorned, even transparent, drawing the reader into the story without calling attention to itself in any way. She consistently eschews big dramatic scenes containing lots of action for smaller, more interior moments. Her characters struggle with their internal conflicts—the things they can't bring themselves to tell their loved ones or how they feel trapped in their own lives. Although quiet in language and scene, Lahiri's prose is still vivid through the specificity of its details. Food, clothing, books on a shelf, or a gesture—Lahiri renders each of these with such clarity and simplicity that the reader easily finds herself inside the world of the story.

Works by Lahiri

- Fiction Interpreter of Maladies, 1999



- The Namesake, 2003
- Unaccustomed Earth, 2008
- The Lowland, 2013

Non-fiction-

- "Cooking Lessons: The Long Way Home" (2004)
- Improvisations: Rice" (23 November 2009, The New Yorker)
- "Reflections: Notes from a Literary Apprenticeship"

3.3 Main Body of the Text

The Gangulis are an Indian immigrant family to the United States whose tale is told in 'The Namesake' across two generations. When we first meet Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli, they are expecting their first child and reside in a modest Cambridge, Massachusetts apartment. The young pair first connected through an arranged marriage in Calcutta, India, where Ashima was born and raised before moving to follow Ashoke to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to pursue his engineering degree. Since he nearly survived a horrific train disaster a few years ago, Ashoke has been determined to travel overseas. The blowing pages of the book he was reading when the train derailed—a copy of 'The Collected Stories'—led the rescue crew to him.

But Ashima has found that traveling overseas has not been easy. Clutching letters from her family and creating improvised Indian meals with whatever ingredients she can find, she is a lonely and homesick American. Their son is soon born, in the unfamiliar setting of an American hospital. Ashoke muses about the boy's good fortune, considering that his life would be very different from his own. He has received a book as a gift from a Bengali friend. Ashima is also shocked by how different her son's life would be, but she feels sorry for him because she knows how important her extended family is to her development, and he will grow up alone. The pair decides on "Gogol," the author whose book both saved Ashoke's life and made this new one possible, as a temporary "pet name" for the hospital while they wait for their son's "good name" to arrive in a letter from Ashima's grandmother in India.

The next part of the book follows Gogol's development as the family relocates to a small suburban town after Ashoke is appointed assistant professor at the nearby institution. Gogol takes on a key role in his mother's life, helping to alleviate some of her loneliness toward India. His parents decide that Nikhil



will be his "good name" when he starts kindergarten because Ashima's grandma had a stroke and her naming letter got lost in the mail. However, Gogol continues to study at school. After his sister Sonali (Sonia) is born, the two become close as the house's ambassadors of American culture. Ashoke and Ashima's acceptance of Christmas and some American foods can be attributed to the two kids' natural, unaccented English and socialization in the American school system. Ashoke and Ashima also take their kids to the frequent get-togethers of their Bengali friends in the United States, and the family travels extensively to Calcutta, where they once spent eight months living with relatives. Gogol and Sonia feel alienated during this journey. Despite witnessing their parents' happiness at being backed home, India remains an alien land to them. Gogol eventually comes to hate his name and feels extremely ashamed of the writer Nikolai Gogol, who shares it, as well as the fact that the name has nothing to do with him. The details of his father's rail disaster are still unknown to him. He chooses to legally change his name to Nikhil when he turns eighteen, and this is the name he will use going forward when he leaves home to attend Yale. Ruth, an English major who has been with Nikhil for more than two years, is the first person he meets while he is still a student. Ruth goes to England for a semester and then a summer, at which time they split up. The story of Nikhil's escape from the "Gogol" planet is still incomplete, though, as every other weekend he travels home, where his family stubbornly persists in calling him by his pet name. The escape is intensified when Gogol, having completed his architecture degree at Columbia, moves to New York and develops feelings for Maxine Ratliff, a clever young art historian who lives with her affluent and exquisite parents, Gerard and Lydia. After moving into their home, Gogol practically abandons his residence. The Ratliffs captivate him; their New Hampshire vacation house, complete with a family cemetery, represents the comfort, stability, and solidity he never had as a child growing up sandwiched between two cultures. When his father unexpectedly passes away from a heart attack, his escape with Maxine's family is abruptly ended. Ashoke was separated from his spouse and kids at the time since he was residing in Ohio as part of a teaching fellowship. Gogol, devastated by this loss, goes back to his family and finds solace in the Bengali customs he had before opposed. Maxine, who was never a part of that world, drifts away from him, and they cease dating. Later, after returning to New York, he goes on a date (arranged by his mother) with Moushumi Mazoomdar, one of the other Bengali kids who were there at all of his childhood events. Surprising each other by how well they clicked despite their familiarity and similar



backgrounds drew them together since both have tried hard to distance themselves from their past. Soon enough, they are married at a large Bengali ceremony in New Jersey.

Even while they are initially content, little flashbacks to Moushumi's previous relationship with her ex-fiancé Graham gradually cause problems in their union. French doctoral candidate Moushumi, who is studying at NYU, has always been independent and feels that marrying Gogol was "settling" in some manner. In the end, she gets divorced from Gogol after having an affair with her former crush, Dimitri Desjardins. The family reunites in the novel's last chapter to celebrate one more Bengali Christmas Eve in their now-sold home, with Sonia joined by her new fiancé Ben. Ashima has decided to reside in Calcutta for six months of the year. Gogol discovers in his room a copy of *The Collected Stories of Nikolai Gogol*, which his father had given him as a birthday present years before, when all Gogol had wanted was to get away from that name. Reflecting on how this connection to his past is fading, Gogol feels depressed. He reads his father's favorite story while sitting on his boyhood bed, filling a need to reach out to the past again now that there won't be anyone around to call him by name.

3.3.1 About the age

'The Namesake' is centered on the tension between maintaining traditions and moving into a future that is distinctly "American." The Ganguli family's experiences in America—a place that is intensely foreign to some of them—offer a glimpse of life as an Indian immigrant to the United States. What is familiar to most readers in America is deeply unfamiliar. This shift, within one generation, is common in immigrant fiction and raises questions about the gradual disappearance of the home culture. Is assimilation the best option? Gogol and Sonia, two members of the second generation who were born in America, are none the less viewed by most Americans as "outsiders" or "others" because of their foreign heritage, to which they may or may not personally feel any connection. Gogol experiences this emotion most keenly when a New Hampshire dinner party guest believes he was born in India. If this generation finds itself forced out of both of the civilizations to which it owes allegiance, where, if anywhere, can it find a place to call home?

The central theme of Gogol's and Moushumi's actions later in the narrative is the search for a home, which is similar to the search for a true name. To Ashoke and Ashima, who thus offer a distinctive viewpoint on what appears to be commonplace items in American culture. Together, the husband and wife represent two sides of the immigrant experience, with different responses to the onslaught of new



norms they encounter in America. Ashoke thrives as a student and then as a professor in America, and he is frequently entertained and captivated by the culture there. He is not particularly homesick, despite his continued attachment to the family's Bengali customs, and he has always had a strong desire to travel. Ashima, on the other hand, frequently feels that living in Massachusetts is chilly and lonely, and she misses her life in India tremendously. She struggles to comprehend the traditions of people around her and clings to her correspondence with her husband and children in America and her relatives in India. Ashima serves as the story's emotional focal point and actively works to keep her family cohesive and uphold their Bengali customs, which in many ways underpins the story. Her frequent feelings of extreme loneliness highlight how challenging it may be to both integrate into a completely new culture and hold onto one's cultural history. The subsequent immigrant generation, the first generation born in America, is represented by Gogol, Sonia, and subsequently Moushumi; for them, assimilation—the process of assimilating into American culture—occurs much more smoothly. Having attended American schools their whole lives, the Ganguli children speak English as their first language and are far more engaged in American pop culture and gastronomy than their parents. It is India that appears foreign to them. They are bewildered by customary Indian practices and yearning for American food when they visit family. But their conflicting allegiance frequently sparks an internal battle for a single, cohesive identity.

3.3.2 About the author

Author Jhumpa Lahiri won the Pulitzer Prize; she was born in London in 1967. The majority of Lahiri's characters are Indian immigrants or the offspring of immigrants who struggle with identity, marital problems, and cultural alienation. Lahiri was born in Calcutta to Bengali parents. When she was a little child, her parents—a university librarian by trade and a schoolteacher by profession—moved to London and later to South Kingstown, Rhode Island. Her works capture the essence of her 'Diasporic experience'. Her immigrant protagonists, torn between two cultures, redefine their identities in her book *The Namesake*. Even though the majority of these stories take place in America, Lahiri occasionally uses Indian settings, which is a reflection of her time spent in Calcutta. Lahiri's debut book, *The Namesake*, came out in 2003.

A Diasporic novel called 'The Namesake' chronicles the thirty-year assimilation of an Indian Bengali family from Calcutta, the Ganguli, into America. Despite coming from the same country, the cultural



struggle they and their American-born children faced caused a significant cultural divide. They experience emotional, cultural, and spatial displacement as they try to make the new place their "home." They immigrated to the US as professionals "as part of the brain drain," just like a lot of other Indians (Spivak 61). The second generation finds themselves living in tension between the two cultures, while the first generation tries to adapt and learn new things about themselves. Even though they are now living abroad, the parents make an effort to stay connected to India, their birthplace. They are attempting to impart their traditions and heritage which they inherited from their home country—into their children's lives. Their kids are fascinated by their friends in the host nation, who aren't even their own anymore.

In the book 'The Namesake' every character tries to redefine their identities while striking a balance between Western and Indian cultures and beliefs. It appears that youngsters find it harder to value their original culture and heritage when their parents manage cultural hybridist to create such a balance. Gogol, the protagonist of the book, is a typical second-generation immigrant because he was called after a realist from Russia and has close ties to both his grandfather and family in India.

While Gogol, the son of Ashoke Ganguli and his wife Ashima, tries to erase his background, the couple makes concessions to the past. This is clear from Lahiri's account of Gogol's bitterness toward his early travels to India. He is compelled to engage with family members and give up during his stay.

Lahiri writes:

"He always takes India not as his homeland but as a country the way other Americans view it to be, he wants to be seen as American, free of expectations of a foreign land, Gogol grows up to find such loyalty to a homeland they have never known or lived in absolutely ridiculous, for Gogol India is a primitive setting." (*The Namesake* 12)

Gogol's teenage family vacations to Calcutta were unsatisfactory. Gogol does not feel as connected to his relatives as his parents do, even if he meets them:

"Soon, American meals and fast food, which Gogol badly desires, are replaced by plates of syrupy, spongy rossogollas" (82).

Gogol is not hungry for such Indian dishes. He has no choice but to consume them, albeit very difficult. He initially believes that the Ganguli house is a less upscale place to live in India, but he soon learns



that he has to get used to it. Gogol finds it unsettling since there is no privacy in his father's Indian home. He never feels like he belongs in the area of his origins and shows no remorse or care for it. Gogol feels like a foreigner in India in which he is physically and psychologically alienated.

He bemoans the Hindu rites that his parents continue to observe and is invariably at ease accepting the emblems of the prevailing Western culture. Additionally, Gogol objects to the name ABCD (American-born confused Desh), because it implies marginality, something he never experienced in America. He declines to be referred to as such because it will cause issues with his American identity. Lahiri poses the query, "Is a person's homeland the location where they are born, rose, and currently reside? Or is it the location of his ancestry?" (125). The work does not respond to this topic, even though it lies at the heart of the characters' cultural and emotional difficulties. The main character in Gogol denies his origins and purposefully hides his own cultural identity. In the process of recreating his identity, Gogol develops an obsession with certain norms related to Western ideals like autonomy and personal freedom. He merely becomes enamored with American culture. After graduating, he moves into a different apartment and starts dating different women. He spends Christmas vacations with Maxine, his American girlfriend because he is enthralled with her enjoyable lifestyle. Gogol notices a shift in Maxine's parents' lifestyle after receiving a cordial welcome from her parents. He is not formally associated with her parents. They give him little plates, "and Maxine's mother, Lydia, gives Gogol's plate no thought" (150).

But,

When Ashima receives Maxine for the first time, she offers her: flavored pink lassi, samosas, and then a big heavy lunch. Gogol's parents remain silent during the meal because, in India, one should not talk while eating. On the other hand, Gogol enjoys dinner parties with the Ratliffs because they are loud and lively. The tables are candlelit, and wine is served. He likes their intelligent talks and the elegance of the whole atmosphere. Maxine's parents are the center of attraction at these dinner parties while Ashima and Ashoke behaved like caterers in their own home. (35) He not only embraced the American lifestyle and culture, but he also began to despise his name in an attempt to blend in. He concluded that Gogol, his name, was the source of all issues. He was compelled to use his family's traditional Bengali name at home, which made him unpopular with Americans outside of his house. Gogol did not, however, feel particularly passionate or affectionate towards India or her customs.



As a mature man, no one in Nikhil's world is called Gogol. Thus, he never tells Maxine the story of becoming Nikhil after long years of being Gogol. He fears being rejected by American society, which he is eager to join and blend with Nikhil, ignores the Indian identity of the name as he behaves as a pure American. On the other hand, this renaming process does not help him to reinvent himself fully, to break from that mismatched name. (287)

The sole reason he chose to become "Nikhil" in high school was to appease his parents. Despite this, his appreciation for his original identity has not grown since he rejected the Indian name "Nikhil" (32). He is not any more devoted to his Indian heritage as a result. Paradoxically, Nikhil serves as his entry permit into a more modern society, while the name Gogol stands in the way of his freedom from the confines of his parents' traditional environment. Following that, he willfully separates from his parents to adopt an American way of life: He thought it would correct the "randomness" and the "error" (287) of his earlier name, but it does not.

