

LITERATURE & CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

III SEMESTER FOR BA/B.Sc.

II SEMESTER FOR BBA

(2012 Admission)

COMMON COURSE IN ENGLISH



UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

CALICUT UNIVERSITY.P.O., MALAPPURAM, KERALA, INDIA – 673 635

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**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT
SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

STUDY MATERIAL

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LITERATURE AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

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MODULE 1: PROSE

1. NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Frederick Douglass

About the Author

Frederic Douglass (1818-1895) was born in Washington Bailey near Easton in Talbot County, Maryland. He was the son of a slave woman and an unknown white man. He was separated from his mother in his infancy and spent his early years with his grandparents, who were slaves in plantations. As a young boy, he was sent to Baltimore, to be a house servant, where he learned to read and write, assisted by his master's wife. In 1838, he made his escape from his merciless masters, only to engage himself in anti-slavery campaigns. Later he became the leader of the abolitionist movement. His wonderful oratory and incisive anti-slavery writing earned him a respectable place among the champions of the anti-slavery cause.

Besides his first autobiography '*Narrative of the Life of Frederic Douglass, An American Slave*' (1845), two more autobiographies, *My Bondage and My Freedom* and *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, followed later in 1855 and 1881 respectively.

About the passage

'*Narrative of the Life of Frederic Douglass, An American Slave*' published in 1845 is the first of a series of autobiographies that Douglass wrote and it stands apart from the other slave narratives that appeared during the period for its simplicity and honesty. The present essay forms the eighth chapter of his much acclaimed autobiography. It sheds light on the brutalizing effect and infernal character of slavery. It reveals the violence, brutality, social injustice and dehumanization that slavery brings upon the victim. The slaves were called property, a commodity, or household goods. They were traded like cattle in the auction houses and were subjected to all sorts of inhuman treatment. Slaves were mercilessly punished for no reason; punishments were whipping (often 50 to 100 lashes), branding, ducking under water, slapping, kicking, tarring and feathering and tying up. Run away slaves were chased by dogs and when caught, were whipped or their body parts such as ears were cut off as punishment.

Summary of the Essay

Narrative of the life of Frederic Douglass begins with the description of the events that followed soon after the narrator went to live at Baltimore, a largest city in the US state of Maryland. As soon as Douglass reached there, his old master's youngest son Richard died and within a short time his old master captain Antony also died, leaving only his son Andrew and daughter Lucretia to share his estate. He had left no will as to the disposal of his property. It was therefore necessary to have a valuation of his property so that it might be equally divided between his heirs. Along with the property Douglass, the slave, was also sent for to be valued. When it was done, his feelings rose up in detestation of slavery and he had a new conception of his degraded condition. His heart was overborne with sadness and apprehension. He took passage with Captain Rowe on board a sailing vessel, Wild Cat. Soon he reached the place of his birth from where he had been absent for almost five years. However, he remembered the place very well. He was only about five years old when he left his native village to go and live with his old master on Colonel Lloyd's plantation. At the valuation, men and women, old and young were ranked with horses, cattle and pigs. It was then that Douglass realized the brutalizing effect of slavery.

After the valuation of the property of captain Antony, it was scheduled to be divided. At the time of the division of the property Douglass went through high excitement and deep anxiety thinking of his uncertain destiny. In addition to the pain of separation, there was the horrid dread of falling into the hands of Master Andrew, a most cruel drunkard who had by his reckless mismanagement wasted a large portion of his father's property.

Douglass suffered more anxiety than most of his fellow slaves when they were marked for division. So far he had never tasted in his back the bloody lashes of the callous masters. His old master and mistress had been very kind to him, for from them he had got few whippings. Douglas says that few slaves could boast of having such a kind master and mistress as he had. The thought of being transferred from their hands into the hands of Master Andrew, the cruelest wretch, made him anxious beyond limit. He had already witnessed the wretched master's bloody nature when the latter took his little brother by throat and threw him on the ground and stamped upon his head with his boot.

By God's grace, Douglass fell to the share of Mrs. Lucretia and he was immediately sent back to Baltimore to live again in the family of Master Hugh. Their joy knew no bound at his return. It was a glad day for Douglas because he felt as if he had escaped a lion's jaw.

Soon after Douglas' return to Baltimore his mistress Lucretia died and in a very short time after her death her brother master Andrew also died and all the property of the old master including the slaves and the cattle delved on the hands of strangers. Not a slave was left free including both the youngest and the oldest. This deepened Douglas' conviction of the infernal character of slavery. It was the base ingratitude of the slave holders to Douglas' poor old grandmother that filled him with utter loathing. She had served Douglas' old master faithfully from youth to old age. She had been the source of all his wealth. She had peopled his

plantation with slaves. She had become a great grand mother in his service. She had served him from his cradle to the grave and she was nevertheless left a slave for life in the hands of strangers. Her present owners finding her of no value took her to the woods and left her there in a hut to live in perfect loneliness. This was the climax of the base ingratitude and fiendish barbarity of the slave holders.

In this connection the narrator mentions John Greenleaf whittler's poem which reflects the poet's opposition to slavery. In the poem he laments "gone gone sold and gone" which reflects the mental anguish of a slave mother at all her daughters having been sold by the cruel slave owners.

Douglass' grand mother was left to grope in the darkness of age in the lonely hut in the woods for a drink of water. Weighed down by the needful time, his poor old grandmother was left all alone and died. There was none of her children or grandchildren present to wipe from her the cold sweat of death or to bury her.

Douglas underwent another most painful separation. It was when Mr. Master Thomas, the widower of Mrs. Lucretia took him from master Hugh to live with himself at saint Michael where he was living after his remarriage. However it was not as severe as the one Douglas dreaded at the division of property because a great change had taken place in Master Hugh and his once kind and affectionate wife. The influence of brandy upon Hugh and of slavery upon his wife had changed the characters of both. Therefore Douglas felt that he had nothing to lose by the separation. But he felt the strongest attachment to the little Baltimore boys. He had received many lessons from them. Hence Douglas pained at the thought of leaving them.

When he was summoned to Saint Michael, Douglass regretted that he did not at least make an attempt to carry out his resolution to run away. Sailing for Saint Michael, Douglas paid particular attention to the direction of the steamboat. He found that, instead of going down, the steam boats went up the bay in a north-easterly direction. Douglas considered this knowledge of great importance. His determination to run away was again revived. He waited for a favourable opportunity. When that came, he was determined to escape.

Comprehension

1. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences.

- a. 'It was therefore necessary to have valuation of the property.' What made it necessary? What does property mean here?

Douglass's old master's youngest son Richard and his old master Captain Antony died. Only the master's son Andrew and daughter Lucretia survived to share his estate. The master had left no will as to the disposal of his property. It was therefore necessary to have a valuation of his property so that it might be equally divided between his heirs. Here the word property means slaves. Slaves were treated as a commodity traded like cattle in auction houses.

- b. What did Douglass feel when he was sent for to be valued? How did he reach the place of his birth?

When Douglass was sent for to be valued, his feelings rose up in detestation of slavery and he had a new conception of his degraded condition. His heart was overborne with sadness and apprehension. He took passage with Captain Rowe on board a sailing vessel, Wild Cat. Soon he reached the place of his birth.

- c. How was the property valued after captain Antony's death?

At the valuation of property after captain Antony's death, men and women, old and young were valued like horses, cattle and pigs.

- d. 'I saw more clearly than ever the brutalizing effects of slavery...' says Douglass. Explain the situation.

Slaves were treated as a commodity like cattle, horses and pigs to be traded in auction. It was then that Douglass realized the brutalizing effect of slavery.

- e. What contributed to the excitement and anxiety that Douglass went through at the time of the division of his old master's property?

At the time of the division of the property Douglass went through high excitement and deep anxiety thinking of his uncertain destiny. In addition to the pain of separation, there was the horrid dread of falling into the hands of Master Andrew, a most cruel drunkard.

- f. What sort of a master was Andrew?

Master Andrew was a most cruel drunkard who had by his reckless mismanagement wasted a large portion of his father's property.

- g. What made Douglass anxious about his fate, if Andrew turned out to be his master?

If Andrew, the cruel drunken wretch, turned out to be his master, he would have to bear the brunt of his whip.

- h. 'I had escaped a worse than lion's jaw.' Who is the lion here? What paved the way for his escape?

The lion under reference is Andrew, the cruel drunken slave holder. At the time of the division of old master's property, Douglass fell to the share of Mrs. Lucretia and he was immediately sent back to Baltimore to live again in the family of Master Hugh. Their joy knew no bound at his return. It was a glad day for Douglas because he felt as if he had escaped a lion's jaw.

- i. What experience of Douglass deepened his conviction of the infernal character of Slavery?

After the death of Lucretia and Andrew, all the property of the old master including the slaves and the cattle delved on the hands of strangers. Not a slave was left free including both the youngest and the oldest. This deepened Douglas' conviction of the infernal character of slavery. It was the base ingratitude of the slave holders to Douglas' poor old grandmother that filled him with utter loathing.

- j. Who is Whittler? What does he lament in the poem, 'Gone, gone, sold and gone'?

John Greenleaf Whittler is an American slave poet. In the poem "Gone, gone, sold and gone" he laments the mental anguish of a slave mother at all her daughters having been sold by the cruel slave owners. Master Thomas' misunderstanding with master Hugh caused the separation.

- k. 'Here I underwent another most painful separation.' What caused the separation? Why was it not so severe as the one he dreaded at the division of property?

Douglas underwent another most painful separation. It was when Mr. Master Thomas, the widower of Mrs. Lucretia, took him from Master Hugh to live with himself at Saint Michael where he was living after his remarriage. However it was not as severe as the one Douglas dreaded at the division of property because a great change had taken place in Master Hugh and his once kind and affectionate wife.

- l. Why was Douglass pained at the thought of leaving the little Baltimore boys?

Douglas felt the strongest attachment to the little Baltimore boys, for he had received many lessons from them. Hence Douglas pained at the thought of leaving them.

- m. What did Douglass regret when summoned to St Michael's?

When he was summoned to Saint Michael, Douglass regretted that he did not at least make an attempt to carry out his resolution to run away.

Paragraph questions

- a. Narrate Douglass's account of the valuation and the division of property.

'Narrative of the life of Frederic Douglass' begins with the description of the events that followed soon after the narrator went to live at Baltimore, a largest city in the US state of Maryland. As soon as Douglass reached there, his old master's youngest son Richard died and within a short time his old master captain Antony also died, leaving only his son Andrew and daughter Lucretia to share his estate. He had left no will as to the disposal of his property. It was therefore necessary to have a valuation of his property so that it might be equally divided between his heirs. Along with the property, Douglass, the slave, was also sent for to be valued. When it was done, his feelings rose up in detestation of slavery and he had a new conception of his degraded condition. Douglass suffered more anxiety than most of his fellow slaves when they were marked for division.

- b. What are the brutalizing effects of slavery as revealed in the 'Narrative'?

In 'Narrative of Life of Frederick Douglass', the narrator, Frederick Douglass, gives an account of the brutalizing effects of slavery. It reveals the violence, brutality, social injustice and dehumanization that slavery brings upon the victim. The slaves were called property, a commodity, or household goods. They were traded like cattle in the auction houses and were subjected to all sorts

of inhuman treatment. Slaves were mercilessly punished for no reason; punishments were whipping (often 50 to 100 lashes), branding, ducking under water, slapping, kicking, tarring and feathering and tying up. Run away slaves were chased by dogs and when caught, were whipped or their body parts such as ears were cut off as punishment.

c. Write a paragraph on the infernal character of slavery that the 'Narrative' reveals in Douglass's account of his grandmother's fate.

Soon after Douglas's return to Baltimore his mistress Lucretia died and in a very short time after her death her brother master Andrew also died and all the property of the old master including the slaves and the cattle delved on the hands of strangers. Not a slave was left free including both the youngest and the oldest. This deepened Douglas's conviction of the infernal character of slavery. It was the base ingratitude of the slave holders to Douglas's poor old grandmother that filled him with utter loathing. She had served Douglas's old master faithfully from youth to old age. She had been the source of all his wealth. She had peopled his plantation with slaves. She had become a great grand mother in his service. She had served him from his cradle to the grave and she was nevertheless left a slave for life in the hands of strangers. Her present owners finding her of no value took her to the woods and left her there in a hut to live in perfect loneliness. This was the climax of the base ingratitude and fiendish barbarity of the slave holders.