Gogol redefines himself once more to ground himself in the Indian identity, having previously rooted himself in the American identity. Following his father's passing, Nikhil discovers the Gogol within himself as he reads the book written by Akaky Gogol, which his father had given him as a birthday present years prior. He is prepared to begin reading the book that he [had] previously given up on and left unfinished (290). He not only reads the book and learns that his father "was pulled from a crushed train forty years ago" (291), but he also moves one step closer to realizing his true identity after years of denying his Indian heritage and assimilation into Western civilization. His appreciation of American life wanes after the death of his father. His relationship with Maxine starts to deteriorate. Therefore, he goes through resistance to the relationship, rejection, and finally, redefinition of his native cultural identity. Now, he does not want to get away from his family, "Immediately after the funeral, he tells Maxine in a decisive tone, I do not want to get away" (186). Maxine realizes the real change in Gogol and moves away from his life.

The circumstances that followed Gogol's father's death demonstrate how he remade himself as an Indian. He willingly adopts Indian customs and culture. "After his father passed away, he shaved his head as a Bengali father's son should have done." consuming a mourner's diet, according to which Gogol, his mother, and his sister should only have vegetables, dal, and plain rice (179–180).



The truth is that immigrants frequently switch between identities because they are always surrounded by expectations and uncertainty. Gogol serves as a reflection of this in the book. Gogol swiftly returned to his former life and continued to retain his Indian and American sides despite being in a state of sadness. Gogol was conscious of the fact that he was an American citizen. Continually switching between two personas based on who or where he was, he did this.

According to Mishra ("The Literature," 59), "men might learn of a future than the past,"

Gogol grows more understanding of his mother's viewpoints. He began to behave like the submissive child that Indian children are expected to be. Stepping free of Maxine's shadow, Gogol redefines who he is. Gogol connects with a Bengali woman when it comes to his home heritage. He starts to recognize himself as the son of an Indian. "He is ready to join his parent's friends in the crowded party, to take photographs of the people in his parents' life, in this house to eat as well, seated cross-legged on the floor, and speak to his parent's friends, about his new job, about New York, about his mother," is how the novel's concluding scene highlights Gogol's admirable epiphany (291). Gogol ultimately succeeds in resolving the tension between his dual identities and advances our knowledge of Indian-American identity. Gogol acknowledges his Indian heritage without completely rejecting Western society. Even though he finally comes to appreciate his heritage, he acknowledges that he is more than just Bengali. His Western environment, including "his schoolmates, university colleagues, and work associates," has had an unconscious and psychological impact on him (293). Gogol blends his own culture into American society by redefining what it means to be a Bengali family member in a society where white people rule. He now understands how his life has been enhanced by the ideals of the two civilizations. He truly is the new hybrid generation's symbolic personification. According to Robin Cohen, "Gogol, an Indian-American, lives in a pendulum-like manner until he eventually reaches maturity and self-realization (4). "After spent years maintaining distance from his origins, yet all his detachment toward his family would eventually draw him back to them; to the quiet, stubbornly exotic family," he writes, allowing the two cultures to merge in one zone of cultural interaction (281). Moreover, Gogol saw his mother Ashima as his "home" following the breakdown of his marriage, despite his earlier assertion that his flat served as his home (284).

His apartment represented America, while his mother represented India. Apart from his father's passing, there was another incident that cemented Gogol's Indian identity. Gogol realized how crucial



his mother was to his ability to support him while he was living in America when Ashima decided to leave the country and spend the rest of her life in India. "He realized, by all means, he was the one to introduce Indian tradition to new generations, and yet it was for him that his parents had to undergo to learn American customs; Thanksgiving and Christmas, even if the celebration was not really for them," Gogol said.

Ultimately, Gogol permits the two cultural contexts to combine to produce a hybrid subject. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha believes that a hybrid identity "is productive and innovative," thus he welcomes the new indicators of his hybrid identity (1). "The search for one's roots can be positive or it can lead to narrow nationalism, which results in prejudices, hideous biases, and implacable animism," according to Robin Cohen (*"Global,"* 188). Lahiri depicts Gogol's discovery of his third space and his realization that his quest for his Indian ancestry is a constructive force. As a result, Gogol was unable to change his name and would always be known as "Gogol" rather than "Nikhil." For years, his name, Gogol, had defined and troubled him; he was powerless to change who he was and depart from the mismatched "Gogol" name. However, according to *The Namesake* (287), those experiences had "formed Gogol, shaped and determined who he was, in which he should prevail and endure in the end."

As a result of combining the two distinct domains of American culture and Indian ancestry in a third place, Gogol refuses to engage in a single American identity and instead joins two cultural vistas. At last, Gogol realizes that he is an American-born Indian.

3.4 Further Body of the Text

3.4.1 original text

The story opens with a young Bengali couple named Ashok and Ashima Ganguli moving to Cambridge, Massachusetts' Central Square from Calcutta, India. Ashok attends the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as an engineering student. Ashima gives birth to her first kid by herself, overcoming personal anxieties in addition to linguistic and cultural hurdles. She would have given birth at home, in the company of relatives, if the delivery had occurred in Calcutta. The birth goes well, but the new parents wait for the letter from Ashima's grandmother, and an elder in the family bestows a name on the newborn. This is how their families traditionally name babies. The grandmother passes



away shortly after the letter is supposed to arrive. In Bengali tradition, a kid is expected to have two names: a good name for public usage and a pet name for household use. In remembrance of the well-known Russian writer Nikolai Gogol, Ashok offers the name Gogol for the infant, and they use this name on the birth certificate. Parents discover that they have to give their kids a legal name before they can leave the hospital. When Ashok was a young man, a train derailed in which he was travelling and many people died but fortunately he survived. Right before the crash, he was reading a collection of Gogol short stories, and as he lay there surrounded by debris, he held a single page of the story "The Overcoat" in his hands. Ashok can't move or cry out because he has multiple shattered bones, so the only thing he can do is drop the crumpled page to attract the notice of rescuers searching for survivors. This inspired him to leave his hometown and start over. Even though the baby's parents hold great meaning for the pet name, it is never meant to be used by anybody else but family. They choose Nikhil to be his moniker.

Gogol is confused by his pet name as he grows up. The Gangulis tell their kid that he will go by Nikhil at school when he starts kindergarten. The five-year-old disagrees, and the administrators send him home with a note pinned to his shirt indicating that, by his request, he will be called Gogol at school. Gogol grows increasingly resentful of his name as he advances through school because of its peculiarity and the peculiar intellect for which it was intended. Ashok feels that Gogol is too young to comprehend its meaning. Reluctantly, his father grants his request to change his name when he tells them. Just before heading off to college, Gogol gets his name officially changed to Nikhil Ganguli.

The distance that grows between Gogol and his family is created by this name change and his decision to attend Yale rather than MIT, as his father had done. There is still more space—both geographically and emotionally—between Gogol and his parents. Instead of being Bengali, he wishes to be American. He dates American females, returns home less often, and gets upset if someone refers to him as Gogol. He attends a lot of parties, uses marijuana and cigarettes, and loses his virginity to an unidentified girl while in college.

Gogol introduces Maxine to his parents. Ashima dismisses Maxine. Gogol's train abruptly stops while he is returning home for the summer because a man jumps in front of it. As Ashok waits for Gogol at the train station, he starts to worry. When he gets home, he eventually reveals the real meaning of Gogol's name. This severely disturbs Gogol.



Gogol gets a relatively small apartment in New York City after graduating from Columbia University, and he soon finds employment in a reputable architecture firm. He is rigid, infuriating all the time, or else constantly waiting for someone to make a clichéd remark about his upbringing.

Gogol meets Maxine, an extroverted girl, at a party and they start dating. Maxine's parents own a four-story home in a wealthy neighborhood. Gogol is alone once more as Sonia gets ready to marry her fiancé, a Chinese-American named Ben. As Ashima is ready to head back to India, Gogol picks up an actual get over. Ashok passes away from a heart attack while teaching in Ohio not long after. To collect his father's possessions and ashes, Gogol journeys to Ohio. Gogol gradually distances himself from Maxine and ends their relationship. He starts to spend more time with Sonia, his sister, and his mother.

Subsequently, Ashima proposes that Gogol gets in touch with Moushumi, the friend's daughter, whom Gogol knew as a kid and who ended her relationship with her fiancé Graham not long before they were married. Despite his reluctance, Gogol meets Moushumi, who is Bengali somehow, to win his mother.

Gogol and Moushumi eventually get married after being drawn to one another. But toward the end of the first year of their union, Moushumi starts to get fidgety. She starts to regret getting married since she feels bound by it. Gogol seems like an inadequate replacement for Graham as well. When she casually mentions his former identity to her friends at a party, he feels deceived. At some point, Moushumi had an affair with an old friend named Dimitri, whose identity becomes clear when it comes to the novels written by the Russian author that his father had given him for his birthday a long time prior.

3.4.2 Character list

- Ashoke Ganguli (Mithu) a caring father of Gogol and Sonia, and husband to Ashima. Ashoke grew up in Calcutta. An avid bookworm, he especially loves Russian novels. His life is changed forever when during a train.
- Ashima Ganguli (Monu)- mother to Gogol and Sonia, and wife to Ashoke. Ashima is the family member most attached to the traditions of India, and who is most homesick for her family.
- Gogol/Nikhil Ganguli - The story's main protagonist, Gogol is the son of Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli. Growing up in a suburban town in Massachusetts, with intermittent, long trips to Calcutta, Gogol quickly becomes conscious of the difference between



- Sonali (Sonia) Ganguli-Gogol's younger sister, who calls him, affectionately, "Goggles." She too struggles with the divide between her American friends and her Indian background and moves to California for college. After their father dies, though, Sonia moves.
- Moushumi Mazoomdar-The Bengali woman who marries Gogol, Moushumi was one of the children present at the many gatherings of Bengali friends in their childhood. She grew up in London and had a British accent.
- Maxine Ratliff- Gogol's second significant girlfriend, She is a recent graduate from Barnard where she studied art history. She lives with her parents in a beautiful apartment in New York. Gogol falls in love with her effortless beauty.
- Ruth-Gogol's first girlfriend, an English major at Yale whom he meets on the train home to Boston. The year after she and Gogol start dating.
- A friendly, portly Bengali businessman with whom Ashoke strikes up a conversation on the train that eventually crashes. He urges Ashoke to travel the world while he is still young and free.
- Dr. Gupta-A post-doctoral fellow at M.I.T. and friend to the Ganguli family. He visits the hospital on the day that Gogol is born, and gives him an illustrated book of Mother Goose rhyme

3.5 Check Your Progress

- What does "namesake" mean in "The Namesake"?
- What are the themes of "The Namesake" and their significance to the title?
- What is cultural identity in the novel 'The Namesake'?

3.6 Summary

Even though The Namesake's title character is named after Russian author Nikolai Gogol, Lahiri does not list him among her favorite authors, pointing out that his work is considerably more stylized and antic than her own. However, Gogol's father Ashoke's line in Lahiri's book, "We all come out of Gogol's overcoat," is in a way an homage to the genuine Gogol, who came before and had an influence on a great deal of other important Russian writers. Lahiri writes in a clear and distinct style in all of her published books. Ashima is shown preparing a snack for herself in the opening scene and preparing samosas for a party toward the end. Throughout the entire book, food plays a significant part. The story



is told primarily in the present tense. Gogol's family resides in a typical suburban home, while Maxine and her parents own a luxurious townhouse. Gogol's discomfiting identity is among the book's central topics. Since using one's given name to refer to one's spouse is "intimate and therefore unspoken," Ashima never uses it. Sonia, Gogol's sister, appears in very few moments throughout the book, and her perspective is never taken. In the book, Gogol and his father are involved in two separate train accidents.

3.7 Keywords

- Expectation
- Identity
- Unrealistic
- Influence
- Construction
- Forgiveness
- Novel

3.8 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

- **The word "Namesake" alludes to the human search for meaning in Jhumpa Lahiri's work. In essence, the word captures Gogol/Nikhil's identity crisis.**
- **What are the themes of "The Namesake" and their significance to the title?**

The origin of Gogol's name is explained at the start of the novel. Thus, when Gogol's father Ashoke's train veered off the tracks, he was reading a book of Nikolai Gogol's short stories. A horrible accident occurred, with few people surviving. Ashoke was partially trapped via a window and was not able to move much. He was, coincidentally, still holding a page from Gogol's "The Overcoat." As he let go of the page, first responders realized he was still alive. Ashoke believes Gogol saved his life on that particular day. With no Bengali "good name" (bhalonam) for his son, Ashoke named him after the Russian author. All Bengalis traditionally give their kids pet names, which are typically sentimental or loving. Everybody is reminded by pet names that "one is not all things to all people." Good names, on



the other hand, are a mark of respectability and status. Bengalis typically take their time while naming their children since they value good names so highly.

A well-respected family matriarch or patriarch is frequently asked to name the infant. This honor had been granted to Ashoke's wife's grandmother. The naming convention encounters a problem, though, when Ashima's grandmother's letter is delayed. Hospital birth certificate writer Mr. Wilcox alerts Ashoke and his spouse Ashima that the infant would not be permitted to leave the hospital unless his birth certificate has a formal name.

Ashoke, cornered, names his son Gogol. Ashoke's fondness for absurdist philosophy and literature serves as the justification for his son's name. For its part, absurdist fiction explores the illogical and casts doubt on the applicability and existence of impersonal concepts like justice and truth. Absurdism's ideology is based on the idea that God, if He exists at all, is a remote, solitary being and that life has no purpose. In the narrative, Ashoke is aware of how lucky he was to escape the horrific train accident. Noting that his Marxist beliefs do not permit him to attribute his miraculous recovery to divine power, he gives credit to Gogol for saving his life. Thus, the term "namesake" has multiple meanings in the book.

It first signifies Lahiri's acceptance of Gogol's absurdist viewpoint. There isn't much evidence Ashoke finds that implies he was meant to live. All he knows is that he defied all chances to survive a horrifying disaster. The word "namesake" is a metaphor that takes a secular, absurdist stance when addressing the issue of fate. The narrative implies that life has no purpose and that humans are helpless against the powers of fate. It also implies that everyone needs to revolt against the limitations imposed by such a life. The only way to find purpose in this chaotic world is to resist. When Akaky returns to torment the general, he does just that.