3. Answer the following in not more than 300 words:

Discuss the violence, brutality, social injustice and dehumanization of slaves that slavery brings upon the victim as revealed in 'Narrative of the Life of Frederic Douglass, An American Slave'.

'Narrative of the Life of Frederic Douglass, An American Slave' published in 1845 is the first of a series of autobiographies that Douglass wrote and it stands apart from the other slave narratives that appeared during the period for its simplicity and honesty. The present essay forms the eighth chapter of his much acclaimed autobiography. It sheds light on the brutalizing effect and infernal character of slavery. It reveals the violence, brutality, social injustice and dehumanization that slavery brings upon the victim. The slaves were called property, a commodity, or household goods. They were traded like cattle in the auction houses and were subjected to all sorts of inhuman treatment. Slaves were mercilessly punished for no reason; punishments were whipping (often 50 to 100 lashes), branding, ducking under water, slapping, kicking, tarring and feathering and tying up. Run away slaves were chased by dogs and when caught, were whipped or their body parts such as ears were cut off as punishment.

Narrative begins with the description of the events that followed soon after the narrator went to live at Baltimore. As soon as Douglass reached there, Douglass's old master's youngest son Richard and his old master Captain Antony died. Only the master's son Andrew and daughter Lucretia survived to share his estate. The master had left no will as to the disposal of his property. It was therefore necessary to have a valuation of the property so that it might be equally divided between his heirs. Along with the property, Douglass, the slave, was also

sent for to be valued. His feelings rose up in detestation of slavery. His heart was overborne with sadness and apprehension. He took passage with Captain Rowe on board a sailing vessel, Wild Cat. Soon he reached the place of his birth from where he had been absent for almost five years. He was only about five years old when he left his native village to go and live with his old master on Colonel Lloyd's plantation. At the valuation, men and women, old and young were ranked with horses, cattle and pigs. It was then that Douglass realized the brutalizing effect of slavery.

At the time of the division of the property Douglass went through deep anxiety thinking of his uncertain destiny. In addition to the pain of separation, there was the horrid dread of falling into the hands of Master Andrew, a most cruel drunkard. So far Douglass had never tasted on his back the bloody lashes of the callous masters. His old master and mistress had been very kind to him, for from them he had got few whippings. The thought of being transferred from their hands into the hands of Master Andrew, made him anxious. He had already witnessed the wretched master's bloody nature when the latter took his little brother by throat and threw him on the ground and stamped upon his head with his boot. By God's grace, Douglass fell to the share of Mrs. Lucretia and he was sent back to Baltimore to live again in the family of Master Hugh. Douglas felt as if he had escaped a lion's jaw.

Soon after the death of Lucretia and her brother master Andrew, all the property of the old master including the slaves delved on the hands of strangers. Not a slave was left free. This deepened Douglas' conviction of the infernal character of slavery. It was the base ingratitude of the slave holders to Douglas' poor old grandmother that filled him with utter loathing. She had served Douglas' old master faithfully from youth to old age. She had been the source of all his wealth. She had peopled his plantation with slaves. She had become a great grand mother in his service. She had served him from his cradle to the grave and she was nevertheless left a slave for life in the hands of strangers. Her present owners finding her of no value took her to the woods and left her there in a hut to live in perfect loneliness. There was none of her children or grandchildren present to wipe from her the cold sweat of death or to bury her. This was the climax of the base ingratitude and fiendish barbarity of the slave holders.

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When he was summoned to Saint Michael, Douglass regretted that he did not at least make an attempt to carry out his resolution to run away. Sailing for Saint Michael, Douglas paid particular attention to the direction of the steamboat. He found that, instead of going down, the steam boats went up the bay in a north-easterly direction. Douglas considered this knowledge of great importance. His determination to run away was again revived. He waited for a favourable opportunity. When that came, he was determined to escape. The narrative gives expression to the violence, brutality, social injustice and dehumanization that slavery brings upon the victims.

2. TOYS

Roland Barthes

About the Author

Roland Barthes (pronounced, roll-ah-ng) (1915 – 80) was a French literary theorist, philosopher and critic. His writings on semiotics (the study of symbols and signs) were largely responsible for the growth of leading intellectual movements like structuralism and New Criticism. He was a major influence in the development of prominent schools of theory such as semiotics, existentialism, Marxism and post-structuralism. His work with structuralism focused on revealing the importance of language in writing. He made a breakthrough in culture studies, viewing specific cultural materials – soap advertisements, wrestling matches, toys, women’s magazines - as myths, thereby exposing how the bourgeois society asserted its values through them. His works include, *Writing Degree Zero*, *Mythologies*, *Elements of Semiology*, *The Empire of Signs*, *The Pleasure of the Text*, *Roland Barthes*, *A Lover’s Discourse*, etc. Barthes died at the age of 64 from injuries suffered after being struck by an automobile.

Summary of the passage

Roland Barthes “Toys” is an analysis of the cultural significance of children’s playthings. According to Barthes the adult French man sees the child as another self. All the toys are commonly seen essentially a microcosm of the adult world. They are all reduced copies of human objects. Barthes pities that the elders belittle the child. We create for children a small world that goes with their size, underestimating their imaginative capabilities and power of creativity. Since the child is a minor by law, she/he does not enjoy the right to take decisions and everything is decided for her/him.

In Barthes view, French toys always mean something that is always entirely socialized, constituted by the myths or the techniques of modern adult life. To illustrate, toys usually consist of an assortment of the miniature items of the Army, Broadcasting, the post office, medicine, school, hairstyling, the Air Force Transport and science.

The French toys literally represent the world of adult functions. This fact obviously prepares the child to accept them all without any thought. The world of the adult is thrust upon the child. The child is forced to accept the social environment silently without questioning. This is what Barthes means when he refers to “the alibi of a nature which all the time created soldiers, postman and vespas. Toys here reveal the list of all the things the adult usually finds. Barthes says that toys are like Jevaro head (pronounced as hee-var-o). The Jevaro are one of the most feared tribes in South America. They have the war custom of

cutting their enemies' head and also shrinking this human head to the size of a ball. The toy like head could still be recognized as that of an adult. Toys are like Jevero head in the sense that the toys which stands for an object, say a revolver, may still be recognized as a revolver. The toys thus initiate the child into a world of adulthood. For example, replica of kitchen appliances and the dolls which urinate whisper to the girl that her fate is tied to the expressive role of a house wife. In other words, the dolls given to the little girl prepares her for the casualty of housekeeping. They condition her to future role as a mother.

Barthes describes modern toys as faithful and complicated objects. This is because the child only used the toys as an owner and not as a creator, he does not invent the world he uses it. The toys are prepared for him. They are actions without adventure, wonder and joy. They are supplied to him readymade and he is never allowed to discover anything. French toys are thus meant to produce children who are users and not creators.

Roland Barthes analyses toys as a text and brings out the underlying ideology and the cultural significance of children's playthings. In the course of his observation Barthes makes a distinction between building sets which are designed as toys and other common toys. France is the second largest toy market in the Europe but kids' building sets enjoy only marginal sales in France. Barthes describes modern toys as faithful and complicated objects because the child only uses them as an owner and not as a creator, he does not invent the world, he uses it. Building sets differ from toys in the sense that it develops the child's creativity and allows the child to discover something and create meaningful objects. Other toys do not allow the child this benefit. The set of blocks implies a very different learning of the world. The actions that the child performs with such toys are not those of a user but those of a creator who fashions the sensible world in the light of eternal ideas. From the building sets the child creates forms which walk or rolls. He creates life itself. But Barthes laments that such toys are rather rare

Both in the form and in the substance toys signify bourgeois ideology. Current toys are molded from the plastic materials. They are the product of chemistry and not of nature. They have the appearance of hygienic but it destroys all the pleasure, the sweetness and the humanity of touch. Wood as a material for making toy is gradually disappearing. Barthes considers wood as a familiar and poetic substances. It does not sever the child from the close contact with the tree. Wood does not wound or breakdown. It does not shatter. It can last a long time, it lives with the child. Wood makes objects for all time. Yet currently there hardly remain any of these wooden toys. Toys are chemical in substance and colour. Their very material introduces one to a feeling of use, not of pleasure. These toys die infact very quickly and it is incapable of bringing of fond memories of childhood.

1. Answer the following the questions in a two or three sentences each

A. Why does Barthes state that the adult French man sees the child as another self?

According to Barthes the adult French man sees the child as another self because all the toys are commonly seen essentially a microcosm of the adult world. They are all reduced copies of human objects.

b. What do French toys mean, according to Barthes?

In Barthes view French toys always mean something that is always entirely socialized, constituted by the myths or the techniques of modern adult life.

c. What does Barthes mean when he refers to “the alibi of a nature which has at all times created soldiers, postman and Vespas?

The French toys literally represent the world of adult functions. This fact obviously prepares the child to accept them all without any thought. The world of the adult is thrust upon the child. The child is forced to accept the social environment silently without questioning. This is what Barthes means when he refers to “the alibi of a nature which all the time created soldiers, postman and vespas

d. French toys are like a Jevaro head. What is a jevaro head? How is it similar to the toys?

Barthes says that toys are like Jevaro head. The Jevaros are one of the most feared tribes in South America. They have the war custom of cutting their enemies' head and also shrinking it to the size of a ball. The toy-like head could still be recognized as that of an adult. Toys are like Jevaroes head in the sense that the toys which stands for an object, say a revolver, may still be recognized as a revolver.

e. 'It is not so much, infact, the imitation which is a sign of abdication, as its literalness.' Explain this statement.

The statement means that the French toys, infact, express love for war, bureaucracy, ugliness etc.

f. What message do dolls indirectly convey to the little girl?

The dolls given to the little girl prepares her for the casualty of house keeping. They condition her to future role as a mother.

g. Why does Barthes describe modern toys as faithful and complicated objects?

Barthes describes modern toys as faithful and complicated objects because the child only used the toys as an owner and not as a creator, he does not invent the world he uses it.

h. How do building sets differ from other toys?

Building sets differ from other toys in the sense that it develops the child's creativity and allows the child to discover something and create meaningful objects. Other toys do not allow the child this benefit.

i. 'But such toys are rare.' What is referred to here? How do they benefit the child?

The reference is to the 'building sets' designed as toys for children. Such toys develop the child's creativity and allow the child to discover something and create meaningful objects.

j. Why does Barthes oppose plastic toys?

Current toys are molded from the plastic materials. They are the product of chemistry and not of nature. They have the appearance of hygienic but it destroys all the pleasure, the sweetness and the humanity of touch. That is why Barthes opposes plastic toys.

k. Modern toys offer no pleasure. Why?

Modern toys are chemical in substance and colour. Their very material introduces one to a feeling of use, not of pleasure. They are the product of chemistry and not of nature.

1. Answer the following the questions in a paragraph

a. What are the limitations of present-day toys?

Current toys are molded from the plastic materials. They are the product of chemistry and not of nature. They have the appearance of hygienic but it destroys all the pleasure, the sweetness and the humanity of touch. Wood as a material for making toy is gradually disappearing. Barthes considers wood as a familiar and poetic substances. It does not sever the child from the close contact with the tree. Wood does not wound or breakdown. It does not shatter. It can last a long time, it lives with the child. Wood makes objects for all time. Yet currently there hardly remain any of these wooden toys. Toys are chemical in substance and colour. Their very material introduces one to a feeling of use, not of pleasure. These toys die infact very quickly and it is incapable of bringing of fond memories of childhood. Unlike building sets, other current toys neither develop the child's creativity nor allow the child to discover anything. They do not allow the child to create meaningful objects.

b. Why does Barthes favour the use of wood in the production of toys?

Wood as a material for making toy is gradually disappearing. Barthes considers wood as a familiar and poetic substances. It does not sever the child from the close contact with the tree. Wood does not wound or breakdown. It does not shatter. It can last a long time, it lives with the child. Wood makes objects for all time. there hardly remain any of these wooden toys. Current toys are chemical in substance and colour. Their very material introduces one to a feeling of use, not of pleasure. These toys die infact very quickly and it is incapable of bringing of fond memories of childhood. That is why Barthes favours the use of wood in the production of toys.

c. What are Barthes' views on building sets as toys?