Gogol/Nikhil by Lahiri reaches a similar result. At first, he finds it difficult to understand his name and dual awareness, as well as how he fits into the stereotype of an Indian-American. Ultimately, he accepts the difficulties that come with having a second identity. As the narrative comes to a close, he decides to read the absurdist tales of his namesake.

Qus-2 What are the themes of "The Namesake" and their significance to the title?

Ans-The generational gap is one of 'The Namesake's' themes. The ancient cultural customs, particularly those that pertain to the family, are very significant to Ashoke and Ashima. However, Gogol and Sonia,



their children, find it hard to integrate those traditions with American life. There is a significant generational divide between Ashoke and Ashima, primarily due to their lower levels of assimilation than their offspring.

Identity: Gogol battles his twin identities as an American and a Bengali throughout the entire book. He renames himself in an attempt to dispel any bad associations with his name's ancestry. Since Nikolai Gogol was regarded as an unusual man, Gogol Ganguli does not wish to be connected to the strangeness of the writer. He feels this way, nevertheless, because he is unaware of his namesake's real origins. The namesake has varying meanings for different people, hence this theme relates to the title. The majority of people don't care much about the name Gogol. It is very important to Ashoke because, first, it is the name of his favorite Russian writer, and second, he was taking a cue from Nikolai Gogol's "The Overcoat" when he was pulled from the train wreck. To Gogol, it is not connected to him or his Bengali heritage in any way and therefore he initially rejects it. Culture Clash: Ashima and Ashoke try to raise their children in a Bengali manner by reading them Bengali literature, taking them to Bengali cultural events, and even visiting Calcutta. But the Ganguli kids rapidly pick up American customs, and their parents, wanting to please their kids, introduce similar practices into the Ganguli household. The fact that Gogol's name has little meaning in this country but a great deal of significance to his Bengali parents makes this issue relevant to the title. While Nikhil represents his American side, Gogol represents his Bengali side. Therefore, having two names for the same individual emphasizes the impression of conflicting civilizations.

Qus.-3The question of identity lingers in diaspora literature. What are the themes related to it in The Namesake?

Ans-The Namesake explores several issues, including immigration, and assimilating the habits, traditions, and attitudes of a new country into one's lifestyle, marriage, and home. Being a stranger in a foreign land and severing ties with family and friends are prerequisites for immigration. The challenges of assimilation are considered to be distinct from the needs that drive emigration. In The 'Namesake', Ashima refused to assimilate and welcomed other immigrants into her home to observe customary Bengali holidays and feasts.

Theme of marriage- The novel goes into great length about marriage. Ashima had less control over her arranged marriage to Ashoke. Gogol resides with his affluent American partner till the passing of his



father. While his parents adhered to the Bengali cultural norm that forbids displaying one's innermost feelings of love in public, her parents enjoyed an openly loving marriage. At his parents' suggestion, Gogol marries a Bengali friend, but a year later, he gets divorced since his wife is unsatisfied and forms a connection with another boy.

There is a connection between the themes of marriage and home. Gogol is not comfortable where he is. The family's vacation destination is not India. Before his father passes away and he returns to his mother and siblings, he believes everything is with the American family. India will always be Ashoke and Ashima's home. In the story of Gogol (the name of a well-known Russian writer chosen since his work indirectly saved Ashoke's life), whose very name signifies an ill-defined home and cultural allegiance, Lahiri recalls many of the shades of these difficult issues.

Qus-4 What is the significance of cultural identity in *The Namesake*?

Ans- In 'The Namesake', Gogul Ganguli explores his complex relationship with his name as a means of grappling with his cultural identity as a Bengali American. He chooses to embrace his cultural background after his father's untimely death, but he momentarily separates himself from it by changing his name.

The main character of Jhumpa Lahiri's 'The Namesake', iBengali American Gogul Ganguli, is trying to figure out who he is while living in two separate worlds. His relationship with his name serves as the primary vehicle for showing the cultural characteristics of his identity.

"Gogol" starts as a nickname that the Gangulis give their child exclusively for usage at home. When Gogol starts school, they instruct his instructor to address him as "Nikhil." But to their astonishment, their son divulges his He tells his instructor that he wants to be named Gogol, and he uses that name all through childhood. Gogol's name indicates how he is embracing his cultural identity and is proud of what sets him apart from his friends in this first half of the book. But by the time Gogol starts college, he has grown tired of the name and has filed to have it officially changed to Nikhil. This represents a rift in his connection with his parents and an effort to blend in with American society by distancing himself from his Bengali heritage. Nikhil starts seeing an affluent American woman after renaming himself, and he spends a lot more time with her family than his own. But as his father passes away unexpectedly, Nikhil finds himself drawn closer to his heritage. In the end, he breaks up with his American lover and



gets married to a woman who is also of Bengali-American descent. Nikhil discovers the Nikolai Gogol book his father gave him and learns to value the cultural and personal significance of his first name, even though he never goes back to Gogol.

The themes of independence, rebellion, and growing up

The novel's central theme is Gogol's fight for independence from his sometimes-embarrassing family. Gogol's 'The Namesake' complements him as the maturing protagonist in the narrative.

'The Namesake', like many other novels, follows Gogol's development from infancy to adulthood, focusing on his schooling and the different experiences that shape him along the way. As an independent thinker, Gogol actively opposes aspects of his life that bind him to India, a country with which he feels less connected than his parents. This independence and rebellious spirit are demonstrated by his independent decision to legally change his name before departing for Yale. From then on throughout the book, everyone he encounters will only know him as Nikhil. He gets upset and ashamed when his parents mistakenly call him Gogol when they are visiting his college. Following his departure from college, Nikhil/Gogol makes fewer trips home.

He begins forging a separate life for himself in New York, complete with a rebellious romantic relationship with Maxine (as his parents would not condone it). Family only resurfaces as a significant aspect of Nikhil/Gogol's life after his father's passing. As a result, as his mother Ashima is packing up their house and getting ready to move to India, he finds himself wondering how he would manage to be apart from her.

Lahiri offers a perspective that allows the reader to imagine the reasons behind each of Gogol's choices and to see how he responds to the obstacles he faces by following the events in Gogol's life, from his departure from the family home to his professional development, his major romantic connections, and the death of his father. For instance, we witness his early visit to the Taj Mahal igniting his love of architecture, which subsequently serves as the inspiration for the sketch of his family house, which initially links him to Ruth, his first love, and subsequently to his subsequent career as an architect. The reader can engage in this cause-and-effect guessing game and interpret Gogol's decisions in more than one way, and Lahiri provides us with lots of material for discussion.



Quest for Identity

Gogol's will to take charge of his identity is evident in his choice to change his name to Nikhil before heading out to college. The reason "Nikhil" finds the name Gogol so repulsive is because he was confused about his identity at birth and the letter containing his "true name" from India got lost in the mail. Gogol, a Russian novelist, is another name that has great significance for Ashoke because it was a collection of his short stories that saved his life in a tragic train accident; however, Gogol/Nikhil was not taught this lesson when he was a child.

The primary conflict that propels Gogol/Nikhil's identity dilemma is the gap between his family's Indian tradition and his aspirations for an autonomous, contemporary American existence, as the other topic outlines make evident.

The developmental stages of Gogol/Nikhil that are depicted in the book show a persistent quest for a distinct identity, a fight that is complicated by the split society in which he is raised. He seems to be driven by a desire to live as a "normal" American and to get away from his family's influence on many of his decisions. For instance, Gogol's friendship with Maxine, an affluent New Yorker who resides with her chic and contemporary parents, develops to the point where Maxine offers Gogol a different place to live. But there are also times when Gogol seems to be returning to his roots, such as when he chooses to marry Moushumi or after his father passes away. Even though Gogol and Moushumi's marriage ends in divorce, the book's ending—in which Gogol sits down to finally read the collection of short stories bearing his name that his father had long since given him—suggests a new acceptance of his past and a readiness to let it shape who he is today.

Nicknames and names are significant indicators of the relationships that the many characters in the book have, and they serve as symbols of those relationships. During family vacations, Ashoke and Ashima return to Calcutta where they undergo transformations and take on the names "Mithu" and "Monu." In the Novel 'The Namesake', the characters of Jhumpa Lahiri find it hard to identify themselves with one culture and constantly struggle between their root and the host culture while being pained by dislocation, feelings of alienation, and identity crisis. Second-generation immigrants as shown in Gogol's character and as well as in his wife and his sister show the emergence of a hybrid identity and they have tried to assimilate with the host culture adopting the ways and styles of the Americans.



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Subject M.A	
Course Code: 403	Author: Dr. Nutan Yadav
Unit-04	
'Azadi' by Chaman Nahal	

Lesson Structure

- 4.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
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4.1 Learning objectives

- To develop critical thinking among students towards literature.



- To enhance their knowledge of literature.
- To let them enjoy different genres of literature.
- To make them good in the English language.

4.2 Introduction

Chaman Nahal, who was originally a fellow at Churchill College, Cambridge University, and a professor of English at Delhi University. *Azadi* has been translated into ten languages. He was awarded 'The Federation of Indian Publishers Award' in addition to the 'Sahitya Akademi Award'. He wrote three children's novels, a collection of short stories, and numerous other literary works. He taught as a visiting professor at several colleges in the US, Europe, Asia, and Australia in addition to serving as a Fulbright visiting scholar at Princeton University from 1967 to 1970.

His 'Talking about Books' column appeared in the Indian Express from 1966 to 1973. In addition, Chaman Nahal taught creative writing while occupying the Dai Ho Chun Distinguished Chair at the University of Hawaii from 1998 to 1999. He died in 2013.

Nahal was awarded 'The Sahitya Akademi Award' in 1977 for his 1975 publication, '*Azadi*'. Throughout the nearly fifty years that the book has been published, a lot has been written about it. Since the Gandhi Quartet, it has been included in many South Asian curricula, and Hachette India's 2023 edition has brought it back to the front of book displays. Rereading this Partition story seems appropriate in this, the 77th year of *Azadi*, when problems of divisiveness, identity, and belonging continue to plague us.

The story follows a tight schedule, beginning on June 3, 1947, in Sialkot with Viceroy Mountbatten's public broadcast announcing the Partition, and concluding on January 30, 1948, in Delhi with the announcement of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. The issue of language is the primary source of identity confusion at the start of Chaman Nahal's novel '*Azadi*'. Lala Kanshi Ram, a middle-aged Arya Samaji who earned his way as a prosperous grain merchant in Sialkot, was raised on the dogma that Vedic heritage is the sole authentic heritage of India. Despite not knowing the language, he faithfully marks "Hindi" as his mother tongue on all census forms.



“When he opened his mouth he spoke Punjabi, the rich and virile language of the province to which he belonged. And when it came to writing, whether the entries in his shop ledger or a note to the vendor down the road, he wrote in Urdu.”

He says he learned the language from his father and the primary instructor in his hamlet a few miles outside of Sialkot, neither of whom was Muslim, refusing to give the language a religious connotation. Lala Kanshi Ram dismantles the bogus language barrier that far too many of our distinguished citizens still hold to—that Hindi and Urdu belong to two different religious demographics—by acknowledging Urdu as his own. Much of Nahal's story illustrates and criticizes this forced separation in language and other facets of an otherwise common culture and history.

4.3 Main Body of the Text

The original account of the horrific events brought on by the partition can be found in Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*. It stands on with any terrible book. Furthermore, it should be noted that Chaman Nahal purposefully tainted the historical record with situational and didactic discursive elements, in addition to objectifying personal experience, in his novel, rather than attempting to pit one religion against another (Hindus against Muslims). He had cleared this information almost near the end of the book.

He wrote

“In Delhi, Lala Kanshi Ram and other sardars saw the Muslim abducted women's parade, they felt bad. Soon they saw that a train of the Muslim refugees was attacked and many Muslims were killed”.

Nahal conveyed through his protagonist that he did not despise Muslims because, same to what they had done to Hindus in Pakistan, Indians had done the same to Muslims in India. The sociology and psyche of societal members have been severely damaged by these terrible events, not only in those times but even up to the present, inviting cannibalistic waves for humanity. The social environment on both sides descended into chaos as a result of this terrible period, which sowed the roots of societal unrest and anger. People's psyches have been severely damaged by the two-nation thesis, to the point where the trauma affected the entire society, and a communal frenzy developed to put the negative effects upon the life process.

Lala Kanshi Ram's wife Prabha Rani and son Arun, along with other community members, gather around a radio set in Sialkot to await word of their fate. The listeners to the radio broadcast, a group of



Hindus and Sikhs from various professions, were all aware of their minority status and carried their fears and apprehensions about decisions being made for them. In 1947, communal unrest had already started to occur in Punjab. Nahal unites several families that are tenants of Bibi Amar Vati, the landowner matriarch who has a special affection for Lala Kanshi Ram. As it turned out, the Mountbatten Plan betrayed the confidence that the general public, a minority on both sides of a divided land, had placed in their leaders. Partition would necessarily mean displacement. It would mean the loss of home, land, and history. Nahal paints an image of a syncretic civilization that is collapsing due to the weight of pride in one's community and country. The book tells the tale of families who were uprooted from their homes and placed in camps for refugees. What makes me a refugee in my own country? When informed that he must leave the life he has built for himself and move into a camp, Kanshi Ram queries. Aside from losing possessions and opportunities, "the pinch was that he should have to give up this land, this earth, this air." That's the area of injury! After being made homeless, the concept of "Azadi" becomes problematic. In the Sialkot refugee camp, August 15, 1947, is simply another gloomy day. The families "felt inexplicably proud" of their country's independence, but they have nowhere to call home, no landmarks to celebrate, no news of events in the just-formed India, and no place to attach their pride. They don't have a relocation plan or arrangements to cross the border. India doesn't seem to be in a rush to bring them or find them a home, but Pakistan does not seem to want them either. Nahal describes bloodshed, dead bodies being transported by trains, burned homes, and ruined livelihoods. He describes the arduous trek that thousands of people decided to take in foot convoys, occasionally with the help of Indian troops determined to get them to safety. These kafilas were nevertheless plagued by violence, which included premeditated assaults, rapes, murders, and kidnappings. When Nahal's characters do eventually make it to India, they discover that they have not changed, that they have no goal, and that they are still cut off from the outside world. "Azadi" is still an abstract concept that is difficult to convert into a concrete reality.