In his essay 'Toys', Roland Barthes analyses toys as a text and brings out the underlying ideology and the cultural significance of children's playthings. In the course of his observation Barthes makes a distinction between building sets which are designed as toys and other common toys. France is the second largest

toy market in the Europe but kids' building sets enjoy only marginal sales in France. Barthes describes modern toys as faithful and complicated objects because the child only uses them as an owner and not as a creator, he does not invent the world, he uses it. Building sets differ from toys in the sense that it develops the child's creativity and allows the child to discover something and create meaningful objects. Other toys do not allow the child this benefit. The set of blocks implies a very different learning of the world. The actions that the child performs with such toys are not those of a user but those of a creator who fashions the sensible world in the light of eternal ideas. From the building sets the child creates forms which walk or rolls. He creates life itself. But Barthes laments that such toys are rather rare.

111. Answer in not more than 300 words.

a. 'Toys' is an analysis of the cultural significance of children's playthings. Discuss.

Roland Barthes "Toys" is an analysis of the cultural significance of children's playthings. According to Barthes the adult French man sees the child as another self. All the toys are commonly seen essentially a microcosm of the adult world. They are all reduced copies of human objects. Barthes pities that the elders belittle the child. We create for children a small world that goes with their size, underestimating their imaginative capabilities and power of creativity. Since the child is a minor by law, she/he does not enjoy the right to take decisions and everything is decided for her/him.

In Barthes view, French toys always mean something that is always entirely socialized in the adult point of view. Toys usually consist of an assortment of the miniature items of the Army, Broadcasting, the post office, medicine, school, hairstyling, the Air Force Transport and science.

The French toys literally represent the world of adult functions. This fact obviously prepares the child to accept them all without any thought. The world of the adult is thrust upon the child. The child is forced to accept the social environment silently without questioning. Toys reveal the list of all the things the adult usually finds. Barthes says that toys are like Jevaro head in the sense that they could still be recognized as the object which it stands for. The toys thus initiate the child into a world of adulthood. For example, the dolls given to the little girl prepares her for the casualty of house keeping. They condition her to future role as a mother.

Barthes describes modern toys as faithful and complicated objects. This is because the child only used the toys as an owner and not as a creator, he does not invent the world he uses it. The toys are prepared for him. They are actions without adventure, wonder and joy. They are supplied to him readymade and he is never allowed to discover anything. French toys are thus meant to produce children who are users and not creators.

In the course of his observation Barthes makes a distinction between building sets which are designed as toys and other common toys. France is the second largest toy market in the Europe but kids' building sets enjoy only

marginal sales in France. Barthes describes modern toys as faithful and complicated objects because the child only uses them as an owner and not as a creator, he does not invent the world, he uses it. Building sets differ from toys in the sense that it develops the child's creativity and allows the child to discover something and create meaningful objects. Other toys do not allow the child this benefit. The set of blocks implies a very different learning of the world. The actions that the child performs with such toys are not those of a user but those of a creator who fashions the sensible world in the light of eternal ideas. From the building sets the child creates forms which walk or rolls. He creates life itself. But Barthes laments that such toys are rather rare.

According to Barthes toys signify bourgeois ideology. Current toys are moulded from the plastic materials. They are the product of chemistry and not of nature. They have the appearance of hygienic but it destroys all the pleasure, the sweetness and the humanity of touch. Barthes considers wood as a familiar and poetic substance. But wood as a material for making toy is gradually disappearing. It does not sever the child from the close contact with the tree. Wood does not wound or breakdown. It does not shatter. It can last a long time. It lives with the child. Wood makes objects for all time. There hardly remains any of these wooden toys. Toys are chemical in substance and colour. Their very material introduces one to a feeling of use, not of pleasure. These toys die in fact very quickly and it is incapable of bringing fond memories of childhood.

3. DISCRIMINATION AND EQUALITY

Andrew Clapham

About the Author

Andrew Clapham was born in Turnbridge Wells in England. He is an expert in human rights, international courts and tribunals, international humanitarian law, international organizations and the UN. He is currently the director of the Geneva Academy of international Humanitarian Law and Human Rights. He also serves as professor of Public International Law at the Graduate Institute of international and development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. He teaches international human rights law and public international law. Prior to joining the institute in 1997, he was the representative of the Amnesty International at the United Nations in New York. Clapham has worked as Special Advisor on corporate Responsibility to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Advisor on International Humanitarian Law to the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Iraq. He is the author of *Human Rights Obligations of Non-state Actors and International Human Rights Lexicon*.

Summary

Andrew Clapham's 'Discrimination and Equality' forms the eighth chapter of his book "*A Very Short Introduction to Human Rights*". It traces the prohibited grounds of discrimination and the emerging areas of human rights. The two concepts which form the philosophical basis for universal human rights are: (1) human beings are born equal in dignity and rights and (2) all human beings have to be treated with equal concern and respect. Despite the prevalence of inequalities at birth, we can ensure social justice to the marginalized social groups by designing a system to give everyone equal access to opportunities and redistributing resources so that the disadvantaged sections of the society achieve equality. These philosophical approach to the human rights provides much of the strength and stability for the human rights rules on discrimination with a view to achieve greater social justice.

The emerging areas of human rights are anti-slavery movement, feminist movement, anti-colonial movement, anti-apartheid and anti-racist movement. Discrimination is also central to the concept of genocide (the deliberate and systematic destruction of an ethnic, racial or religious or national group). The injustice that stems on account of one's gender, colour, or religion formed the human rights to non discriminations in its present form. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed in 1948 states that "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedom without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, politics, or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status".

International and national rules have extended the scope of non-discrimination obligation to most areas of life. Both the private and public

agencies are to be prohibited from practicing discrimination on any grounds. The UN committees responsible for monitoring legal obligations under the Covenants of 1966 have extended the non-discrimination obligation to prohibit discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, health status, physical and mental disability and nationality. However, in some cases drawing a distinction between people on a particular ground may be justified. For example, religious schools may limit employment to followers of the relevant faith. Age discrimination provides another example. An Australian Airline pilot Mr. Love complained to the UN Human Rights Committee that his compulsory retirement at the age of sixty was unlawful discrimination. First, the committee determined that age could be considered as a prohibited ground of discrimination and considered that age was 'prohibited statuses'. Second, it was noted that a mandatory retirement age provides workers protection by limiting lifelong working time. Third, the distinction made on the basis of age has a legitimate aim of maximizing safety to passengers and others. Thus every differentiation does not incur the vice of discrimination.

One of the emerging areas of human rights concerns the same sex marriage. Even before the legalization of human rights on international level, the South African constitutional court favored two women who wanted to get married to each other. It was held that an egalitarian society embraces everyone and accepts people for who they are. To penalize people on the basis of caste, class or gender is an instance of violation of equality. Equality means equal concern and respect across difference. Equality therefore does not imply a leveling or homogenization of behavior, but an acknowledgement and acceptance of difference.

With respect to non-nationals distinctions are justified as proportionate to a legitimate aim in the practice of human rights. At one level, discrimination against non-nationals is a form of racism which is offensive and irrational. At another level, it is legitimate on the ground that it can control immigration and may limit access to employment, health care or education, human rights principles demand that any such distinctions are justified as proportionate to a legitimate aim. For example, 'A rule that excludes foreigners from obtaining employment with secret service ensures national security. Rules that demand higher university fee from foreigners ensures access to education for the local tax paying population. Migrant workers are protected by a specialized convention and by a number of international opinions and interpretative statements.

Another major area of human rights concerns human trafficking. Human trafficking exposes its victims for further abuses in the country of destination. They are subjected to forced labour and inhuman treatment. This illustrates how human rights frame work is moving away from a simple focus on equality to develop new protection. In 2000, a new treaty was adopted to 'prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons'. The treaty addresses traffickers who use deception or coercion in their recruitment of transportation of persons. Their purpose is various forms of exploitation such as sexual exploitation, forced labour, or slavery or removal of organs. The treaty states that the consent of the victim is irrelevant. The treaty focuses on creating criminal jurisdiction over the

traffickers. The treaty is vague in its demands that the receiving country considers adopting measures for protecting the trafficked women. In some cases they are exposed to further risks in their own country. Thus the promise of human rights is proving to be meaningless in the case of the victims of trafficking.

Migrant workers and the victims of trafficking have no right to enter a country or have access to the employment markets. The discrimination principles rely on the idea of a comparator. Human rights are violated when some one is treated less favorably than someone else in a comparable position. But there is a risk involved when a comparator is absent.

Women who are discriminated against for being pregnant or minorities whose culture risk extinction may find that discrimination principles are of little use. A further problem relates to affirmative action. Human rights principles do allow for positive discrimination in the context of racial and sex discrimination. But it has the risk of being challenged as fresh forms of discrimination. The acceptability of any affirmative action depends on the context. Besides different societies have different priorities with regard to the policy of protective discrimination.

In spite of the above discussed fundamental difficulties with the concept of non-discrimination, human rights framework and notion of equality have been adopted to create a powerful campaign to deal with violence against women.

1. Answer the following in two or three sentences.

a. State the two concepts which form the philosophical basis for universal human rights?

The two concepts which form the philosophical basis for universal human rights are : (1) human beings are born equal in dignity and rights and (2) all human beings have to be treated with equal concern and respect.

b. Despite inequalities at birth, how can we ensure social justice to the disadvantaged social groups?

Despite the prevalence of inequalities at birth, we can ensure social justice to the marginalized social groups by designing a system to give everyone equal access to opportunities and redistributing resources

c. How does same-sex marriage come under the purview of human rights?

Same-sex marriage comes under the purview of human rights on the ground that it is unlawful to maintain prejudice on the basis of any distinctions such as gender, class or caste. The law bans discrimination with respect to the enjoyment of civil and political rights.

d. 'Distinctions are justified as proportionate to a legitimate aim, in the practice of human rights.' Give two examples with respect to non-nationals.

With respect to non-nationals, distinctions are justified as proportionate to a legitimate aim in the practice of human rights. For example, 'A rule that excludes foreigners from obtaining employment with secret service ensures national

security. Rules that demand higher university fee from foreigners ensures access to education for the local tax paying population.

e. What should the states be vigilant about with respect to non- national employees?

The states should be vigilant about with respect to non- national employees in the matter of rules. For example, 'A rule that excludes foreigners from obtaining employment with secret service ensures national security. Rules that demand higher university fee from foreigners ensures access to education for the local tax paying population.

f. What does the treaty signed in 2000 to check human trafficking address?

In 2000, a new treaty was adopted to 'prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons'. The treaty addresses traffickers who use deception or coercion in their recruitment of transportation of persons.

g. What are the special features of the treaty that addresses trafficking?

The treaty states that the consent of the victim is irrelevant. The treaty focuses on creating criminal jurisdiction over the traffickers. The treaty is vague in its demands that the receiving country considers adopting measures for protecting the trafficked women.

h. Discrimination principles rely on the principles of a comparator'. What is a comparator? What is the risk involved when a comparator is absent?

The discrimination principles rely on the idea of a comparator. Human rights are violated when some one is treated less favorably than someone else in a comparable position. But there is a risk involved when a comparator is absent. A comparator is the mechanism for making comparison.

i. What is affirmative action? What is the limitation of affirmative action with regard to human rights?

Affirmative action implies an action whereby human rights principles do allow for positive discrimination in the context of racial and sex discrimination. But it has the risk of being challenged as fresh forms of discrimination.

j. How have women been benefited by the universal nature of human rights?

One of the most powerful features of the human rights frame work is that human rights are universal i.e., all people have equal rights by virtue of being human. It ensures women of their basic human rights such as adult franchise and protection from violence.

1. Answer the following in a Paragraph.

a. What are the emerging areas of human rights?

Andrew Clapham's 'Discrimination and Equality' traces the prohibited grounds of discrimination and the emerging areas of human rights. The emerging areas of human rights are anti-slavery movement, feminist movement, anti-colonial movement, anti-apartheid and anti-racist movement. Discrimination is also central to the concept of genocide (the deliberate and

systematic destruction of an ethnic, racial or religious or national group). The injustice that stems on account of one's gender, colour, or religion formed the human right to non discriminations in its present form. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed in 1948 states that "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedom without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, politics, or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status". One of the emerging areas of human rights concerns the same sex marriage. An egalitarian society embraces everyone and accepts people for who they are. To penalize people on the basis of caste, class or gender is an instance of violation of equality. Equality means equal concern and respect across difference. Equality therefore does not imply a leveling or homogenization of behavior, but an acknowledgement and acceptance of difference.

b. '.....not every differentiation incurs the vice of discrimination' illustrate.

In the essay 'Discrimination and Equality' Andrew Clapham affirms that not every differentiation incurs the vice of discrimination. He illustrates this with some examples. With respect to non-nationals distinctions are justified as proportionate to a legitimate aim in the practice of human rights. At one level, discrimination against non-nationals is a form of racism which is offensive and irrational. At another level, it is legitimate on the ground that it can control immigration and may limit access to employment, health care or education, human rights principles demand that any such distinctions are justified as proportionate to a legitimate aim. For example, 'A rule that excludes foreigners from obtaining employment with secret service ensures national security. Rules that demand higher university fee from foreigners ensures access to education for the local tax paying population. Migrant workers are protected by a specialized convention and by a number of international opinions and interpretative statements.

c. What are the two levels of approaches with respect to the human rights issues of foreigners?

There are two levels of approaches with respect to the human rights issues of foreigners. At one level, discrimination against non-nationals is a form of racism which is offensive and irrational. At another level, it is legitimate on the ground that it can control immigration and may limit access to employment, health care or education, human rights principles demand that any such distinctions are justified as proportionate to a legitimate aim. For example, 'A rule that excludes foreigners from obtaining employment with secret service ensures national security. Rules that demand higher university fee from foreigners ensures access to education for the local tax paying population. Migrant workers are protected by a specialized convention and by a number of international opinions and interpretative statements.

d. What are Clapham's views on trafficking and abuse of human rights?

One of the major areas of human rights that Andrew Clapham discussed in his essay 'Discrimination and Equality' concerns human trafficking and abuse of human rights. . Human trafficking exposes its victims for further abuses in the

country of destination. They are subjected to forced labour and inhuman treatment. This illustrates how human rights frame work is moving away from a simple focus on equality to develop new protection. In 2000, a new treaty was adopted to 'prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons'. The treaty addresses traffickers who use deception or coercion in their recruitment of transportation of persons. Their purpose is various forms of exploitation such as sexual exploitation, forced labour, or slavery or removal of organs. The treaty states that the consent of the victim is irrelevant. The treaty focuses on creating criminal jurisdiction over the traffickers. The treaty is vague in its demands that the receiving country considers adopting measures for protecting the trafficked women. In some cases they are exposed to further risks in their own country. Thus the promise of human rights is proving to be meaningless in the case of the victims of trafficking.

3. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

What are the new areas that human rights should cover to establish equality?

All men and women are born equal in dignity and right. The saying "some are born great, others achieve greatness and greatness is thrust upon some others" has no relevance at all today. By virtue of being human every one deserves equal concern and rights. There are laws, national as well as international which ban discrimination with respect to the enjoyment of civil and political rights. It is unlawful to maintain prejudice on the basis of gender, colour and religion. It is the duty of the government as well as the non-governmental agencies to safeguard the interest of the people in the event of human rights violation. This is the spirit of human rights embodied in the Universal Declaration Human Rights(UDHR) and in the international human rights law.

Andrew Clapham's 'Discrimination and Equality' traces the prohibited grounds of discrimination and the emerging areas of human rights. The two concepts which form the philosophical basis for universal human rights are: (1) human beings are born equal in dignity and rights and (2) all human beings have to be treated with equal concern and respect. Despite the prevalence of inequalities at birth, we can ensure social justice to the marginalized social groups by designing a system to give everyone equal access to opportunities and redistributing resources so that the disadvantaged sections of the society achieve equality. These philosophical approach to the human rights provides much of the strength and stability for the human rights rules on discrimination with a view to achieve greater social justice.

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One of the emerging areas of human rights concerns the same sex marriage. An egalitarian society embraces everyone and accepts people for who they are. To penalize people on the basis of caste, class or gender is an instance of violation of equality. Equality means equal concern and respect across difference. Equality therefore does not imply a leveling or homogenization of behavior, but an acknowledgement and acceptance of difference.

Another major area of human rights concerns human trafficking. Human trafficking exposes its victims for further abuses in the country of destination. They are subjected to forced labour and inhuman treatment. In 2000, a new treaty was adopted to ‘prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons’. The treaty states that the consent of the victim is irrelevant and focuses on creating criminal jurisdiction over the traffickers. In some cases the victims are exposed to further risks in their own country. Thus the promise of human rights is proving to be meaningless in the case of the victims of trafficking.

Women who are discriminated against for being pregnant or minorities whose culture risk extinction may find that discrimination principles are of little use. A further problem relates to affirmative action. Human rights principles do allow for positive discrimination in the context of racial and sex discrimination. But it has the risk of being challenged as fresh forms of discrimination. The acceptability of any affirmative action depends on the context.

A discussion of human rights assumes importance in the global context. It will prove productive in the fight against human rights violation. Andrew Clapham’s ‘Discrimination and Equality’ will make this discussion an informed one.

4. SO I BECAME A MINISTER

Vijayalakshmi Pandit

About the Author

Vijayalakshmi Nehru Pandit (1900-90) was the daughter of Motilal Nehru and the sister of Jawaharlal Nehru. She was one of the leading women in public life of the twentieth century. She was the first woman minister of British India. She served as the Indian ambassador to the Soviet Union, the US, Mexico, Ireland and Spain and also the Indian High Commissioner to the UK. In 1953, she became the first woman president of the UN General Assembly. Ms. Pandit proved to the world that women were also capable of undertaking responsible posts that had so far remained the monopoly of the male. She had a strong conviction that the progress and prosperity of the world depended on the advancement of women. She was a member of the Parliament from 1964 to 1968. Her contributions to the cause of women's advancement, as the president of All India Women's Conference (AIWC), were remarkable. In 1979, she published *The scope of Happiness: A Personal Memoir*.

About the Passage

In the prose piece 'so I Became A Minister', Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit shares her experience as a minister and as a woman. It reflects on the discrimination that women have to face. The author is of the opinion that even women in positions of power are incapable of escaping the severity of gender bias. She considers herself fortunate because there have never been an occasion in her life when she was bored. As a minister, she felt a special joy in facing and overcoming the difficulties, oppositions and criticism that stood in her way. Different factors worked in her favour. Hard work was the major one. She had a special ability to handle important and difficult task for which she had no training or previous experience. She joined the ministry with least hesitation. She states with pride "So I Became a Minister".

Summary of the Passage

Vijayalakshmi Pandit considers herself fortunate because there have never been an occasion in her life when she was bored. She felt a special joy in facing and overcoming the difficulties, oppositions and criticism that stood in her way. Different factors worked in her favour. Hard work was the major one. She had a special ability to handle important and difficult task for which she had no training or previous experience. She joined the ministry with least hesitation. She states with pride "So I Became a Minister".

Pandit's knowledge of a council in action was very limited. As a girl she had sat in the visitors' gallery in the assembly chamber when her father led the swaraj party opposition in the Assembly. Hence she had only a vague idea of the duties of a minister when she entered her office room for the first time. She was more interested in the room where she had to spend a good deal of her time. There was a large writing table in the centre of the room and a sofa against the wall. The rest of the space was occupied by innumerable chairs, small tables and book shelves. Ms. Pandit, therefore, equates her office to a second hand furniture shop. She asked the personal assistant to remove some of the unwanted furniture and the pink carpet from the room. She wanted to make sure that the flower vase was always filled with roses which she had seen growing

in plenty in the secretariat garden. But the caretaker suggested that she could not have flowers in her office as it had never been the custom. Upon this she ventured to go down the garden and pick some flowers. But since the idea of a cabinet minister cutting roses seemed strange, the caretaker hastily went out promising to bring the roses himself and from that day onwards it had become the custom to fill the flower vase with roses.

Having arranged the room, Pandit turned her thoughts into more important things. She looked through the files and chose one that looked less complicated than the rest. Having read it, she felt quite competent to pass an order. After this she went on to the next file and had dealt with several important matters.

Pandit always had an inferiority complex when confronted by tall people. So she was not pleased when her department secretary who was six feet tall came into her room. When she stood up to shake hands with him, she became conscious how short she was. In spite of her inferiority complex, she managed well in giving orders to him.

She had never met her Parliamentary Secretary. Therefore to deal with him seemed to her somewhat at difficult. Scarcely had she got used to daily dealings with the departmental secretary and the personal assistant, when the third man came in her path. She felt that all these men were not necessary. But again fortune came to her help. The Parliamentary Secretary soon fell in with her ways and after the first few days of adjustments, they were able to work in harmony.

During the days before the presentation of the budget in the house, Pandit was troubled by figures. As she had not learnt sufficient arithmetic, she wrote to her parliamentary secretary: "these figures alarm me". The parliamentary secretary instilled courage in her by replying that the home minister was to prepare to face battalions and mould the destiny of the nation.

Pandit gave no seriousness to the Assembly as it deserved because it consisted of men whom she had known from her childhood as clients and friends of her father. They never seemed to her as dangerous opponents. The views they represented belong to a comparatively small group. It seemed to her that they had limited vision. Therefore she was sure that the policy they opposed in the Assembly would injure themselves in the long run.

Pandit gives an account of her maiden speech. She had never before spoken in the assembly and felt slightly nervous as she sat waiting for the speaker to call her name. She remembered her father's advice not to be nervous. She suddenly gathered courage and stood up and spoke. The speech went smoothly and so the last remnants of stage fright vanished for ever.

Her first civic address gave her an insight into how things were managed in 'the ancient regime'. She had consented to receive an address from the municipal board but a few days before she received a copy of municipal Board's address together with suggestions for the reply she had to give. She was very much surprised at it. She felt that things did not happen like this outside a story book. She responded to it in strong terms that she was competent enough to give

adequate reply to any address. Thereafter she always spoke extempore at all public functions including reply to civic address.

She took pleasure in familiarizing herself with various Acts and points of law and working up of a difficult case and in the ultimate passing of an order, especially an order helping to dispel the age old tradition that women could not do man's work. She considers the last two years of her ministership as filled with rich and varied experience which added to the understanding of life. There had been times of disillusion and distress. Yet she never felt that her period of ministership had been entirely wasted. The lessons she learned have been of great value.

On Being Interviewed

Having entered the political field, Pandit found herself among the journalists. In her eyes, the telephone and the journalists are two great pests. She says that the telephone can be easily disconnected when one feels irritated. But the journalist cannot be easily dealt with. In her view, a journalist cannot be discouraged like an ordinary individual. Discouragement only spurs the journalist. She identifies the journalists to the proverbial duck (the idiom "like water of a duck's back means without any apparent effect). What Pandit here implies is that no words of discouragement would have any effect upon the journalist. Pandit complains against the journalists that they never try to give a correct report. According to her these young journalists ignored what seemed to her important and laid special emphasis on what she considered trivial. Once Pandit advised some girl students not to be influenced by the biased opinion about women and their duties. She told them that the conservatives usually opposed modern thought on women and their duties on the plea that the goddess of the home must not be corrupted. Later her advice to the girl students was interpreted by the press in the following words. Mrs. Pandit supporting divorce for women said, "You must cease to be goddesses and become human beings etc". After this incident, she received a lot of letters of criticism and advice.

Pandit considers the female journalists more deadly than the male. During her visit to Europe a young female journalist enquired her about Indian women and about her opinion on physical culture. In reply she said that she is a believer in physical cultures especially that Indian variety. The female journalist interpreted her and the next morning popular daily announced to the public "woman minister begins 18-hour-day by standing on the head". Another journalist asked Pandit: "did you meet your husband in prison?". Pandit replied that she had been married for ten years before she went to jail. But the journalist remarked that it sounds interesting from the public point of view that Pandit met her husband in prison. Thereupon Pandit reminded the journalist that it would be difficult to reconcile the fact of a fifteen year old daughter with that statement. Later on her paper gave very interesting but incorrect details of Pandit's life including a romantic meeting in jail which led to marriage.