Nahal wrote in his 2001 introduction to the book, replicated in this volume,

"For the historical novelist, the human suffering of the moment has greater significance. Calamities like Partition will in all probability occur in the future as well. But their blows can be somewhat deflected if we remain aware of the traumas we have been through. That was the core of this novel, though as a novelist it was not my business to be pedagogic. I wanted to tell a story, not write an essay on the



subject. So I take up an average Indian family living in a small town and show how their entire lifestyle and attitudes are changed by the Partition.”

It is hard to divorce the language of communal violence, alienation, and loss from the discourse of independence in India. In this regard, the *Azadi* is an important record of a people's lived history that criticizes the actions of political leaders, the governments of India and Pakistan, and the bloodlust that results directly from polarizing political discourse.

4.3.1 About the age

The most poignant and tragic "Partition of India" event occurred in 1947 in history. It seems impossible to locate a significant event in world history that involved mass migration, torture, trauma, and violence. Diverse perspectives exist on this occasion. Such events typically have an impact on artists, both fiction and nonfiction writers. As a result, historians' documents that have occurred on Earth and fiction writers have depicted such events in literature. Historians and fiction authors alike consider the partition of India to be a historical event.

Large-scale, scholarly literary works, historical accounts, monographs, and memoirs using fiction—novels and short stories—have all been produced as a result of India's division. The growth of nationalist and religious struggle, the relationship between Muslims and Hindus and its worst transformation from brotherhood to enmity, social, cultural, and political protests, as well as the imperial policies of the British government, all contributed to the expansion of writing that emphasized the various aspects of partition.

Looking at presently available narratives, we can easily conclude that the various issues involved national, communal, social, cultural, religious, and political issues. Literary fictional works that mirror the event of the partition of India are numerous but the most read and widely accepted are

- Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956)
- Bhisham Sahani's *Tamas* (1974)
- Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man* (1988)
- Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* (1975)
- Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* (1988)
- Salman Rushdie's- *Midnight's Children* (1980) and *Shame* (1983)etc.



4.3.2 About the author

One of the most illustrious authors of Indian English fiction in history is Chaman Nahal. He comes in behind Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, and R.K. Narayan, the three great masters. Many praise Chaman Nahal as a brilliant Indian English novelist. His contributions to historical and political fiction are numerous. In each of his three books, Nahal has made Gandhiji the main character. The novels are titled 'The Triumph of the Tricolour', 'The Salt of Life', and 'The Crown and the Loincloth'. One could categorize these three books as authentic Gandhian literature. Usually, they concentrate on Gandhi's character and his political initiatives.

Azadi is one of Nahal's most well-known works of art. It is regarded as an epic work that depicts the terrible 1947 Indian split. Numerous Indian languages have translated the immensely popular work. Nahal's reputation as an accomplished Indian English writer has grown thanks to this novel. He has managed to get authentic photos of the sad division. The actual story of the tragedy of the partition on the brink of India's freedom is presented on every page of the book. The book is notable for its horrific terror, trauma, and tragic intensity. Azadi is replete with depressing facts about the partition. There is an emotional connection to one's motherland love. The primary inspiration for the creation is this affection and emotional contact. The miseries of partition and its aftermath on the Indian subcontinent are vividly shown in "Azadi." Writing from a genuine position of refuge, Nahal covered topics such as the beginning of freedom, the horrors of partition, mass migration, atrocities, and the arrival of refugees in Pakistan and India. The novel focuses on man's desires, anxieties, loves, and hates, as well as the ongoing conflict between the Devil and God within him.

4.3.3 About the Novel

The novel starts on June 3, 1947, when the then-vice-roy, Lord Mountbatten, announces the country's separation into India and Pakistan. It concluded on January 30, 1948, with the killing of Mahatma Gandhi. Despite being written from an omniscient point of view, Lala Kanshi Ram's consciousness is used to depict life in the novel. Lala Kanshi Ram is a grain merchant who has been living a happy life in Sialkot. In his hometown, he has also purchased a few acres of land. His wife Prabha Rani is beautiful and pious, but she is illiterate. He wants to gradually teach her. He is the father of two children: Arun and Madhubala. Lala Kanshi Ram has been residing at Bibi Amarvati's rented home. Lala Kanshi Ram is a fervent follower of Hinduism who holds the Vedic philosophy in high regard. He is fluent in Hindi,



Punjabi, and Sanskrit. Having been a part of Arya Samaj, he holds Hindu culture in high regard. Lala Kanshi Ram has mixed feelings toward the British Raj because he was raised in a colonial setting.

He despises the British people and their government in general as a Hindu patriot, yet he respects the British Raj's accuracy and discipline. He encourages his son Arun to observe the British officers' discipline by taking him to the Hurrah Parade. The stray dogs are interfering with the British soldiers' march. So after the procession ends, the British sergeants skillfully shoot the dogs. Lala Kanshi Ram believes that even a British man is a creation of God because he attempts to see the idea of spiritual unity in human life.

According to him, all matter—including humans, animals, birds, flowers, and trees—was once one. Furthermore, these Angrez represented yet another facet of the same Brahman that made up all of reality. These vicious dogs, owned by no one and a nuisance to the whole neighborhood, had destroyed their Hurrah Parade. They have to assist them in encircling and eliminating these scavengers. The long-suppressed animosity between Muslims and Hindus becomes overt and manifests itself in a plethora of ways. Numerous Hindu homes have been set on fire by Muslims, who also break into them, rape Hindu women, and kill Hindus without regard for who they kill. Unfortunately, though, Hindus lack the unity within themselves to take a powerful and appropriate counterattack. Similar animosity also exists between Sikhs and Muslims. The Sikhs brutally kill a large number of Muslims. At times, they adjust to the circumstances by trimming their facial hair and taking off Sikh emblems such as the turban and kangan, among other items. As a result, there is a generalized sense of mistrust, dread, and hostility between Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims. They are all experiencing psychological restlessness, anxiety, and insecurity in one form or another. The hate in the community has no bearing whatsoever on the emotional bond between a man and a woman.

Arun, the son of Lala Kanshi Ram, harbored feelings for Nur (Nisar Nurunnisa), Munir's sister. They are both enrolled in the same college in Murray. They meet in secret quite frequently. They hug and kiss each other occasionally. Their affection for one another is mutual. Arun even goes so far as to declare himself prepared for her marriage. Nur, a defenseless young woman, lacks the bravery to become a Hindu. As a result, she advises Arun to convert to Islam to be married. As a result, their love stays pure and undisturbed by the societal craze going on all around them. However, Nur's brother Munir worries that the inter-caste romance between Nur and Arun could incite unrest in the community. Arun is



forewarned by him to quit moving with Nur and seeing her. Nevertheless, despite all the obstacles, the young couple still hopes to be together. There is an inevitable physical separation that occurs after the painful psychological separation that occurs between Muslims and Hindus.

Politically, Pakistan and India's boundary need to be established. The Hindu in the recently formed Pakistan must depart for the newly formed Pakistan. To determine the exact borders between Pakistan and India, the government names a Boundary Commission. With great wish, Lala Kanshi Ram hopes that Sialkot will never be in Pakistan. The Sikhs hope and demand that the Chenab basin serve as the border. However, Arun is aware that the boundary will be at the Ravi basin rather than Chenab. The physical boundary of the division greatly disappoints Lala Kanshi Ram and his friends. All around, there is a violent and blatant release of pent-up wrath and disdain once the borderline is established. By stabbing Hindus, robbing their stores and homes, and raping their women, the Muslims in Sialkot start to disturb their tranquility and contentment.

Hindus experience a very terrible and hellish life. Kanshi Ram has been a harmless shopkeeper, but when Muslims steal from his shop at night, he gets very angry. Lala Kanshi Ram and his Hindu neighbors are forced to go through the agonizing process of migration. They are forced to leave their property, house, business, and region despite their strong emotional ties to them in quest of new locations for permanent settlement. To expedite the process of mass migration from one country to another, the government has established numerous refugee camps. Lala Kanshi Ram is anxious about having to become a man without a home, a land, or roots.

Chaman possesses a special ability to depict the characters with great skill. Lala Kanshi Ram becomes pale and dejected. The circumstances compel him to depart Sialkot. He is advised to leave the town by his close friend Barkat Ali, who worries about Lala Kanshi Ram's safety. However, Abdul Ghani, the fervent Muslim, finds pleasure in witnessing Lala Kanshi Ram's suffering. The city is still in a social frenzy. The Muslim bodyguard of the Hindu Deputy Commissioner shoots him to death. Lala Kanshi Ram ultimately decides to leave his home and relocate to the refugee camp, driven by the uneasy atmosphere. Thus, in the vehicle that transports them to the Refugee Camp are all of his family members, including Prahba Rani and Arun, as well as his neighbors, Bibi Amar Vati, Suraj Prakash, Sunanda, Padmini, and Chandni, among many others. In the evening, Bill Davidson delivers two trucks and takes them to the Refugee Camp. Thus, Lala Kanshi Ram's dislocation process has begun. He is no



longer able to support himself and is forced to live in a state of uncertainty and homelessness. In the Refugee Camp, Lala Kanshi Ram's family is given their tent.

The author has expertly blended tragedy in public life with personal experience. Lala Kanshi Ram must endure not only his grief but also the collective disaster that is occurring all around him. The government makes an effort to keep the area peaceful, but the bloodshed and killings inside communities continue. The refugees are generally broken both mentally and physically. One wonderful aspect of Lala Kanshi Ram's life is that despite all the anguish he and his family have experienced, he has managed to cultivate a philosophical and even yogic peace of vision. He knows that Muslims alone are not to be blamed and that Hindus are equally guilty. Although Prabha Rani is very furious with Muslims for killing her daughter, Madhu, Lala Kanshi Ram tries to silence her with his yogic vision:

“I can't hate the Muslims anymore....What I mean is, whatever the Muslims did to us in Pakistan, we're doing it to them here! ... We have sinned as much. We need their forgiveness”(AZ 335).

The novel explores a number of topics related to the horrific event of the nation is divided in two. Chaman Nahal demonstrates his extraordinary ability to observe human nature in general and Muslim and Hindu political behavior in particular. Despite having a melancholic tone, the work has an epic scope. The admirable aspects of Chaman Nahal's work include his balanced and unbiased depiction of the animosity and affection between Hindus and Muslims, their political and emotional interactions, and the complex and highly organized relationship between Indians and British citizens.

This novel is a turning point in Indian English political fiction, offering a wealth of material for both literary critics and political psychologists to appreciate for their artistic purposes and conduct objective study. The plot and structure of *Azadi* are straightforward and sequential, with no particularly intricate elements. Thus, eight turbulent months in the Indian subcontinent's history are covered in *Azadi*. There is also a noticeable effect from several other historical events that occurred before this time.

Azadi, meaning 'freedom', takes into account the various events leading to the partition, the actual event itself, and its aftermath. The story is related to certain historical events of great importance and their impact on ordinary people—thus creating two narrative levels, the historical and the human, both merging at crucial points to make the narrative effective.

Main points-



- Azadi is a novel written by Chaman Nahal and the central theme of the novel is the partition of India into two separate nations India and Pakistan.
- The writer being a refugee himself has portrayed his life story via the character of Lala Kanshi Ram. He lives in Sialkot and has a big name over there. It is a Muslim-dominated area but he holds no grudge against them.
- After Partition as the land of Sialkot went to Pakistan, they had to bear the pain of leaving their homeland and coming to Delhi. He felt like he was having an identity crisis.
- When all of them reached Delhi safely, they saw that many Muslim women were being abducted, Muslim people were attacked and much more and the same happened with the Hindus in Pakistan. What happened in Pakistan was just done the same way to give them an answer back from the Indians. Partition was extremely brutal.

4.4 Further Body of the Text

The book "Azadi" explores the aftermath of India's partition in three sections: Lull, Storm, and Aftermath. With a focus on Sialkot, a city with a majority of Muslims, it chronicles the agony of thousands of victims and their families. Nahal asks seven households for assistance in telling the tale. In addition, "Azadi" is a wide-ranging story about India's 1947 division that centers on a family of grain dealers in West Punjab. Lala Kanshi Ram, a well-respected Hindu man, suffers from British Anger in the narrative. An English soldier's shooting of a dog sets the stage for riots, looting, and carnage. Lala and his family would be left on their own as the division exacerbated the violence between Muslims and Hindus. The family is compelled to relocate from the village to refugee camps in New Delhi. More unrest results from Arun, the son of Ram, being forced to marry Chandni, a lower-caste lady who was abducted by Muslims. In "Azadi," by Chaman Nahal, a horrific event that happened in 1947, right after India gained its freedom, is shown. That day is known as Red Letter Day. There was devastation, brutality, and humiliation throughout the next partition. Nahal draws attention to both the hopeful beginnings of Indian independence and the self-serving acts of politicians that tore up families and claimed the lives of 500,000 innocent people. The unfulfilled love stories of Arun-Nur and Arun-Chandni demonstrate how division affects interpersonal relationships and peaceful cooperation.

Overall, the novel 'Azadi' presents sorrow and slaughter as a precursor to the emergence of a new humanity and new connections.



4.4.1 Character List

- Lala Kanshi Ram
- Abdul Ghani's
- Prahba Rani
- Arun
- Bibi Amar Vati
- Suraj Prakash
- Sunanda
- Padmini
- Arun
- Nur
- Chandni

4.5 Check Your Progress

Qus-1. Discuss Nahal's novel 'Azadi' as a politics of dispersion.