Yet another female journalist asked her whether she wasn't tired of office work, Pandit innocently replied that she enjoyed doing ordinary things just as

much as the extra ordinary things. The report published next day informs the public that “Indian woman minister darns husband’s socks”.

There were some conflicting reports and descriptions of Mrs. Pandit’s appearance and dress in the news paper. If the journalist belongs to the social school of thought, he would describe Mrs. Pandit as dressed plainly, giving due emphasis to some aspects of their work. If on the other hand the writer represented the popular press of the conservative view, he would describe Mrs. Pandit as clothed with all the magnificence of the Orient. Such conflicting reports must have confused the English public. The reporters rather treat her as if her interest were confined to clothes and children.

She concludes that though theoretically woman is treated as the equal of man, she is still regarded as the lesser being even by those who plead for their equality. It must be acknowledged that the progress of the world lies in women’s advancement.

Comprehension

1. Answer the following in two or three sentences.

a. Why does Vijayalakshmi Pandit call herself fortunate?

Vijayalakshmi Pandit considers herself fortunate because there have never been an occasion in her life when she was bored. She felt a special joy in facing and overcoming the difficulties, oppositions and criticism that stood in her way.

b. “so I became a minister” states Ms Pandit with pride. What were the Different factors that worked in her favour?

Ms Pandit states with pride “So I Became a Minister”.. Different factors worked in her favour. Hard work was the major one. She had a special ability to handle important and difficult task for which she had no training or previous experience.

c. Why does Ms. Pandit equate her office to a second hand furniture dealer’s shop?

Pandit equates her office to a second hand furniture shop because besides a large writing table and a sofa in the room, the space was occupied by innumerable chairs, small tables and book shelves.

d. How did Ms. Pandit make sure that the flower vase was always filled with roses?

When Pandit wanted to have the flower vase filled with roses, the caretaker excused it on the ground that it was not customary. Upon this she ventured to go down the garden and pick some flowers. But since the idea of a cabinet minister cutting roses seemed strange, the caretaker hastily went out promising to bring the roses himself and from that day onwards it had become the custom to fill the flower vase with roses.

e. As soon as Pandit assumed the office of the minister, her personal secretary, parliamentary secretary and departmental secretary approached her to have negotiation on several matters.

f. The speech went smoothly and so vanished the last moments of 'stage fright.' Which is the speech in question? How did she conquer her nervousness?

The speech in question is Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit's maiden speech in the Assembly. She tried to overcome her stage fright by remembering her father's advice not to become nervous.

g. 'Surely things didn't happen like this outside a story book.' What is the story? How did Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit respond to it?

Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit had consented to receive an address from the municipal board but a few days before she received a copy of municipal Board's address together with suggestions for the reply she had to give. She was very much surprised at it. She felt that things did not happen like this outside a story book. She responded to it in strong terms that she is competent enough to give adequate reply to any address.

h. 'I am today a wiser and perhaps a sadder person than before.' Observes Ms. Pandit. State the circumstances that provoked this comment.

The disappearance of professional ethics in journalism provoked Mrs. Pandit to make this comment.

i. Which are the 'two greatest pests' in the eyes of Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit? Why?

In her eyes, the telephone and the journalists are two great pests, because both the telephone and the journalist always pester her.

j. '.....a snub is but so much water on the back of the proverbial duck.' Who is the duck here? What is the appropriateness of this comparison?

The duck under reference is the journalist. In Pandit's view, a journalist cannot be discouraged like an ordinary individual. Discouragement only spurs the journalist. She identifies the journalists to the proverbial duck (the idiom "like water on a duck's back means without any apparent effect). What Pandit here implies that no works of discouragement would have any effect upon the journalist.

k. How did the press interpret her advice to the girl students?

Pandit's advice to the girl students was interpreted by the press in the following words. Mrs. Pandit supporting divorce for women said, "You must cease to be goddesses and become human beings etc".

l. 'Woman minister begins 18-hour-day by standing on head!' Comment on the malicious nature of reporting that Ms Pandit refers to here?

The malicious nature of reporting is a proof to the disappearance of professional ethics in journalism.

m. 'It sounds so much more interesting from the public point of view.' Who is the speaker? What are the public interested in, according to the speaker?

The woman journalist is the speaker. According to her the public is interested in knowing the personal history of political leaders.

2. Answer the following in a paragraph

a. What was Mrs. Pandit's experience in the Assembly?

In "So I Became A Minister, Mrs., Pandit gives us an account of her experience in the assembly. Pandit gave no seriousness to the Assembly as it deserved because it consisted of men whom she had known from her childhood as clients and friends of her father. They never seemed to her as dangerous opponents. The views they represented belong to a comparatively small group. It seemed to her that they had limited vision. Therefore she was sure that the policy they opposed in the Assembly would injure themselves in the long run. Pandit gives an account of her maiden speech. She had never before spoken in the assembly and felt slightly nervous as she sat waiting for the speaker to call her name. She remembered her father's advice not to be nervous. She suddenly gathered courage and stood up and spoke. The speech went smoothly and so the last remnants of stage fright vanished for ever.

b. 'The figures certainly seemed less alarming after that.' Explain the context.

In "So I Became A Minister, Mrs., Pandit shares her experience as a minister and as a woman. During the days before the presentation of the budget in the house, Pandit was troubled by figures. As she had not learnt sufficient arithmetic, she wrote to her parliamentary secretary: "these figures alarm me". The parliamentary secretary instilled courage in her by replying that the home minister was to prepare to face battalions and mould the destiny of the nation.

c. Pandit's views on disappearance of professional ethics in journalism.

Having entered the political field, Pandit found herself among the journalists. In her eyes, the telephone and the journalists are two great pests. In her view, a journalist cannot be discouraged like an ordinary individual. She identifies the journalists to the proverbial duck. What Pandit here implies is that no words of discouragement would have any effect upon the journalist. Pandit complains against the journalists that they never try to give a correct report. According to her these young journalists ignored what seemed to her important and laid special emphasis on what she considered trivial. Pandit considers the female journalists more deadly than the male. During her visit to Europe a young female journalist enquired her about Indian women and about her opinion on physical culture. In reply she said that she is a believer in physical cultures especially that Indian variety. The female journalist interpreted her and the next morning popular daily announced to the public "woman minister begins 18-hour-day by standing on the head". Mrs. Pandit's experiences with journalists cement the fact that even woman of importance are taken for granted, haunted and humiliated in patriarchal set up. She expresses her pain at the disappearance of professional ethics in journalism.

3. Answer the following in not more than 300 words

‘So I Became a Minister’ is a true account of a woman of indomitable spirit who tirelessly fought against obstacles. Discuss.

In the essay ‘So I Became A Minister’ Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit shares her experience as a minister and as a woman. The prose piece reflects on the discrimination that women have to face. The author is of the opinion that even women in positions of power are incapable of escaping the severity of gender bias. She considers herself fortunate because there have never been an occasion in her life when she was bored. As a minister, she felt a special joy in facing and overcoming the difficulties, oppositions and criticism that stood in her way. Different factors worked in her favour. Hard work was the major one. She had a special ability to handle important and difficult task for which she had no training or previous experience. She joined the ministry with least hesitation. She states with pride “So I Became a Minister”.

Pandit’s knowledge of a council in action was very limited. As a girl she had sat in the visitors’ gallery in the assembly chamber when her father led the swaraj party opposition in the Assembly. Hence she had only a vague idea of the duties of a minister when she entered her office room for the first time. She was more interested in the room where she had to spend a good deal of her time. She took care to remove the unnecessary furniture from her office and made sure that the flower vase was always filled with roses. Having arranged the room, Pandit turned her thoughts into more important things. She looked through the files and chose one that looked less complicated than the rest. Having read it, she felt quite competent to pass an order. After this she went on to the next file and had dealt with several important matters.

Pandit always had an inferiority complex when confronted by tall people. So she was not pleased when her department secretary who was six feet tall came into her room. When she stood up to shake hands with him, she became conscious how short she was. In spite of her inferiority complex, she managed well in giving orders to him. She had never met her Parliamentary Secretary. Therefore to deal with him seemed to her somewhat difficult. But again fortune came to her help. The Parliamentary Secretary soon fell in with her ways and after the first few days of adjustments, they were able to work in harmony.

During the days before the presentation of the budget in the house, Pandit was troubled by figures. As she had not learnt sufficient arithmetic, she wrote to her parliamentary secretary: “these figures alarm me”. The parliamentary secretary instilled courage in her by replying that the home minister was to prepare to face battalions and mould the destiny of the nation.

Pandit gave no seriousness to the Assembly as it deserved because it consisted of men whom she had known from her childhood as clients and friends of her father. They never seemed to her as dangerous opponents. The views they represented belong to a comparatively small group. It seemed to her that they had limited vision. Therefore she was sure that the policy they opposed in the Assembly would injure themselves in the long run.

Pandit gives an account of her maiden speech. She had never before spoken in the assembly and felt slightly nervous as she sat waiting for the speaker to call

her name. She remembered her father's advice not to be nervous. She suddenly gathered courage and stood up and spoke. The speech went smoothly and so the last remnants of stage fright vanished for ever.

Her first civic address gave her an insight into how things were managed in politics. She had consented to receive an address from the municipal board but a few days before she received a copy of municipal Board's address together with suggestions for the reply she had to give. She was very much surprised at it. She felt that things did not happen like this outside a story book. She responded to it in strong terms that she was competent enough to give adequate reply to any address. Thereafter she always spoke extempore at all public functions including reply to civic address.

She took pleasure in familiarizing herself with various Acts and points of law and working up of a difficult case and in the ultimate passing of an order, especially an order helping to dispel the age old tradition that women could not do man's work. She considers the last two years of her minister-ship as filled with rich and varied experience which added to the understanding of life. There had been times of disillusion and distress. Yet she never felt that her period of minister-ship had been entirely wasted. The lessons she learned have been of great value.

MODULE II: POETRY

POETRY

5. *ODE TO THE SEA*

Ibrahim al-Rubaish

Introduction

The poem *Ode to the Sea* is taken from the collection of poems, *Poems from Guantanamo: The Detainees Speak* which brings together twenty two poems by seventeen detainees at Guantanamo. The poems were written when he was in the prison using the limited circumstances. The poems were collected by the pro bono attorneys who had to submit every action of the prisoners to the officers of Pentagon for checking. This collection of the poems was the best seller in 2007 which gives voice to the men living limbo at Guantanamo. It explains man's hopes and dreams towards survival and change. This anthology was edited by Marc Falkoff and the poems were translated into more than a dozen languages.

Introduction to Ibrahim al-Rubaish

Ibrahim Sulayman Muhammad Arbaysh or Ibrahim al-Rubaish was born on July 7, 1979 at Al Brida in Saudi Arabia. He was kept under extrajudicial in The United State's Guantanamo detention camps in Cuba.

He was graduated from Imam Muhammad bin Sa'ud University in Shari'a. Ibrahim Sulayman Muhammad Arbaysh was captured near the Pakistan-Afghan border. The American troops shipped him to Guantanamo Bay and kept him in prison for five years. He was released and transferred to Saudi Arabia on December 13, 2006. On February 3, 2009 Saudi security officials published a new list of Saudi suspected terrorists. Al Rubaish was one of eleven of the 85 men on this list who was a former Guantanamo captive.

Guantanamo Bay is essentially a US detention centre off the Cuban coast for suspected terrorists. The term 'Guantanamo' has become synonymous with America's human rights violations, inhumanity and bestiality. Very few of the 'terrorists' held in the prison have actually been proven guilty and none of them have been given a trial. Tales of abuse and forced confessions at Guantanamo have shocked the civilized world. There have been cases of beating up inmates until they wet their pants. Prisoners were also stripped and intimidated using dogs. Such violations of fundamental human rights are unacceptable to the modern civilized society.

Marc Falkoff, the editor of this anthology made a remark upon him as:

"Ibrahim al-Rubaish was teaching in Pakistan when he was arrested by mercenaries and sold to allied forces. A religious scholar who dislikes hostility and was once a candidate for a judgeship, Rubaish has a daughter, born just

three months before he was captured, who is now five years old. During a military administrative hearing, he was told, 'If you are considered to be a continued threat, you will be detained. If you are not considered a threat, we will recommend release. Why should we consider releasing you?' Rubaish's response was, 'In the world of international courts, the person is innocent until proven guilty. Why, here, is the person guilty until proven innocent?'"

ODE TO THE SEA (poem)

O sea, give me news of my loved ones.

Were it not for the chains of the faithless, I would have dived into you,
And reached my beloved family, or perished in your arms.

Your beaches are sadness, captivity, pain, and injustice.
Your bitterness eats away at my patience.

Your calm is like death, your sweeping waves are strange.
The silence that rises up from you holds treachery in its fold.

Your stillness will kill the captain if it persists,
And the navigator will drown in your waves.

Gentle, deaf, mute, ignoring, angrily storming,
You carry graves.

If the wind enrages you, your injustice is obvious.
If the wind silences you, there is just the ebb and flow.

O sea, do our chains offend you?
It is only under compulsion that we daily come and go.

Do you know our sins?
Do you understand we were cast into this gloom?

O sea, you taunt us in our captivity.
You have colluded with our enemies and you cruelly guard us.

Don't the rocks tell you of the crimes committed in their midst?
Doesn't Cuba, the vanquished, translate its stories for you?

You have been beside us for three years, and what have you gained?
Boats of poetry on the sea; a buried flame in a burning heart.

The poet's words are the font of our power;
His verse is the salve for our pained hearts.

Meaning of Ode to the Sea

Ode to the Sea is a poem which is powerful in terms of striking imagery, metaphor and thematic complexity. The poem is addressed to the sea as the narrator describes his emotions as prisoner. The narrator addresses the Sea and asks it to reach his news in the hands of his beloved family. The narrator in the poem wants to live for the faith and the family which is awaiting him in his motherland. Otherwise he wants to end his life in the sea. It is the chains

created by the US commandos keeps him away from selecting from the two alternative ways in front of him. All around him, the narrator finds sadness, violation of human rights and injustice. All the detainees do not know when they will be released. Everyone in these prisons have bitterness towards the people who keep them as captives. Sea becomes an image of the mind of the narrator and his fellow prisoners. The surroundings carry stillness. The calmness of the sea is like death and the narrator cannot read the Sea's mind. The silence of the shows that even the Sea is not ready to respond against the injustice which is happening against the believers of Islam. The narrator suggests that the Sea is deaf, gentle, mute and ignoring about the issues of the detainees. If the sea becomes outraged by the wind, the sea is not guilty ie; if the detainees are provoked that will not be their guilt but a reaction against the sufferings they are having. But if the wind makes the sea silent, there will be ebbs and flows. Once again sea becomes a metaphor to show the attitude of the detainees.

Now the narrator begins to ask questions to the Sea. Are we offending you by showing our chains in front of you? It is only because we are compelled to come here. Here the chains suggest the oppression they are suffering in Guantanamo. One after another the narrator throws questions towards the sea. He asks, do you know our sins; why all of us have to be in this condition? Do you understand the circumstances under which we are kept in this gloom? Oh sea, you condemn us on our condition. You have cruelly protected both us and our enemies, but you pulled us safely into this cruel world. Don't the rocks tell you what they had done to our people? Doesn't the suppressed Cuba, who is similar to us, translate our cries for you? For these three years you have been watching us? But don't you learn anything about us? All the detainees are writing poems about the sea with their imaginary skills, but the poems are full of rage, the rage of the oppressed.

The poem ends with the most beautiful lines. They show the power of writing. The words of their poets are the words of their power. These lines act as a balm which cures the wounds in their hearts.

Notes and explanations

'Ode to the Sea' is an eloquent expression of the powerful feelings of a detainee at Guantanamo Bay. Its theme is physical incarceration, oppression and torment. The poem represents a poetics of universal human rights-a response to the American assertion of global legal sovereignty.

ode: an elaborately formal lyric poem, often in the form of an address to a person or an abstract entity, always serious and elevated in tone.

Guantanamo Bay: Guantanamo Bay is located on the south side of the island in the Caribbean Sea. It is surrounded by steep hills which create an enclave that is cut off from its immediate hinterland.

Arabs believe that poetry is born of suffering. Its rhythms are attuned to measured thoughts. The sea becomes a powerful symbol of one that is capable

of providing relief and stirring the depths of despair. It is sweet as well as bitter at the same time.

O sea: The poet addresses the sea. This is the characteristic of the ode.

O sea...loved ones: By the use of a powerful metaphor, the poet asks the messenger (the sea) to bring him news of his dear ones.

the faithless: non-Muslims; believer of a different religion; *kafir*

line 3, And reached...in your arms: The poet has only two choices-either to reach home or perish in the sea. The present condition, being in the chains of the faithless, is worse than hell.

in your arms: continuation of the metaphor; 'in the arms' of the messenger

line 5, Your bitterness...patience: The detainees do not know when their illegal detention will come to an end.

Words such as 'sadness', 'captivity', 'pain', 'injustice', 'bitterness', 'calm', 'silence', 'deaf', 'mute', 'ignoring', etc., elicit a wide range of emotions. They are powerful enough to bring out a succession of feelings and thoughts about a person languishing in the corners of a prison.

line 4, Your beaches are sadness: a metaphor

line 6, Your calm is like death: a simile

line 8, Your stillness will kill: The repetition of the sound 'l' is noteworthy. This is a poetic technique known as alliteration. The repetition heightens the effect of unpleasantness.

line 10, Gentle, deaf,...: The epithets show the poet's impatience at the unhelpful attitude of the sea.

line 12-13, If the wind...ebb and flow: The lines present a beautiful couplet, strong, emphatic and filled with rhythm.

line 14-15, O sea: The poet apostrophizes the sea, and asks if it is not saddened at the sight of the chains.

line 16, Do you know our sins?: The detainees are more sinned against than sinning.

taunt: mock; tease

captivity: imprisonment

colluded: conspired together; planned a fraud together

rocks: The Guantanamo Bay is surrounded by steep rocky hills.

vanquished: utterly defeated

line 21, Doesn't Cuba...for you?: The poet's self-pity transforms itself into a feeling of empathy at the condition of Cuba which is reeling under the US sanctions.

line 23, *a buried flame in a burning heart*: With the help of a beautiful alliteration, the poet brings out the torture and torment of the prisoners' hearts.

font: reservoir

salve: balm

lines 24,25: The final couplet is a powerful aphorism. The poet says that the magical power of a poet's words can be a fountainhead of endurance and fortitude in times of adversity. His poetry has the diving power of a balm that can heal wounded hearts.

Answer the following questions in a sentence or two

1. What are the options which are in front of the detainees?

Answer: there are two alternative options in front of the detainees; either to kill themselves by diving in to the sea or to keep themselves alive in order to see their family members.

2. What is an ode?

Answer: Ode an elaborately formal lyric poem, often in the form of an address to a person or an abstract entity, always serious and elevated in tone.

3. 'Gentle, deaf, mute, ignoring, angrily storming

You carry graves' - Comment.

Answer: These lines show the attitude of the sea on the pathetic condition of the detainees. The sea doesn't listen to the sufferings of them.

4. Why does the poet say that the sea had 'cruelly guarded us'?

Answer: The poet says that the sea had colluded with their enemies. The sea guarded them safely to the Bay of Guantanamo and without kindness threw them into the hands of the enemies.

5. Comment on the term 'vanquished'.

Answer: Just like the Arabian captives of Guantanamo, Cuba also is a country which is controlled by the foreigners. Hence the term share the meaning equally oppressed status of both Cuban people and the captive Arabians.

Answer in a paragraph

1. Write a note on the condition on the situation of the captives of Guantanamo?

Answer: Guantanamo Bay is essentially a US detention centre off the Cuban coast for suspected terrorists. The term 'Guantanamo' has become synonymous with America's human rights violations, inhumanity and bestiality. Very few of the 'terrorists' held in the prison have actually been

proven guilty and none of them have been given a trial. Tales of abuse and forced confessions at Guantanamo have shocked the civilized world. There have been cases of beating up inmates until they wet their pants. Prisoners were also stripped and intimidated using dogs. Such violations of fundamental human rights are unacceptable to the modern civilized society. In this poem, Ibrahim al-Rubaish is trying to explain the suffering of these people. Everyone in these detention centre are tired out of their condition and all of them are about to break up against the injustice done against them.

2. Explain the poem as an ode?

Answer: Ode is an elaborately formal lyric poem, often in the form of an address to a person or an abstract entity, always serious and elevated in tone. The poem, *Ode to the Sea* is a lengthy poem containing twenty five lines. The poem starts with addressing the sea. The poem begins with request to the sea to give a message to the family members of the detention centers. There is a narrator in the poem who seems to be the poet or any person from the detainees. The poem reflects the tone of anger, rage, humiliation etc. The narrator in the poem is speaking in a voice of desperation about their condition. But in the end, the narrator brings about an inspiration of resistance through poetry.

3. Explain 'Sea' as a metaphor in the poem.

Answer: The poem starts with a tone where the poet addresses the sea. The poet finds sea as a place of refuge by giving up the life in the depth of the sea. But on course the sea becomes an image which represents the inner psyche of the detainees. The beaches are sadness and the waves are strange for the detainees. This means, when they reach the beach all their sadness break up and they think about themselves and family. Along with that they cannot justify the waves which do not show any consideration towards them. The silence of the sea is compared to their own silence which has a big meaning. The silence shows the storm which is hidden in the depths. If the 'sea' remains calm for all the time, it will kill the power they have within them, and all of them will end up with in it. Along with all these sea is too passive towards all their sufferings. Sea acts as deaf and mute person who is ignoring all their issues. The poet makes many complaints and asks many questions to the sea.

4. What are the questions which the narrator asks to the sea?

Answer: The narrator of the poem is showering all his miseries and anger towards the sea as they cannot rise against their enemies. The first question towards the sea is that "do our chains offend you?" by this question, the poet suggests that like them, does the sea is getting tortured by the US. Keeping the supposed people under such circumstances as culprits is an act against human rights. Second question is about the sins they have committed according to the US government. According to them, the detainees have committed a big crime. The narrator suspects that, the sea and the enemies

have a secret agreement to punish the detainees. It is only because of this reason; the sea had safely brought them to the Bay of Guantanamo. For all the three years where they were kept in the detention centers, all of them were writing poems about the sea with an ignited mind. As a conclusion, the poet finds that this poetic inspiration they have got is going to bring power to them and also to act as a balm to cure their wounds in the hearts.

Answer in words not exceeding 300.

1. Discuss *Ode to the Sea* as an ode which explains the sufferings of the detainees?

Answer: Ode an elaborately formal lyric poem, often in the form of an address to a person or an abstract entity, always serious and elevated in tone. The poem, *Ode to the Sea* is a lengthy poem containing twenty five lines. The poem starts with addressing the sea. The poem begins with request to the sea to give a message to the family members of the detentions centers. There is a narrator in the poem who seems to be the poet or any person from the detainees. The poem reflects the tone of anger, rage, humiliation etc. The narrator in the poem is speaking in a voice of desperation about their condition. But in the end, the narrator brings about an inspiration of resistance through poetry.

Ode to the Sea is a poem which is powerful in terms of striking imagery, metaphor and thematic complexity. The poem is addressed to the sea as the narrator describes his emotions as prisoner. The narrator addresses the Sea and asks it to reach his news in the hands of his beloved family. The narrator in the poem wants to live for the faith and the family which is awaiting him in his motherland. Otherwise he wants to end his life in the sea. It is the chains created by the US commandos keeps him away from selecting from the two alternative ways in front of him. All around him, the narrator finds sadness, violation of human rights and injustice. All the detainees do not know when they will be released. Everyone in these prisons have bitterness towards the people who keep them as captives. Sea becomes an image of the mind of the narrator and his fellow prisoners. The surroundings carry stillness. The calmness of the sea is like death and the narrator cannot read the Sea's mind. The silence of shows that even the Sea is not ready to respond against the injustice which is happening against the believers of Islam. The narrator suggests that the Sea is deaf, gentle, mute and ignoring about the issues of the detainees. If the sea becomes outraged by the wind, the sea is not guilty ie; if the detainees are provoked that will not be their guilt but a reaction against the sufferings they are having. But if the wind makes the sea silent, there will be ebbs and flows. Once again sea becomes a metaphor to show the attitude of the detainees.