Qus-2. The trauma of partition is depicted in the novel 'Azadi' by Chaman Nahal. Discuss

Qus. -1 Discuss Nahal's novel Azadi as politics of dispersion.

Ans.-Chaman Nahal is a highly renowned Indian novelist and short story writer. Chaman Nahal outlines the beginning of liberation, the partition, and its aftermath in 'Azadi'. One could be shocked to read of the heinous killings, cold-blooded slaughter, horrific rapes, and property burning and looting. It portrays the extraordinary and unsightly incident that has wreaked havoc on people's lives and caused them much grief. There is a significant migration of individuals from both sides of the border between India and Pakistan following the split. The book is broken up into three sections "Lull," "Storm," and "Aftermath." The author of "Lull" captures the hushed atmosphere preceding the news of the partition. In "Storm," the second section, he tells the terrifying tale of the merciless killing of the Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs after the partition. In the final section, "Aftermath," he describes how individuals have suffered as a result of Gandhi's assassination.

The Viceroy's declaration of the Indian subcontinent's division into India and Pakistan marks the start of the story. Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs coexisted peacefully before the announcement of the division,



but following it, Muslims rejoiced in the news. They hope for significant improvement in their lives and believe that the creation of Pakistan will give them a fresh start. There is communal violence on both sides of the border. Hindus and Sikhs are targeted in Muslim-dominated Pakistan and in the same way, Muslims are attacked in India.

People are fleeing in large numbers in search of safe havens in which to escape certain death. Lala Kanshi Ram, the main character, is a wholesale grain merchant who resides in the predominantly Muslim city of Sialkot. He resides in a rented flat that belongs to Bibi Amarvati with his wife Prabha Rani, son Arun, and daughter Madhu, along with several other families. He is a devoted follower of Arya Samaj.

Chaman Nahal skillfully highlights Lala Kanshi Ram's sense of nationalism. Kanshi Ram is greatly alarmed by the announcement of partition because he knows very well about the consequences of it. He loves unity among people. He wants to emulate the great leaders of the nation and take part in the freedom struggle. The author presents his desire:

'He too wanted to claim for himself the role of a revolutionary. I've even been to prison,' he would boast before his listeners, real or imaginary. It mattered little if the only night he had spent in prison was in connection with a Sales Tax strike, where along with the merchants of his trade he had taken part in a hartal'. (9)

It makes his willingness to participate in revolutionary actions and his longing for the country's liberation quite evident. In the text, he emphasizes his strong sense of patriotism and his willingness to serve time in prison to free his nation. To protect themselves from the Muslims, some Hindus in the Muslim-dominated city of Sialkot have built gates. When they learned of the division, they asked for police protection. Certain Hindu organizations teach young Hindus how to use sticks, and they urge everyone to carry bottles loaded with acid as a means of defending their homes. Muslims are commemorating Pakistan, the newly formed nation, following the news of the division. They plan a march that makes its way to the Trunk Bazaar while yelling "Pakistan Zindabad!" and "Long live Pakistan." The Hindus gathered for self-defense and shut the Trunk Bazaar entry gates out of concern for the Muslim procession. Amidst all of this chaos, Lala Kanshi Ram, an experienced individual, calms the kids down by telling them to trust the authorities and to be patient. He has confidence in law enforcement and the police.



The Muslim city inspector, Inayat-Ullah Khan, is stationed at the gates of Trunk Bazaar to keep an eye on the Hindu population. The Bazaar gates are locked when the procession comes, but the Muslims yell for them to open. A Muslim leader charmed and garlanded the city inspector at the head of the parade. He commands Lala Kanshi Ram to open the gates because he is a Muslim, but the Hindus refuse to comply. As a result, he gives his constables the order to smash the gates. Pran Nath, the Hindu Deputy Commissioner, arrives for the watch and puts an end to it. Once the safety of Hindus has been confirmed, Pran Nath permits the procession to pass through the Bazaar.

Lala prays to God that the processions should not destroy the lives of Hindus. Chaman Nahal effectively shows the communal frenzy of Ullah Khan:

Inspector Inayat-Ullah Khan had no response to his order and the gate remained shut. That incensed him immensely.

“Listen, ohai, Kanshi Ram. If the gate is not opened in five minutes, I’ll order my men to force it open. How can he do that?” Arun whispered to his father”.

Lala Kanshi Ram craned his neck to see if the Deputy Commissioner was coming. Not that he put much faith in him.

Despite being a police officer, Inayat-Ullah Khan takes a stance and backs Muslims. He puts Hindus' lives in peril. It demonstrates how hatred within a community affects individuals. The communal forces have the power to persuade the disciplined police officer to act against humanity. That is the effect of collective hysteria. Chaman Nahal skillfully illustrates the detrimental consequences of politicized division perpetrated by political and religious figures.

The romance between Arun, a Hindu man, and Nurul Nissar, a Muslim woman's daughter studying at the same college as Barkat Ali, is portrayed by Chaman Nahal. The partition crisis has an impact on Arun and Nurul's love. Arun asks Nurul to convert to Hinduism, but she declines. Nurul does not express her desire for him to convert to a different religion to him. Arun and Nurul both want to convert to the other's religion, but they are not yet prepared to give up their own. He feels uneasy when she directly invites him to become an Islamic convert.

Chaman Nahal adeptly brings out their state of mind:

He heard himself say:



“Why should I become a Muslim?

He was harsh in his voice as if it was Nur who had created the new states.

Why should't you? That is if you love me.”

It sounded like anger, but she was only pleading. Arun was cruel to her:

Why should “you become a Hindu?”

For a while was stunned. She looked at him in anger, her passive, pleading eyes lit up with fire. (78)

Their conversation presents their reluctance to convert the religion and they are not ready to do so. They expect each other to change their religion. Chaman Nahal has portrayed skillfully their dilemma in their conversation.

The religious frenzy reaches its zenith when riots take place on a large scale. Hundreds of men die daily. Hindus and Sikhs are targeted by the Muslims. Kanshi Ram's shop is burnt and he and his wife Praba Rani are frightened. They reach the refugee camp according to the advice of Barkat Ali, who is a Muslim friend of Lala. He comes to know about the death of his daughter Madhu and her husband Rajiv. Lala sends Arun along with Suraj Prakash to find the body of Madhu at the spot of violence. While Arun searches the body, Abdul Ghani, a friend of Lala declares that Madhu and her husband are burnt alive by him.

Abdul Ghani is the manufacturer of hookah, a long-time friend of Lala Kanshi Ram and other Hindu businessmen in the area. Without having any religious bias, he leads life amicably in the Bazaar. The divisive politics played by Jinnah and other politicians made the people feel hatred and enmity between them. Abdul Ghani is a good example of how religious fanaticism corrupts the mind of a good person. He goes to the extent of killing his friend's daughter and son-in-law. It is due to the vested interest of the politicians and they fan the religious fanaticism among the people. Abdul Ghani becomes selfish and has an eye on Kanshi Ram's shop. He becomes a puppet in the hands of Muslim leaders who have influenced him greatly to go against the Hindus.

Ali, who accompanied Lala to Gandhi's meeting, is deeply moved by Gandhi's emphasis on harmony and non-violence between Hindus and Muslims. Following this meeting, he joined the Congress party and began donning khaki. He becomes a sincere devotee of Gandhi. Being a Muslim, he consistently advocates for the unity of Muslims and Hindus. His connection with Lala Kanshi Ram serves as a



tangible demonstration of tragedy. Rahmat Ullah Khan is assigned as the Pakistan Army captain in the refugee camp, with the responsibility of caring for the Hindus and ensuring their safe return to India. Arun's classmate is Rahmat-Ullah Khan. Rahmat has been notified by Arun of the death of his sister Madhu and her husband as a result of communal violence. Despite being Arun's classmate, Rahmat-Ullah Khan is uninterested in listening to him. His goal is to woo Suraj Prakash's wife, Sunanda. His attitude has completely altered after he joined the Pakistani army and has turned into a lustful man. Ullah Khan tells Arun that he and his family will be taken to India securely if he brings Sunanda to him. Ullah Khan has attempted Arun, but he refuses to give in. Later, he kidnaps Sunanda and sexually assaults her in Narowal. This incident makes Arun angry, and as retaliation, he kills Ullah Khan. It illustrates the depth of animosity between Muslims and Hindus.

The animosity between these two communities is the result of political action. Friends become enemies and destroy one another because of their extreme religious beliefs. The nation was divided based on religion, which led to these terrible events. Chaman Nahal has accused politicians of causing the unspeakable misery of followers of Sikhism, Islam, and Hinduism through their divisive politics. Lala and his family finally arrive in India. Lala establishes a modest business while residing in the Kingsway camp on Alipur Road. He learns of Gandhi's assassination through the news. As the nation is thrust into darkness, Nehru declares his death and Mahatma is killed as a result of inter-communal animosity. Chaman Nahal expertly illustrates how politicians' polarizing policies are to blame for the nation's divide and the misery of its citizens.

Qus-2 The trauma of partition is depicted in the novel 'Azadi' by Chaman Nahal. Discuss

Ans-Chaman Nahal's classical novel 'Azadi', which represents the destruction that the country's citizens experienced on a societal and individual level, conceals an all-encompassing revelation of existence. It illustrates the realistic historical proof of the terrible conflicts brought forth by the divide through literary perspective. Since Chaman Nahal was a migrant himself, his writing is remarkably honest and profound. As a result, he has shared his personal experience through the character of Lala Kanshi Ram and his son Arun. The narrative portrays the serene environment that prevailed before the declaration of partition, the horrific events that transpired due to the separation, and the appalling circumstances that the displaced people had to endure after the partition.



Sialkot is the place which is currently a part of Pakistan—is where the novel ‘Azadi’ opens. The author claims that in Sialkot, where Muslims make up the majority, Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs coexisted peacefully before to partition. However, it became a concern when Lord Mountbatten affirmed the creation of India and Pakistan. As the residents of Sialkot became more fearful, resentful, and hostile, a riot broke out for the first time. Lala Kanshi Ram uses his persona in Azadi. Chaman Nahal further discuss his opinions on partition and British control. Lala Kanshi Ram had mixed feelings for the British

While criticizing them for their shortcomings, he praises them for their qualities. He welcomed the security afforded by the British Raj with great fondness. His broken nation had experienced some kind of quiet thanks to the British. "He thought they were a country that could not be easily defeated," he claims. Hitler has now met the same fate as a small minority of those who have controlled us for almost 200 years." Lala Kanshi Ram also respected the power of the police and British authorities. For example, he had great faith in General Ress. But as he prepares to leave his home, Lala Kanshi Ram charges his opinion by realizing that the British would not do enough to protect the refugee. He also aims the British for their errors. He also criticizes the British for their mistakes. It's not because of Gandhi or the uprising of the masses that the British were going to lose India; it's because of a tactical blunder they completed in distributing out an unattractive Viceroy in the vital days of their Raj.

4.6 Summary

“Azadi” portrays vividly the horror of the partition and the colossal violence that still haunts the Indian psyche. It concentrates on the exodus of millions of refugees from Pakistan, and the aftermath of the partition.

While the book accomplishes exactly this, the story is told in the voices of men- heroes, victims, and witnesses – with women seen, but largely, not heard. There is a distinct absence of women’s voices in the novel. They exist only as bodies that lack agency and are defined by kinship relations and the gaze of men. Nahal dedicates the novel to his sister, lost to the violence of the Partition, but the women in ‘Azadi’ never quite emerge from the fug of homogeneity. Even when imaged as conscious of selfhood, like Kanshi Ram’s daughter and Arun’s sister, Madhu, they are turned into types instead of individuals.



4.7 keywords

- Portrays
- Vivid
- Horror
- Partition
- Narrative
- Refugee
- Muslim

4.8 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

Qus 1. Depict the sexual violence in the novel 'Azadi'

4.9 Answers to Your Progress

Ans - The devastating incidents of sexual abuse against women during the 1947 sub-continental division are shown in Chaman Nahal's 'Azadi'. This is a tale of woe that followed the Indian subcontinent's bifurcation included a horrific holocaust, widespread rape, extensive destruction, communal violence and fire, sexual rivalry for women, abduction, and murder. Nahal reveals the harsh reality that women's brunt of suffering during any type of conflict, war, rioting within communities, genocide, or partition. 'Azadi' depicts factual and accurate evidence of the horrors that numerous women had to endure following a communal split.

The calm and harmony of both countries were destroyed by the communal bloodshed brought about by the partition. 'Azadi' is a story that vividly depicts human identity and violence, including widespread kidnappings, mass rapes, mass murders, and naked woman parades. The most frightening incident in the narrative is the procession of nude Muslim and Hindu ladies in Indian Punjab and Sialkot.

Nahal's great book 'Azadi' depicts the brutal image of crimes against women in between. The novel's plot centers on the lives of regular people. Suddenly, murders, kidnappings, rapes, and other acts of violence took the form of a violent storm, threatening peace and harmony. Following this chaos, those who managed to live had to deal with countless tragedies as they lost their families, identities, possessions, and most importantly, their moral strength.



‘Azadi’ depicts a blend of realities of the best and worst times that had been witnessed by the common man. Nahal described in detail his characters with their love, relation faith, and humanity as well as sufferings, snatching, rape, murders, anguish, and chaos. The communal frenzy was provoked after the declaration of partition. India became free but divided into two sovereign countries, major and minor, and into different communities as well. He depicts how Pakistani people have been coexisting peacefully and harmoniously, but that the emergence of Pakistan after the partition rocked the world. Through a literary lens, it presents a realistic historical account of the horrific conflicts brought on by the division.