Now the narrator begins to ask questions to the Sea. Are we offending you by showing our chains in front of you? It is only because we are compelled to come here. Here the chains suggest the oppression they are suffering in Guantanamo. One after another the narrator throws questions towards the

sea. He asks, do you know our sins; why all of us have to be in this condition? Do you understand the circumstances under which we are kept in this gloom? Oh sea, you condemn us on our condition. You have cruelly protected both us and our enemies, but you pulled us safely into this cruel world. Don't the rocks tell you what they had done to our people? Doesn't the suppressed Cuba, who is similar to us, translate our cries for you? For these three years you have been watching us? But don't you learn anything about us? All the detainees are writing poems about the sea with their imaginary skills, but the poems are full of rage, the rage of the oppressed. The poem ends with the most beautiful lines. They show the power of writing. The words of their poets are the words of their power. These lines act as a balm which cures the wounds in their hearts.

The poem starts with a tone where the poet addresses the sea. The poet finds sea as a place of refuge by giving up the life in the depth of the sea. But on course the sea becomes an image which represents the inner psyche of the detainees. The beaches are sadness and the waves are strange for the detainees. This means, when they reach the beach all their sadness break up and they think about themselves and family. Along with that they cannot justify the waves which do not show any consideration towards them. The silence of the sea is compared to their own silence which has a big meaning. The silence shows the storm which is hidden in the depths. If the 'sea' remains calm for all the time, it will kill the power they have within them, and all of them will end up with in it. Along with all these sea is too passive towards all their sufferings. Sea acts as deaf and mute person who is ignoring all their issues. The poet makes many complaints and asks many questions to the sea.

6. THE PORTRAIT IN THE ROCK

Pablo Neruda

Pablo Neruda (1904-73) was the pen name of the Chilean poet, diplomat and politician Richard Eliecer Neftali Reyes Basoalto. In 1971 Neruda won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

During his lifetime, Neruda occupied many diplomatic positions and served a stint as a senator for the Chilean Communist Party. When Chilean President González Videla outlawed communism in Chile in 1948, a warrant was issued for Neruda's arrest. Friends hid him for months in a house basement in the Chilean port of Valparaíso. Later, Neruda escaped into exile through a mountain pass near Maihue Lake into Argentina. Years later, Neruda was a close collaborator to socialist President Salvador Allende. When Neruda returned to Chile after his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Allende invited him to read at the Estadio Nacional before 70,000 people.

By profession, Neruda is a writer. He had worked also as Chilean consul to Rangoon, Burma, in 1927, Colombo, Ceylon in 1929, and Batavia, Java in 1930. He was elected to Chilean senate as Communist in 1945. He self-exiled in Mexico in 1948-53. He was nominated for president on Chilean Communist Party ticket in 1970 and Chilean ambassador to France in 1971-72. He was the founder and editor (with Manuel Altolaguirre) of *El Caballo verde para la poesía* (poetry periodical) and *Aurora de Chile*. Along with all he was a member of World Peace Council in the time period 1950-73.

Neruda's poems were accepted all over the world. . He wrote in a variety of styles including surrealist poems, historical epics, overtly political manifestos, a prose autobiography, and erotically-charged love poems such as the ones in his 1924 collection *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair*. He often wrote in green ink colour as it was his personal symbol for desire and hope with his poetry. Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez once called him "the greatest poet of the 20th century in any language."

About the Portrait in the Rock

Neruda's poems fall into different categories. He speaks about the injustice done against humanity and also the love poems. Here the poem, *The Portrait in the Rock* belongs to the second category where the poet raises his voice against the social injustice. In the society we can see a hierarchal order where the people are divided into different categories. Some among the society attains a status and power to control the others. At occasions, these hegemonic powers will harass the other by banning the human rights to them. Through the poem, Neruda is making a protest against the hegemonic powers which kills the rights of the citizen. The poet elaborates the idea that oppression cannot kill the power of the society to act against the injustice.

Notes and explanations

golden and stony substances: brilliant ideas and expressions (of experiences) that stood firm in the face of state coercion

he was...tired: refers to a state of constant struggle (through his responses as

a writer) against the state tyranny that left him spiritually exhausted

Paraguay: a country in South America, surrounded by Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia

healing...silence: the description of a kind of sensory impression, expressed using words that normally describe another kind of sensory stimulation; synaesthesia

night of storms: a turbulent night when the forces unleashed terror

on horseback: Like his friend, the poet also became a target of state tyranny and, fearing arrest, had to escape on horseback.

his face...stone: This may be a tribute to Cesar Vallejo, another ode to him, his life and struggles. Vallejo, the Peruvian poet, was considered one of the foremost poetic innovations of the twentieth century. The man in exile depicted in the poem, seems to fit his profile. Neruda describes Vallejo as possessing a face carved out of stone, and like the man in the poem, Vallejo was exile. Peru has many monuments built in his honour.

defied: resisted with boldness and assurance; reflecting memories of resistance against his oppressors when he lived

wild weather: an atmosphere of violence and brutality let loose by the Fascist regime

muffling: to wrap or pad in order to deaden the sound

muffling...persecuted: the wind carried faint, muffled cries of the victims of police callousness against political opponents.

Meaning of the poem

The poem starts by referring to the portrait carved on the rock. The poet says that he knows that person very much. That person was well known to him with his beautiful expressions and ideas. This person was a man who was tired out of his life. He was born in Paraguay, and these lines refer to the famous Peruvian poet Cesar Vallejo who was considered as one of the most innovative poets of twentieth century. The portrait on the rock suits well with his face. He was an ordinary man lived there with all the common comforts of a family. He had his parents, sons, nephews, in-laws at his home. He was well read and kept books at home.

One day, the police called him at his door. They arrested him and beat him. Out of the experience and inspiration he had from the police, he wrote poem. As in Peru, his ideas were spread in to other countries like Denmark, Spain, Italy and France. This is explained using a beautiful metaphor of vomiting blood. He stopped watching his face. Then the poet says that Vallejo was died of the torture he had to suffer from the officials. Then he stopped receiving ideas from the great writer's profound silence. On a snowy night which was full of terror, he had to escape from the officials on a horseback through the mountains. Now the poet looks on to the rock and he sees the

face of his friend; the poet on the rock. His face was carved on the rock, with a strong expression which was created out of the suffering he had. The weather could not defeat the feeling formed on his face. The strong wind had wrapped his nose. He was made mute, and the wind carried the cries of the people who were suffering like him. His face showed the pain which he experienced at the time of his persecution. Then his exile was complete, he was completely removed from the country by the officials. But they could not remove him from the minds of the people. His monuments were erected all over the country and in such a way the people gave tribute to him.

Answer in a sentence or two.

1. ‘.....he was a man who was tired-‘: Who is the man referred to here? Why does the poet describe him as tired?

Answer: The man referred in this line is the famous Peruvian Poet Ceasar Vallejo. Vallejo was a poet who was in exile because of the harsh words he had used in his poems to criticize the government. He was tortured by the police every time. That is the reason for describing him a tired.

2. Explain the life of the man in the poem.

Answer: In the poem, this man is explained as common man who was spending his life with his parents and relatives with the comforts of a man. He was well read and for this reason the police were torturing him.

3. Why was the man in the poem dispossessed and beaten up? What was the police doing to him?

Answer: The poem speaks about the violation of human rights and censorship compelled on the citizens. The man in the poem was a poet who spoke against the government. The police arrested him and beat him and finally sent him into exile.

4. How does the poet explain the spreading of poetry?

Answer: The poet uses a beautiful expression to explain it. The man in the poem was beaten up by the police and he spat blood in France, Denmark, Spain and Italy. This means the poet took inspiration from the torments and the poems he wrote were spread into the nearby countries.

5. What does the poet refer by the term ‘changed into stone’?

Answer: This refers how the people pay their tribute to the great poet. They erected many monuments for him and his face was carved in the stone and his words in the hearts of the people.

Answer in a paragraph

1. What are the issues of human rights the poet brings out in this poem?

Answer: Pablo Neruda was an ardent communist .He explained his ideologies to the world through his writings. He used the words as the mightier thing to show the rotten sides of the communal life. In this poem, he explains how a

government under dictatorship acts against the freedom of thought, of speech and expression. The state declares a period of national security and at the time of this emergency all the human rights are ignored. Most often, they convince the citizens and get their approval to torture and imprison or exile the political opponents. They use the hegemonic powers to kill the soul of the opponents. Here in the poem, Neruda brings the example of a powerful poet. The poet used his creative skill as weapon against the autocratic rule. But the government tries to suppress the soul of the people who acts against them. They are brutally treated in the prisons and expelled from the society. Some of them were killed out of the torture they had to suffer. The poem brings out the example of the society which was banned from the basic rights of the society.

2. 'in his nose the wind was muffling'- explain?

Answer: The word 'muffling' means 'to wrap or pad in order to deaden the sound'. The poem is a response to the social injustice which was happening in Paraguay and the neighboring countries. The revolutionists raised their voices against the anarchy which was oppressing them. They faced this threat with brutality and suppressed the revolutionist by prosecuting them. The poet Vallejo was exiled by the autocrats. In the poem, Neruda says that the referred poet was killed and a monument, his carved face in the rock, was erected in the country. But the face of the portrait in the rock reflected the pain which he had to suffer during the time of his persecution. His words were not at all heard around. The censorship of the government restricted the portrait from having further communication. The life of the poet was taken away. His portrait stood amongst the injustice which was happening in that society. The autocrats could not take away the inspiration created by the poet. His words created an energy which made the society powerful to act against the Fascist regime.

Answer in words not exceeding 300

1. How does Neruda use his poetry to protest against the violation of human rights?

Answer: Neruda's poems fall into different categories. The poem speaks about the injustice done against humanity and also the love poems. Here the poem, *The Portrait in the Rock* belongs to the second category where the poet raises his voice against the social injustice. In the society we can see a hierarchal order where the people are divided into different categories. Some among the society attains a status and power to control the others. At occasions, these hegemonic powers will harass the other by banning the human rights to them. Through the poem, Neruda is making a protest against the hegemonic powers which kills the rights of the citizen. The poet elaborates the idea that oppression cannot kill the power of the society to act against the injustice.

The poem starts by referring to the portrait carved on the rock. The poet says that person very much. That person was well known to him with his beautiful expressions and ideas. This person was a man who was tired out of his life. He was born in Paraguay, and these lines refer to the famous Peruvian

poet Ceasar Vallejo who was considered as one of the most innovative poets of twentieth century. The portrait on the rock suits well with his face. He was an ordinary man and lived there with all the common comforts of a family. He had his parents, sons, nephews, in-laws at his home. He was well read and kept books at home.

One day, the police called him at his door. They arrested him and beat him. Out of the experience and inspiration he had from the police, he wrote poem. As in Peru, his ideas were spread in to other countries like Denmark, Spain, Italy and France. This is explained using a beautiful metaphor of vomiting blood. He stopped watching his face. Then the poet says that Vallejo died of the torture he had to suffer from the officials. Then he stopped receiving ideas from the great writer's profound silence. On a snowy night which was full of terror, he had to escape from the officials on a horseback through the mountains. Now the poet looks on to the rock and he sees the face of his friend; the poet on the rock. His face was carved on the rock, with a strong expression which was created out of the suffering he had. The weather could not defeat the feeling formed on his face. The strong wind had wrapped his nose. He was made mute, and the wind carried the cries of the people who were suffering like him. His face showed the pain which he experienced at the time of his persecution. Then his exile was complete, he was completely removed from the country by the officials. By they could not remove him from the minds of the people. His monuments were erected all over the country and in such a way the people gave tribute to him.

Pablo Neruda was an ardent communist who for the rest of the community. He explained his ideologies to the world through his writings. He used the words as the mightier thing to show the rotten sides of the communal life. In this poem, He explains how a government under dictatorship acts against the freedom of thought, of speech and expression. The state declares a period of national security and at the time of this emergency all the human rights are ignored. Most often, they convince the citizens and get their approval to torture and imprison or exile the political opponents. They use the hegemonic powers to kill the soul of the opponents. Here in the poem, Neruda brings the example of a powerful poet. The poet used his creative skill as weapon against the autocratic rule. But the government tries to suppress the soul of the people who acts against them. They are brutally treated in the prisons and expelled from the society. Some of them were killed out of the torture they had to suffer. The poem brings out the example of the society which was banned from the basic rights of the society.