Chaman Nahal writes with amazing insight and authenticity because he was a refugee himself. As a result, he used the characters of Lala Kashiram and his son Arun to write about his personal experiences. The book tells the story of the quiet society that existed before the announcement of Partition, the terrible events that resulted from it, and the miserable conditions that befell the displaced refugees following the division. Nahal's goal in *Azadi* is to explain how the Partition affected common people. He depicts the suffering caused by Partition and their estrangement from their own country for Lala Kanshi Ram and his family of Sialkot, who are currently living in Pakistan. Millions of people are uprooted and forced to migrate to India, and this depicts their sorrow. People come to the tragic realization that they are unwanted in their own countries and that coming to *Azadi* will only result in great suffering and an uncertain future. Nahal recounts the horrific experiences of the displaced people who were forced to flee to camps for refugees and then traveled to India on foot, in convoys, and obediently facing various forms of abuse, including rape, arson, murder, and kidnapping.

The discussion above demonstrates that the central theme of this book is partition. It is an accurate account of the terrible events brought on by the division. It stands on par with any terrible book. It should be noted that Chaman Nahal did not attempt to disparage any particular faith in his book (Hindus against Muslims, for example). In doing so, Nahal not only objectifies the individual experience but also purposefully taints the historical record with situational and didactic discursive aspects. This fact is revealed almost at the end of the book.

He wrote:

“Lala Kanshi Ram and others felt terrible when they saw the Muslim women's march that had been kidnapped in Delhi. They soon learned that numerous Muslims had been slain in an attack on a train



carrying Muslim immigrants. Nahal conveyed his notion through his protagonist that he did not despise Muslims because Indians treated Muslims in India in a similar manner to how they treated Hindus in Pakistan.”

Chaman Nahal's 'Azadi', like 'Train to Pakistan', is primarily concerned with Partition, its causes, and its horrific consequences. *Azadi* dramatizes the devaluation of all values and the dehumanization of existence. The epic-scale book provides a very thorough explanation of Partition. It's also a unique Partition novel because Nahal emphasizes via Lala Kanshi Ram, the protagonist, the value of forgiveness in people and the importance of "the affirmation of life," to which he is "committed." However, this stark realism is counterbalanced by a lot of passionate love and sex.

Generally speaking, "Azadi" tells the story of how the country's split affects lovers' lives, including those of Arun, Nur, and Chandni. Arun's life is left empty by both Chandni and Nur; it is a life of unfulfilled love and hopelessness. Until the very end of the book, Arun is still a brokenhearted lover. His only reason for being alive is to preserve Chandni's memories. Even though he is frustrated, Arun is still attempting to get through the crisis by holding onto the hope that beloved Chandni will eventually find him again.

4.10 Suggested Readings

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Subject M.A	
Course Code: 403	Author: Dr. Nutan Yadav
Unit-05	
Preparation of Examination	

Unit-1

Qus. 1 What is the meaning of the word obituary in the poem ‘obituary?’

Ans - "Obituary" portrays a greater perspective on death though the poet seems dissatisfied with the perceived shortcomings of a father's life. The speaker's father's birth and death dates are included, along with any other informations.

**“...like his caesarian birth
in a Brahmin ghetto
and his death by heart-
failure in the fruit market”.**

Since he didn't come into the world organically, it's possible that dying somewhere other than in bed was also viewed as abnormal. As the speaker's father is burned and the remainder is disposed of by the sons per the priest's instructions, we are made aware of the cultural customs. But it appears that the author's main goal was to illuminate how people viewed him:

**“Father...left dust
on a table of papers,
left debts and daughters,
a bedwetting grandson
named by the toss
of a coin after him...”**

Unfortunately, rather than being judged by the things he completed, the man's life is "evaluated" by the things he left undone. The only noteworthy thing about the "grandson" is that he seems to have inherited



his grandfather's name by accident—possibly literally by tossing a coin—rather than out of reverence for him. There were unpaid debts and unmarried daughters.

“However, the speaker notes...

Being the burning type,

he burned properly

at the cremation

as before, easily

and at both ends...”

This sounds like a direct reference to the cliché about "burning the candle at both ends." According to the modern interpretation of this proverb, it refers to a life that is spent in a frenzied and unsustainable manner, with people working late into the night and starting over early the next day. The son looks dissatisfied with his father's life choices. Gold coins are traditionally placed in the deceased person's mouth, but in this instance, they are placed on his eyes, which oddly have not been damaged by the fire. Many cultures associate them with the body.

“..everything he didn't quite

manage to do himself...”

This also has a negative connotation. The poet seems to have little sympathy or interest in the death of the man.

“But someone told me

he got two lines

in an inside column

of a Madras newspaper...”

The speaker learns of the only record of the death. He found the newspapers end up holding food, like a jaggery. The paper was just a short distance from the garbage. The writer occasionally reads the newspapers that are wrapped around his meals

“....that I usually read



**for fun, and lately
in the hope of finding
these obituary lines.”**

There is a causal component to the obituary search. Maybe with regret, he closes by observing how his mother's death altered her. At least the mother seemed to be missing her husband. Sadly, the poet seems to think that his father's annual ritual—the acknowledgment of his death—is pointless and a waste of time.

Qus-2 What are the son's emotional differences towards the father in "Obituary" by A.K. Ramanujan?

Ans- In the poem "Obituary," Indian poet A.K. Ramanujan mentions the passing of a father. The poet describes the relationship between a son and father following the father's death in free poetry. A new perspective on the parent from the son's point of view is presented in each stanza.

The issues his father left him with irritate the son. What is undone is how his legacy is judged. The son only finds himself unhappy. The speaker is likely the eldest son. In Indian culture the eldest son is typically allowed to manage the father's estate.

His explanation is with a set of annoyances: unpaid bills, unmarried daughters, and a mansion full of issues. The father is usually burnt on a cremation pyre during an Indian funeral ritual. The poet describes the father as the "burning type," which suggests that he had a fiery temper. The father's body appears to have burnt quite thoroughly.

**“As before, easily
And at both ends...”**

The eye coins that were used to seal the eyes shut during the burning remained intact thereafter. Other than a few bones, not much remained unburned. As instructed by the priest, the sons take them up and cast them into the river.

His entire name, birth, and death dates, and no headstone will be present. Parentheses, which carry the man's life between them symbolically, are mentioned by the poet. The father's life was out of balance; he was born via cesarean section, lived in a slum, and passed away in a street market. With a



different set of emotions, at this point in the poem, the poet seems to long for some remembrance of his father.

But someone told me

He got two lines

in an inside column

Of a Madras newspaper...

In the hope of finding these obituary lines...

The poet discovers that his father had a two-line obituary in a local paper a month after he died. The paper is sold by street vendors. The son often gets sugar cane in one of the papers rolled in a cone and then reads it later. The son wishes that he could find a copy of the obituary.

Sadly, the father left his family, particularly the poet's grieving mother. Now, the family rituals will be without him and up to the son. The son wants some meaning for his father's existence; this has become the son's quest.

Qus.-3What is the theme of A.K. Ramanujan's poem "Extended Family?"

Ans- Memory and ritual as a bridge between identities and generations are two main themes that come out in A. K. Ramanujan's poem "Extended Family." The question of identity is particularly relevant because Ramanujan is a man with two identities: Indian and American. The poet is attempting to create a pathway between the deceased and the future members of his family through the ritual of bathing, which is significant in the Hindu tradition of Ramanujan's ancestors. However, he approaches these themes with humor rather than nostalgia, as evidenced by the sharp juxtaposition of images like "dry Chicago light bulb" against "Vedic sun" (lines 5–6), where his grandfather offered his respects to the sun standing in a sacred river.

Yet like grandfather

I bathe before the village crow

the dry chlorine water

my only Ganges



The poet had just the bathroom mirror as a witness, whereas the crow in the village observed the grandfather's ablutions. These sentences convey a sense of being removed from a comfortable setting. The poet has been released into an unfamiliar city scope after being taken from an uninterrupted line in a naturalistic, ritualized reality. However he made the final decision. He suggests using humor and tenderness as a different strategy to preserve the family line. He ends with a Turkish-style towel that he purchased from an American store and replaces the Japanese morning song with an Indian raga, tenderly contrasting his past in his native nation with the global realities of his life.

“I wipe myself dry

with an unwashed

Sears Turkish towel

like mother

I hear a faint morning song

(though here it sounds

Japanese)”

Declaring that the towel is "unwashed" is extremely hilarious, considering his mother was a devout Hindu woman who would never engage in the ritual impurity of using a towel that wasn't quite fresh. However, the unwashed towel has become the poet's new ritual in his American city life.

He playfully and lovingly imitates his children's actions, such as his small son playing garden hose and putting his "pee-pee" in and out of the tub. This is a ritual as well, and by creating it, he is creating a fresh memory for the family. The poet also implies that he is bound to his grandfather and his unborn "great-grandson" by certain rituals, which are more universal than others, such as paying respect to the Vedic sun. Lastly, he discusses memory's function in family customs. The poet will contribute to his grandchildren's recollections in the same way as his understanding of tradition is shaped by his grandfather's memory and his rituals. Maybe he'll be remembered as the bathtub-loving granddad. However, by immigrating to the United States and creating a hybrid American-Indian life, he has spurred tradition to take a whole new turn.

Qus.-4 Discuss Psychological effects in the poetry of AK Ramanujan



Ans.- After leaving his birth and upbringing in a Hindu household, A. K. Ramanujan traveled overseas. Thus, a variety of prior events or recollections of a life he formerly belonged to helped shaped his life and his poetry. The Western environment affects the 'outside' substance of Ramanujan's poetry, while the Indian or Hindu milieu makes up the 'inner' material. These two elements co-exist in his poems.

Self-portraits were once drawn by every poet. His father once drew a portrait of the poet. The traveling poet peers through a store window at his reflection in the mirror. To him, however, his portrait appears foreign. He is unable to identify his own life. In his poems, the concept of family is central to his thoughts. The individual expressed that their "outer" forms, which are linguistic, metrical, logical, and other ways of shaping experience, are provided by English and their disciplines (linguistics and anthropology). Their "inner" forms, images, and symbols, are provided by their first thirty years in India, their frequent visits and field trips, their personal and professional occupations with Kannada and Tamil, the classics, and folklore. His words are "I will seek and I will find/ My particular hell in my Hindu mind." His poetry is renowned for a wide range of themes, including dread and anxiety, Indianness, ironic descriptions, familial relationships, fear and anxiety, and Hindu themes.

His poetry is mostly concerned with the importance of community and family life. The ironically colored poems express the poet's viewpoint on the Indian joint family setup. The poet's "great house" serves as its main focal point and takes in everything that is said in it. Living and non-living creatures are among the things that can enter the dwelling. The girls return from their marriages away from this residence. Their marriage doesn't last too long. Either their foolish husband abandons them, or they return as widows. In certain instances, the sons who depart return and reincarnate as grandchildren: Nothing is left out: sons who flee return home; daughters marry short-lived idiot grandchildren. This residence is also visited by deceased folks. The nephew returns from his overseas trip dead. Most likely, he dies in battle. He returns home by airline, train, and military truck: "...in the north, a nephew with stripes

There was a border incident that was placed on his shoulders, and he was transported back in a military truck, train, and aircraft. Ramanujan effectively captures the stratification of Indian families in his poetry, and his mansion is truly great.

Another poem by Ramanujan that is focused on families is "Obituary." The life of an average Indian parent serves as the model for this poetry. The speaker remembers his father's passing. He describes the



terrible effects his father's untimely death had on the family. The poem also demonstrates how men predominate in Indian society's middle class. His father's birth and death are depicted in a sardonic and unimportant way:

In short, A.K. Ramanujan's poetry is full of family themes. His poems focus on his relationships and their lasting effect on his poetic consciousness. Some poems assert and glorify his relationship with his immediate family members.

Short answer type questions-

Qus. -What is anxiety according to Ramanujan?

Ramanujan puts anxiety in a process of continuity. He explains it indirectly, not directly. 'Fear' is the kindred of anxiety.

Qus. What is the source of all tension?

The source of all tension is the individual as it has loose ends with a knot at the top that's he.

Qus-How does he explain issues related to anxiety?

He explains the issues relating to anxiety through 'water' 'flames' and 'pigeons' and ultimately he confesses: 'but anxiety / can find no metaphor to end it.'

Qus- What does the poem refer to?

Ans-The poem refers to the complex Indian problems like the growth of population, poverty, illiteracy, lack of hygienic sense, and the problem of unemployment. 'Fear' is the source of all tension in the poem.

Qus-Why is fear considered to be the source of all tension?

Ans-Fear' is the source of all tension in the poem because fear may be because of communal conflict, Maoism, and terrorism the problems are having 'loose ends' which may not be directly related to each other.

**Unit-2 Jayant Mahapatra****Qus.-What is the subject matter and theme in Jayanta Mahapatra's Poet 'The Whorehouse in Calcutta Street'**

Ans-In the poem 'The Whorehouse in Calcutta Street', it is suggested to the client to consider the faces on the public hoardings and the posters. These faces, if not the same ones, at least those that resemble the ones on the posters and public hoardings, are probably all found at whorehouses. Any client entering a whorehouse would then feel guilty since; after all, visiting a house of prostitution is not anything honorable, dignified, or decent. The moral system that has always governed society is incompatible with seeing a prostitute, even though it has never been completely followed. For this reason, the poem's client feels—or is led to feel—that nothing he does would turn the whorehouse into a "heresy." A customer feels even more guilty when he think off the women he left behind to visit a whorehouse and have a new sexual experience.

The consumer is requested to consider "dream children" despite the fact is that she is childless women, who need and create dream children, do not constantly think about them. The customer's next thinking is that by visiting the whorehouse and speaking with a whore, he would be able to gain more knowledge about women and have an intimate conversation.

As far as the customer's thinking is concerned, nothing has surprised us. When a customer visits a whorehouse, they all think these kinds of things.

The whore is the poem's other major character. There isn't a detailed photo of her. Her intellect isn't thoroughly examined either. However, her behavior toward the customer is undoubtedly described. To satisfy the client, she acts in a way that she deems appropriate. She accomplishes the kind, small things; she fulfills the customer's possible expectations. Finally, she tells to a customer during the sexual act what every prostitute says. She tells the client to move quickly and released her. Every prostitute hopes that another client will arrive soon; therefore she wants to get rid of her current one as quickly as possible. Her only concern with the entire arrangement is its commercial element. If the client believes that he will learn anything more about women than this sleazy prostitute's business mentality, he is a fool. If he gets even somewhat sentimental about her, the customer is a fool.

It's also important to notice that the customer's inner self emerges during the whore's phony romantic gestures and motions. Every person has an inner life that they are typically unaware of. In actuality,



a man's inner self could stay hidden from him. If a man is not a frequent visitor to a whorehouse, then his sexual relationship with a hired lady is undoubtedly unique. For this reason, the poem tells us that the statue of the man inside is like a toy that defies him. Moreover, we are informed that the majority of the fancies and much of the make-believe, which a man has been treating as something real, are non-existent, or exist only in the imagination.

The poem "The Whorehouse in a Calcutta Street" is incredibly persuasive because it is incredibly authentic. For someone unfamiliar with such topics, the poem might provide something novel, but for individuals who have experienced a diverse social life and are aware of what is typically considered unethical sexual behavior, it doesn't contain anything unusual. This poem doesn't include a lot of obscurity either. Though there may be a line or two that's meaning is not quite evident, the poem's overall message is very obvious. The lines in the poem that inform us that is the most plausible and realistic when visiting a whorehouse, one should consider the faces on the posters and public hoardings, the fact that a customer feels embarrassed to have visited, the expectation that one will learn more about women, the whore's actions of pleasing her client, and, most importantly, the whore's words: "Hurry, will you? Please release me."

Qus.- Critical appreciation of the poem Indian Summer by Jayant Mahapatra

Ans- Major Indian English poet Jayanta Mahapatra is the first poet from India to win Sahitya Akademi Award for English poetry in India. His Poems like 'Indian Summer' and 'Hunger' which are considered classics in contemporary Indian English literature. Jayanta Mahapatra also received the 'Padma Shri', India's fourth-highest civilian award. He did, however, return the Padma award in 2015 in protest of India's growing intolerance. As a poet, Jayanta Mahapatra is more focused on his frequent introspection.

In the poem 'Indian Summer' the wind is blowing, the summer is here, and the priests' chants seem louder than before. The rural populace typically eats after dedicating their homes or temples to their deities. Typically, food is prepared and consumed well into the midday hours. Thus, it appears that the allusions are more closely related to mantic incantation and the tolling of temple bells. The priests continue to recite passages from the scriptures, perform rites, pronounce blessings, blow conches, and ask for God's blessing despite the oppressive heat and summer time. Homes built by Hindus typically



have something like this. Food is cooked in an earthen oven using logs, leaves, haystacks, and cow dung cakes as fuel. Thus, it will undoubtedly require time.

Additionally, there is no guarantee that grains and cereals will be fully available. The characteristics of rural India are scarcity, lack of resources, and hunger. The priests and other participants will grab a midday meal and share their experiences of hunger. The heat is so intense that the crocodiles retreat into the water. In this kind of environment, he thinks. But he gets personal when he talks about how his good wife is with him when he dreams at midday and isn't even tired by the loud boom of funeral pyres in spite of sweaty noon and full of perspiration.

The title, Indian Summer itself suggests that the poem is about a particular summer in India. Characters, creatures, and scenes are all typical Indians. Mahapatra has implemented free verse and ordinary language for chosen images to limn the caliginous atmosphere of a summer that occurred after a long period of devastation. Though the images are not interconnected, yet show off the same level of grimness in personas as well as in happenings. All the images used show the gravity of some hot days. Mahapatra has done a marvelous job in incorporating highly enriched compact images.

Qus-Discuss Jayanta Mahapatra “A luminary of Indian English poetry in using images in his poems”.

"Indian Summer," which appears in the anthology "A Rain of Rites" and is regarded as a magnificent Indian English classic poem, is the best example of his image poetry. This little poetry, which is divided into many sections, is only eleven long lines but his images demand close examination.

The poem begins with this audio-visual representation of the personified wind, emphasizing the melancholy, moaning atmosphere of the time and the utter desolation of the surroundings. Something is killing them from the inside out, something that is grim and sad and is destroying their very essence. By using the onomatopoeic term "soughing" and repeating the "o" sound, the poet hopes to evoke a more intense feeling, a specific mental feeling. The wind is seen wailing, aching for something or someone that is indescribable. The word "over" is used to imply that, despite all of this devastation and melancholy, something stronger, more captivating, and more potent is working its charm. This super power is symbolized by the following reverent picture of priests.

“Priests are chanting louder than ever:” (p.60,2)



This religious image conveys the idea that religion is growing more gently than the degradation that plagues humanity. Priests remain unwavering in their faith despite all the negative events, displaying their complete trust in God's favor. With escalating hurdles, their yelling becomes louder and louder, demonstrating their great tenacity. Both visuals are enhanced by audio-visual effects; the priests' image conveys an overwhelming sense of faith, while the image of the wind provides the historical context.

The vision that follows, "The mouth of India opens." Although it appears to be brief and straightforward has a deeper meaning. From a practical standpoint, it may be the mouth of the Indian masses, opened by shock, fear, and disasters. From a mystical perspective, it can be reminiscent of the open mouth of the Almighty Krishna, who is willing to instruct, inspire, and preach. The poem's next line, "Crocodiles moving into deeper waters," appears to be a reference to crocodiles and follows a spiritual theme.⁷ (page 60,4) Mahapatra chooses crocodiles, the most terrible, monstrous creatures, to symbolize humanity. Mahapatra has adopted a very conventional representation of a good wife.

"The good wife lies in my bed, through the long afternoon; dreaming still, unexhausted by the deep roar of funeral pyres."⁹ (p.60,7-11)

Mahapatra has depicted his wife as an example of a decent wife, using the word "my" in this instance. The picture of the good woman curled up on her husband's bed conjures up images of blissful marriage bliss and passionate kissing. Perhaps the poet describes her as good because she is meeting his wants and giving him her undivided attention, which is expected in traditional Indian society. She doesn't appear to be exhausted in the slightest and continues to fantasize about a physical union and ways to make her husband pleased. Despite the violence, decay, and death-like conditions outside, she is utterly committed to her work and keeps her entire attention on it. Outward disturbances are not able to affect her in any way. This very powerful image suggests, that a good wife is showing her fidelity, fondness, and commitment well amidst all the disturbances, in the same manner, everyone should show dedication and love towards the Supreme Being despite all failures, hopelessness, and despair.

Qus- Discuss the unvoiced pathos in the portrayal of women in the poems of Jayant Mahapatra.

"...It is refreshing to turn to Indian poetry written in English and to find in it a freshness and variety that reflect the remarkable diversity and vigor of the

**culture from which it stems" ...1 --Roger Iredale**

Jayant Mahapatra, an Orissan poet from a lower-middle-class family in Cuttack, gained enormous notoriety and acclaim due to his poetry. His verses painted a realistic picture of Orissan culture. Mahapatra's poetry heightens awareness of the substance of daily life, its complexity, and its significance—particularly when considering the example of Orissa's rich cultural diversity. The richer viewpoint of his ancestry gives the language and imagination life. Every line in his poems seems to be imbued with a certain level of cultural awareness, perhaps a nod to his Oriya heritage. His works have a touch of the poise and sensitivity of the socio-political-cultural reality.

A woman can't have a socio-cultural identity in such a traditional environment. Jayanta Mahapatra makes every effort to establish a significant role for women. Through his poems, he hopes to unshackle the notion that women are nothing more than objects to be sexually gratified.

Women is often viewed as nothing more than objects of sexual desire. Woman's body is viewed by man as something he can manipulate and use to fulfill all of his desires. Regardless of the role—mother, wife, or daughter—the relationship's significance is limited to the notion of a primeval thing. The patriarchal framework in which women are constructed suggests that women are subject to specific limitations. Jayanta Mahapatra has shown women in his milieu in a patriarchal manner. Therefore, he transcends the pseudo-social ideas through the cultural sensitivity in his works.

The male views women as immaterial objects or "things" that are never taken into consideration; Mahapatra uses this reality to shift the poetic quest inward. He tries to give voice to the deep, concealed emotions of the women because he thinks that probably through the literature these agonies and pains can be given the recognition it deserves.

Presenting Mahapatra's realities has always made sense and has been important. He talks about how the civilization is scattered both geographically and culturally. This implies that the cumulative tradition, like Orissa, cannot have a single cultural matrix. He believes that it is a writers' responsibility to present a genuine image of the ongoing tradition, and he does a great job in this regard. Mahapatra tried to transcend the pseudo-hierarchical attitude of the patriarchy in Orissa. Blending his romantic imagination with ironic symbolism, he evokes the limits of enunciation for the patriarchal society. The position of the woman in his poetic vision was far more elevated than it was in reality:

“Dream children, dark, superfluous;



you miss them in the house's dark spaces, how can't you?

Even the women don't wear them—

like jewels or precious stones at the throat;

the faint feeling deep at a woman's center

that brings back the discarded things:

the little turnings of blood

at the far edge of the rainbow.” [The Whorehouse in a Calcutta Street]

But Mahapatra gave them a transcended romantic identity. Since time immemorial, prostitutes have been considered ostracized individuals, who cannot be a part of a decent and cultured society. Writers tried to fight for their social space. Mahapatra not only talked about these ostracized women but in general, he describes the conditions of women who are exiled at home. He uses a sad and serene voice to give their thought a narration. Mahapatra tries to describe this solitude with truth and authenticity.

“On most nights there's a woman

who just lies in her bed, open

like any old thing in the house she lives in.

Like time, that pours over her.

The walls keep their close watch

over her loneliness; and not even that

can go wrong here. ...” [On Most Nights]



Unit-3 The Namesake

Qus-1 Explain how the relationship between Ashoke, Ashima, and Gogol develop throughout the novel.

Ans.- When Gogol reaches an age where he can converse with his parents as a youngster, the theme of the relationship between parents and children emerges. In his early twenties, Gogol is irritable with his parents, and they too find it difficult to connect with their American offspring. Following his father's passing, Gogol starts to feel affection for him. He now realizes the guilt and helplessness his parents experienced in Calcutta when their parents died on the other side of the planet. Gogol reflects on his parents' experience of living in the United States, distant from their parents, and how he has always stayed near to home when Ashima chooses to spend half the year in Calcutta. They endured it "with a stamina he fears he does not possess himself." He does not think he can bear being so far away from his mother for so long.

Qus-2 How is Gogol's name tied to his identity?

Ans- When Gogol reaches an age where he can converse with his parents as a youngster; the theme of the relationship between parents and children emerges. In his early twenties, Gogol is irritable with his parents, and they too find it difficult to connect with their American offspring. Following his father's passing, Gogol starts to feel affection for him. He now realizes the guilt and helplessness his parents experienced in Calcutta when their parents died on the other side of the planet. Gogol reflects on his parents' experience of living in the United States, distant from their parents, and how he has always stayed near to home when Ashima chooses to spend half the year in Calcutta. They endured it "with a stamina he fears." Gogol is "Gogol," and is surprised when he introduces himself as Nikhil at the bar. It is "the first time he's been out with a woman who'd once known him by that other name." He comes to like the sense of familiarity it creates between them. She still calls him Nikhil like everyone else in his life, but she knows the first name he ever had, and that seems like a secret bond between them. While Astrid, Donald, and the guests at the dinner party discuss what to name Astrid's baby, Moushumi reveals to the guests nonchalantly that Nikhil was not always named Nikhil. This offends him because it feels like a betrayal of an intimate detail only she knew to people he doesn't like.

Qus-4 How does the language barrier affect the Gangulis?



Ans- When Ashima and Ashoke arrive at the hospital for Gogol's birth, it is clear that they are going to have a language barrier, which will cause them a great deal of difficulty. Ashima searches for her husband after being offered a bed, but he has moved behind the curtain around her bed. He says in Bengali, which neither the doctor nor the nurses speak, "I'll be back." Although the curtain is a physical barrier, it symbolizes the mental barrier that speaking Bengali in the US creates.

Every other Saturday, Ashima and Ashoke send Sonia and Gogol to classes on Bengali language and culture, yet "it never fails to unsettle them, that their children sound just like Americans, expertly conversing in a language that still at times confounds."

Qus-5 Discuss Ashima's feeling of alienation in the United States.

Ans- Throughout the entire book, there is a strong sense of alienation and being a foreigner in a distant land. Ashima experienced anxiety during her challenging pregnancy because she was worried about parenting in "a country where she is related to no one, where she knows so little, where life seems so tentative and spare." Gogol, her son, will have a different sense of belonging in America than she has. Ashima laments that Gogol is not surrounded by her immediate relatives when he is born. This indicates that his birth feels "haphazard, only half true," much like most things in America. Ashima tells Ashoke, in a time of turmoil after leaving the hospital, "I don't want to raise Gogol by himself in this nation. It is incorrect. I'd like to return."

It is said that Ashima's suburban alienation is "a sort of lifelong pregnancy," as it involves "a perpetual wait, a constant burden, continuous feeling out of sorts... something that elicits the same curiosity from strangers, the same combination of pity and respect."

When Ashima moves into the Pemberton Roadhouse by herself, she does not like it at all. "I feel too old to pick up such a skill," she says. She detests sleeping on one side of the bed and waking up on the other when she comes home in the evening to a dark, empty house."

But after taking a shower before the final Christmas gathering at the Pemberton Road home, The woman "feels lonely suddenly, horribly, permanently alone, and briefly, turned away from the mirror, she sobs for her husband." She experiences "both impatience and indifference for all the days she still must live." She is neither thrilled to be in the United States with her children and possible



grandchildren, nor is she driven to be in Calcutta with the family she left more than thirty years ago. Without her spouse, all she feels is overwhelmed and tired.

Qus-6. Besides Ashima, which characters are marked by alienation? How do they experience it?

Ans- Upon realizing that "no one he knows in the world, in Russia or India or America or anywhere, shares his name," Gogol likewise experiences alienation. Not even his namesake's origin." Gogol occasionally feels cut off from Moushumi throughout their marriage. Relics from her past with Graham are scattered throughout the flat they currently share, and he wonders if "he represents some sort of capitulation or defeat." He hoped that their trip to Paris was her first time as well so that he wouldn't feel as uncomfortable while she was clearly at ease. After Ashoke's funeral, Maxine stays with the Gangulis, and Gogol observes that "she feels useless, a bit." excluded from this Bengali-filled home." It's how he usually feels in the company of her New Hampshire friends and extended relatives.

The topic of estrangement recurs in Moushumi's life when she tells Gogol about turning down every Indian suitor her parents attempted to introduce her to. "She was convinced in her bones that there would be no one at all," she says to him. She occasionally questioned whether her subconscious self-shutdown was brought on by her fear of getting married to a man she didn't love." She traveled to Paris to start again without having to worry about fitting in.

Qus.-7 In what ways is the tension between the United States and Calcutta prominent?

Ans.- The parents of the Ganguli children give in to some American customs when their offspring become American citizens. Gogol celebrates his fourteenth birthday with two different kinds of festivities: an Indian and an American one. Moushumi and Gogol's parents organize every aspect of their children's wedding, even inviting strangers and participating in customs that none of them can comprehend. They are not getting married in the kind of small, private ceremony that their friends in America would have imagined.

Ashima's assessment of Gogol's divorce from Moushumi demonstrates the disparity between Bengali and American perspectives on marriage. She considers, "Fortunately they have not considered it their duty to stay married, as the Bengalis of Ashoke and Ashima's generation do." She believed that the pressure to accept less than "their ideal of happiness" has given way to "American common sense." Surprisingly, Ashima is pleased with this outcome, as opposed to an unhappy but dutiful marriage for her son.



Qus.-8 How is the tension between life and death important in the relationship between Ashoke and Gogol?

Ans.- On his son's fourteenth birthday, Ashoke chooses not to tell Gogol about his near-death experience because he knows that Gogol is not yet ready to comprehend it. This choice highlights the conflict between life and death: "Life should be honored on this day, his son's birthday, rather than being brushed aside. Thus, Ashoke chooses to withhold his son's name explanation from others for the time being." Gogol recalls how he and Maxine "were already drunk from the book party, lazily sipping their beers, their cold cups of jasmine tea" as he copes with the loss of his father, Ashoke. His father had been dead for some time and was in the hospital." As Gogol returns to his life in New York City by train from Boston, New York recalls the train disaster from so long ago in which his father perished. As Gogol prepares for his wedding, he senses the strain between life and death. "Their shared giddiness, the excitement of the preparations, saddens him, all of it reminding him that his father is dead." His father is not present in the joy of his new life with Moushumi.

Qus.-9 What role does nostalgia play in Gogol's experience of the world?

Ans.- Gogol feels nostalgic when his mother and Sonia come to the train station to see him off. He remembers that the whole family would see him off every time he returned to Yale as a college student; "his father would always stand on the platform until the train was out of sight." Gogol begins to feel more and more nostalgic as his marriage with Moushumi progresses. In Paris, he wishes he could stay in bed with Moushumi for hours like they used to, rather than having to sight see by himself while she prepares for her presentation. During the dinner party at the home of Astrid and Donald, Gogol becomes nostalgic for when he and Moushumi were first dating and spent an entire afternoon designing their ideal house. As Sonia, Ben, Gogol, and Ashima assemble the fake Christmas tree, Gogol remembers decorating the first plastic tree his parents had bought at his insistence.

Qus.-10 What do the different women in Gogol's life represent to him?

Ans -As a junior in high school, Gogol kisses Kim for the first time. He informs her that he is Nikhil and that one of the reasons he changed his legal name was the understanding he could never woo a woman like Gogol. His first true lover at Yale was Ruth, with whom he eventually fell out of love when she moved to Oxford to study abroad. The breakup of this connection serves as a metaphor for how hard it is to stay connected to people on the other side of the globe. He uses his New York-based partner



Maxine as a means of escape from his parents and the society they stand for. Gogol has an affair with Bridget, a married woman, as he prepares for his architectural exam; this foreshadows the disintegration of his marriage to Moushumi because of an affair she will have. His wife, Moushumi, is exciting and new to him at first but she also represents a kind of settling for the life that both their parents want for them.

Qus.-10 What is achieved by Lahiri's use of varying protagonists?

Ans. The protagonists change from chapter to chapter even though the entire book is told from the perspective of an omniscient third-person narrator. As a result, Lahiri can depict the experiences of a whole family in detail, developing each character and the other characters' points of view. Lahiri uses a variety of points of view to build multi-layered characters instead of sticking with a single protagonist and defining the other characters solely about them. The reader may relate to the characters' behavior because of this strategy, which is especially relevant in the case of Moushumi and her affair with Dimitri.

Essay type question

Qus. What is the theme of 'The Namesake'?

Ans.-It is a common occurrence in immigrant households for children to adapt to their new country more easily than for parents. Given that parents are more experienced and accustomed to their ways, this is hardly shocking. As a result, they frequently struggle to adjust to living in a foreign nation, particularly one where the culture is entirely different.

And 'The Namesake' undoubtedly illustrates that. Despite moving to the US, Ashoke and Ashima have remained devoted to the long-standing customs and rituals of the Bengali community. They value these facets of Bengali culture even more now that they are separated from their relatives in India by thousands of kilometers. They help people feel less alone in their unfamiliar surroundings.

Regretfully, Gogol and Sonia, Ashoke and Ashima's children don't feel nearly the same way about their Bengali background. They have simply lost their connection to the culture that has molded their parents' entire perspective on life, despite being far more integrated into American society than their parents were. The American ways make them feel a lot more at home.



However, Gogol and Sonia's decision to seek solace in the customs of their past upon their father's passing demonstrates that the generational divide is by no means unbridgeable. The siblings are illuminating another concept in the book, which is that blood is ultimately thicker than water, by forging a link with the old ways.



Unit-4 Azadi

Qus-1 Chaman Nahal focuses more on the loss of personality than on material loss as laid in his Azadi. Discuss.

The novel, “Azadi” depicts the tragedy and atrocities at the time of partition of India which was the worst ever incident in the history of India. India was very cruelly divided into two parts, that is, India and Pakistan, which left a deep scar in the minds of millions and millions of people. It was the darkest period in the annals of Indian history and though so many decades have elapsed since then, this incident cannot be easily wiped out of memory, as it left a tale of massive destruction and massacre. According to a critic, Sisir Kumar Das-

“The partition of India left with it –the memories of horror, looting and arsons, murders and rape haunted the people intensifying their sense of shock and insecurity. Millions were uprooted and migrated across the new frontiers to face hard lives. Before the people could realize the political implications of the partition they were blinded by the unprecedented atrocities and cruelties of man against man.”

Ambuj Sharma, another critic, says

“The partition of the country was heart-rending, unpleasant, regrettable, unpardonable, undreamt of the event in the annals of Indian history – the division of India.”

Besides the geographical division of the land, the partition also built a wall between people and people. The wall of religion, caste, color, and so on. The army, the bureaucracy, and the neighbors who were friends till yesterday became sworn enemies at that time. The vast surgical operation of the proverbial Siamese twin, the partition of the country, resulted as it were, in terrible bloodshed. Chaman Nahal's novel "Azadi" depicts the joy and suffering experienced by India upon achieving independence in 1947. The period following India's liberation from British dominion was one of triumph, joy, and celebration; yet, what transpired next was the most heinous atrocity that will be regrettably recorded in history books. Ambuj Sharma goes on to argue that the book ‘Azadi’ chronicles the Indian liberation fight and ends with a narrative of woe that is fabricated by the British and the Muslim League and includes a holocaust, genocide, mass destruction, arson, rape, slaughter, and instability. Though the action in “Azadi” centers on the political frenzy at the time of the partition of



India into India and Pakistan, it tells about the impact of the worst tragedy in the history of modern India. “Azadi” depicts the role played by Indian politics in the lives of both the Hindus and the Muslims in general and its impact on the lives of lovers, like Arun and Nur and later on again the former with Chandni.

The love between Arun and Nur is quite transient and short-lived. The partition of India acts as a backdrop in the lives of both Arun and Nur due to which their love is torn apart. Just like the partition of the country into two, there is a kind of division in their lives too, that is, the separation of two hearts. Their love is completely crushed and shattered. The lovers are forced to separate from each other due to the dominant political turmoil as a result of which their future appears too bleak to them. Arun, who lives in Sialkot with his parents, has to leave the place because it has become a part of Pakistan.

Nurul Nisar is the daughter of Chaudhari Barkat Ali with whom Arun falls in love. It has been only two years since Arun and Nurul Nisar known as Nur spoke of love to each other. And yet every time he approached her, wherever he approached her, he longed for her as if it were the first encounter. There was ever a flutter in his heart.

After the announcement of the partition of India, Arun, a Hindu boy, having affairs with a Muslim girl is watched menacingly by other Muslim boys. The political crisis based on religious barriers stands as an obstacle between these two young lovers who belong to two different religions and both become quite helpless. Arun earlier assures Nur that he will embrace Islam for her sake, but the whole picture gradually changes with the occurrence of partition. He demands why Nur cannot embrace Hinduism. Nur is stunned to hear this which is beyond her anticipation, beyond her wildest imagination and dream. Amidst tears she says to Arun that she is a defenseless girl and cannot force her will on her family. She pins her hope on Arun to make sacrifices for her, him being a man and thereby more independent. According to Mohan Jha,

In the usual course of events, despite their differing religions Arun and Nur might have been united in marriage, but with the outbreak of communal violence, everything goes topsy-turvy. However, in the flush of his youthful romance, Arun could have elected to go in for Nur in preference to his parents, but the communal holocaust suddenly makes „a man“ of him, and he chooses to share the joys and sorrow of life with his parents.



The family of Arun decides to leave for Delhi from the refugee camp. Munir, the brother of Nur, hands a letter to Arun written by Nur to him. The letter is smudged all over with tears which itself shows Nur's sorrowful state. The content of the letter is a tearful reflection of Nur's mind. It reads thus, 'I'm weeping when I write this to you, will I ever see you again? God alone knows why people are so full of hate. I wish they were not to part souls that love each other. But I'll think of you till the day of my death. May Allah protect you.'

Nur's letter has a pessimistic tone of their bleak future, with no hope of meeting each other again. The partition of the country and the political turmoil has a gloomy picture for the two lovers.

Arun's love is unfulfilled because of the political agitation and more so because of the religious disparity which causes havoc in his life. Arun and Nur, a Hindu boy and a Muslim girl respectively, become helpless victims and are caught quite unaware by the unexpected partition of India. They did not have the least notion that one day their love life would end thus abruptly. The oaths and promises of love made by both remain unfulfilled.

However, fate takes a different turn in the life of Arun. One day while in the refugee camp, Arun happens to see Chandni, the daughter of Padmini. Chandni in the blissful lap of sleep is unaware that she is being watched. Arun feels an acute pain surge up in his heart. He soon falls head over heels in love with her and believes that god had sent her to him at the right time. Chandni had seeped so deeply into his consciousness. Nur now seemed only a milestone – a milestone that he remembered but had left far back on his path. Arun's change of love from Nur to Chandni makes one feel whether Arun's love for Nur was a mere infatuation. Or was he trying to fill up the vacuum created by Nur? His attention towards Chandni's "heaving breasts" makes one feel that his love for Chandni was not a true love, but a mere physical attraction. In all, it appears that Arun is indeed trying to escape from the unpleasant past – a gloomy debacle. He is in a way trying to forget Nur by giving Chandni a place in his heart.

The love between Arun and Chandni does not grow gradually but comes upon them so suddenly that they are taken quite unaware of it. Arun is least bothered about education, her status, her breeding, or her poverty. He finds a new identity for himself in his love for Chandni. But Chandni fears and doubts whether their love will reach a fruitful culmination. She is afraid that her poverty and caste would prevent her from marrying Arun. She staggers in fear as she fancies the thought of being married to



him. Though their whole life pattern is different she still clings to him with hopes complexion glows with the profession of his love which acts as a magic potion in her psyche.

However, even the second woman, Chandni, who comes into his life, is also snatched away from Arun due to the turmoil of partition. His promise to make her his wife when they reach India is a mere promise of a distant future. She is abducted from the camp at Narowal when Pakistan attacks the refugee camp. It is a second major blow to Arun when Chandni is abducted. Now Arun loathes both his father and Padmini. He believes that they were responsible for the separation of Chandni and himself.

From the refugee camp Arun and his parents proceed towards Delhi. Arun does not know where he is heading for. All he knew was that he was leaving behind both Nur and Chandni. Nur was only the beginning; he had walked only the foothills with her. But Chandni had taken him up the slopes to the summit. What would he be without her, without his hamrahi? Arun realizes the depth of loss of Chandni only upon reaching Delhi. Life seems to pull on too mechanically for him day by day. He wants to end his life, but that would only mean cutting off his relationship with Chandni. Arun tries to survive only by feeling the pain over the loss of his second love and by cherishing those thoughts he wants to retain that relationship till his death and sever all other relationships.

Chaman Nahal's 'Azadi is an epoch-making book that describes only the terror and tumult that accompanied darkened, the attainment of freedom in 1947 but also envisages man's 'Azadi or freedom from beastliness, from moral, psychological, and Spiritual malady.

Thus through this novel "Azadi", Chaman Nahal has portrayed a realistic event of a tragedy that took place in 1947, immediately with the freedom of India to be remembered as a red letter day and the partition that followed it as a period of shame, cruelty, destruction and a black period to go into the annals of history. Chaman Nahal's "Azadi" depicts the hopeful dawn of the Indian Independence and of the greedy politicians whose inhuman decisions ruined families and killed half a million innocent people. How the partition has destroyed peaceful co-existence and also human relations, can be seen through the frustrated love stories of Arun-Nur and Arun-Chandni. On the whole, the novel "Azadi" depicts that cosmic pain and bloodshed are a prelude to the birth of new humanity and new relationships.