7. STILL I RISE

Maya Angelou

About Maya Angelou

Dr. Maya Angelou was born on 1928 and she is one of the greatest voices in contemporary literature. She is an African-American poet, memoirist, educator, historian, best-selling author, actress, dramatist, civil rights activist, film maker director and teacher.

Angelou won international recognition with the publication of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, the first series of six autobiographical volumes. Later books in the series are *swingin' and Getting*, *Merry Like Christmas*, *Gather Together in My Name*, *All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes*, and *A Song Flung up to Heaven*.

Angelou, a highly respected spokesperson for the black, was one of the first African American women to publically discuss their personal life- and as such is referred to as a new kind of memoirist. Drawing on themes like identity, family and racism, the depiction of her experience forced the people of all colours to reflect on race and their privileged/unprivileged status for the students in schools and universities internationally. She has been awarded over 30 honorary degrees and was nominated for Pulitzer Price in 1971.

Meaning of the Poem

The poem, *Still I Rise* starts with Angelou's criticism against the constructed history of the Europeans upon the blacks. She says that they had written them in the history with the bitter lies which made them uncivilized in front of the world. They were considered as dirt. They will rise from their down trodden state as dust which is raised from the earth by the wind. The white always wanted to see them as the people who are trying to walk in a room painted with oil. The white could not accept them walking straight with confidence.

Angelou's hopes are high about the future status of the blacks. As the sun and moon rises, they will rise. With the certainty of the tides and like the hopes which are springing high, they will rise. She is expressing the attitude of the white's in the form of questions. They always wanted to see them as broken, with bowed head and lowered eyes. They only could imagine the blacks with drooped shoulders and weakened with cries.

Whenever they show some haughtiness, the white consider it as an offence. The realization of their identity is the most precious thing in the life of the blacks. When they enjoy this, it is not easy for the white's to accept it.

Now Angelou is expressing their will power in strong words. The whites can shoot at them by their harsh words, they can cut the black with their pointed eyes, and they may kill the blacks with their hatred, even then like the air they can rise.

Far from the problems of the whole black people, Angelou moves towards the issues of the black women. She is referring to the different ways in which both sexes were treated by the white, a black man is considered as sexually

intolerable person, whether as black women were getting sexually exploited by both the whites and blacks. Here she realizes power as a woman who is black.

Angelou propagates her agenda. They will rise out of the whole shame they had been suffering; from the misinterpretations about them and their culture. Out of the whole pains they had suffered they will rise. She says that their culture is like an ocean which is spread in to various directions like music, stories, power etc. they are going to learn to be courageous by learning from their roots. The days and nights filled with fear are coming to an end. They are going to face a new morning which will change all their status within the society. By taking inspiration from the ancestors they will rise. The inspired blacks are the hopes for the black community and all of them are dreaming about their freedom of body and mind.

Notes and explanations

line 1, You may write...history: The White supremacy, in its desire for hegemony and power, has distorted and disfigured the history of the Blacks by mass propaganda campaigns based on myths that hide Black people from themselves and their greatness. Through smear campaigns and hate speeches, the Blacks are vilified on the basis of colour, disability, gender, race and sexual orientation. People of every race, creed and colour have contributed their share in the prosperity and well-being of America. American culture is identified through Black musical traditions, European dress and housing styles, Italian and Chinese cuisines and contributions made by a lot of other cultures.

bitter, twisted lies: The Blacks are heavily misrepresented, characterized as inherently barbaric, corrupt, intolerant and lazy savages. The mass media propagates, day in day out, myths and untruths about the work ethics and the sexual ferocity of the Black male. The Black family is depicted as morally lax-parents unskilled, irresponsible or careless in rearing their children. American history books with negative Black images foster the notion that American glory is exclusively the creation of the Europeans, and the sons and daughters of the Whites. Passed on from generation to generation, these bitter, twisted lies affect the dreams, desires and actions of both the Black and White Americans. They seem to forget that America was founded on '250 years of unrequited toil' of Black men and women, as Abraham Lincoln said. Oppression knows no shame. The oppressed are whipped to labour and are humiliated after they have finished. It gets rich on the sweat of its hapless victims and later teases and taunts them for being poor.

line 4, But still...rise: The Blacks cannot be dispirited with vilification.

sassiness: lively and spirited

beset: harass

lines 5-8, Does my...living room: That the Black refuses to be bowed down, that he/she strides with head above shoulders, that the negro radiates confidence

and self-assurance seem to upset the White.

lines 9-10, Just like...tides: Like the sun, the moon and the tides, the Black is rising with increased hopes and promises of future. The Blacks have a cultural identity of their own and have and have an independent place of their own. It is not the caged bird that sings; what is heard is the ecstatic singing of the free bird in flight to the limitless sky.

Haughtiness: self-importance

History's shame: the black history written by the whites portray them as culture less and uncivilized.

Black ocean: the enriched black culture with art, music and traditions

Answer in a sentence or two

1. What does Maya Angelou mean by the twisted lies?

Answer: Here in the poem by the word 'twisted lies' Angelou points her finger towards the black history which is distorted by the white people. In the history of the pre and post colonial world, the Black is portrayed as the uncivilized and uncultured by the Europeans, and Angelou raises her voice against this White hegemony.

2. '..... like dust, I'll rise' Explain?

Answer: Here Angelou compares the situation of the black to the dust. They are a group of people who are totally broken. Hence they have to rise from the earth as dust is raised by the wind.

3. How does Angelou explain the will power of the Black?

Answer: Angelou shows the will power of the Black using the following expressions such as rising of the sun and moon, and the certainty of the tides and the hopes springing in the minds.

4. 'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines

Diggin' in my backyard' Explain the context?

Answer: Here through these lines, Angelou tries to create the Black consciousness. When the Black identify themselves as human beings who have realized their self importance and behave like human beings, and make merry;the White cannot accept it.

5. That I dance like I've got diamonds

At the meeting of my thighs?

Answer: The lines explain the realization of the power of a woman. In these lines, Angelou is mentioning the exploitation taking place against the Black women. She is proud to be born as a woman.

6. What does Angelou mean by 'past that is rooted in pain'?

Answer: The history of the Black Africans is painful. Under the Whites, their history is painted with blood and sufferings as slaves. They were getting exploited physically, economically and psychologically.

7. What are the gifts provided by the ancestors?

Answer: The gifts refer to the strong cultural background built by the Black Americans. This heritage refers to the song and stories which gave them strength, the strong physical condition to work in the field and also the spirit or the identification of the self.

Answer in a paragraph

1. Explain 'Still I Rise' as a celebration of the spirit of Blacks.

Answer: The poem 'Still I Rise' can be considered as a slogan for the Blacks who were protesting against the Whites' colonization. The colonial powers had made the Black history distorted with their own implications about the Black's nature. But here, Angelou is raising the potential of the Blacks by saying that like the dust, they will rise out of the earth where they have been living for centuries under the feet of the Whites. Angelou puts a lot of questions in front of them about how the Whites liked to see the Black, she is asking, whether they wanted to see the Blacks to walk without a strong will power by lowering their eyes and shoulders. She is again asking whether the self realization of both the Black men and women offend them. When they are enjoying, the Whites cannot accept that the creatures which were at their feet are standing with the backbone. The poem clearly portrays the celebration of the Black identity which they recaptured after centuries.

2. 'I am the dream and the hope of the slave' Explain?

Answer: The case of Black women is very complex. In the society, she never gets an equivalent. She is the person who is exploited by the White people and Black men. She suffers as a slave and as a woman. Hence, her position in the society is in the lowest stratum of the society. When she rises from the bottom level, it gives much hope. The woman power is very important in the Black society as they act as the strong back support for each family, where most of the Black men spend their earning for their own merry making. So, Angelou claims that 'I am the dream and hope of slave'. Freedom of the whole Black community is the dream of each Black. It needs a mass movement. When the women come to the front with a will power to protest, that is going to change the whole face.

3. Explain the created history of the black by the whites?

Answer: The White supremacy, in its desire for hegemony and power, has distorted and disfigured the history of the Blacks by mass propaganda campaigns based on myths that hide Black people from themselves and their greatness. Through smear campaigns and hate speeches, the Blacks are vilified on the basis of colour, disability, gender, race and sexual orientation.

People of every race, creed and colour have contributed their share in the prosperity and well-being of America. American culture is identified through Black musical traditions, European dress and housing styles, Italian and Chinese cuisines and contributions made by a lot of other cultures. The Blacks are heavily misrepresented, characterized as inherently barbaric, corrupt, intolerant and lazy savages. The mass media propagates, day in day out, myths and untruths about the work ethics and the sexual ferocity of the Black male. The Black family is depicted as morally lax-parents unskilled, irresponsible or careless in rearing their children. American history books with negative Black images foster the notion that American glory is exclusively the creation of the Europeans, and the sons and daughters of the Whites. Passed on from generation to generation, these bitter, twisted lies affect the dreams, desires and actions of both the Black and White Americans. They seem to forget that America was founded on '250 years of unrequited toil' of Black men and women, as Abraham Lincoln said. Oppression knows no shame. The oppressed are whipped to labour and are humiliated after they have finished. It gets rich on the sweat of its hapless victims and later teases and taunts them for being poor.

Answer in words not exceeding 300

1. Explain how the blacks are identifying themselves in the poem *still I rise*?

Answer: The poem, *Still I Rise* starts with Angelou's criticism against the constructed history of the Europeans upon the blacks. She says that they had written them in the history with the bitter lies which made them uncivilized in front of the world. They were considered as dirt. They will rise from their down trodden state as dust which is raised from the earth by the wind. The white always wanted to see them as the people who are trying to walk in a room painted with oil. The white could not accept them walking straight with confidence.

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The poem 'Still I Rise' can be considered as a slogan for the Blacks who were protesting against the Whites' colonization. The colonial powers had made the Black history distorted with their own implications about the Black's nature. But here, Angelou is raising the potential of the Blacks by saying that like the dust, they will rise out of the earth where they have been living for centuries under the feet of the Whites. Angelou puts a lot of questions in front of them about how the Whites liked to see the Black, she is asking, whether they wanted to see the Blacks to walk without a strong will power by lowering their eyes and shoulders. She is again asking whether the self realization of both the Black men and women offend them. When they are enjoying, the Whites cannot accept that the creatures which were at their feet are standing with the backbone. The poem clearly portrays the celebration of the Black identity which they recaptured after centuries.

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8. GHANSHYAM

Kamala Das

About Kamala Das

Kamala Suraiyya was a major Indian English poet and littérateur and at

the same time a leading Malayalam author from Kerala, India. Her popularity in Kerala is based chiefly on her short stories and autobiography, while her oeuvre in English, written under the name **Kamala Das**, is noted for the fiery poems and explicit autobiography. Kamala Das was born in Punnayurkulam, Thrissur District in Kerala, on March 31, 1934, to V. M. Nair, a former managing editor of the widely-circulated Malayalam daily *Mathrubhumi*, and Nalappatt Balamani Amma, a renowned Malayali poetess.

She spent her childhood between Calcutta, where her father was employed as a senior officer in the Walford Transport Company that sold Bentley and Rolls Royce automobiles, and the Nalappatt ancestral home in Punnayurkulam.

Like her mother, Balamani Amma, Kamala Das also excelled in writing. Her love of poetry began at an early age through the influence of her great uncle, Nalappatt Narayana Menon, a prominent writer.

At the age of 15, she got married to bank officer Madhava Das, who encouraged her writing interests, and she started writing and publishing both in English and in Malayalam. Calcutta in the 1960s was a tumultuous time for the arts, and Kamala Das was one of the many voices that came up and started appearing in cult anthologies along with a generation of Indian English poets.

Kamala Das has received many awards for her literary contribution, including:

Asian Poetry Prize-1998, Sahitya Academy Award-2003, Vayalar Award 2001, Kerala Sahitya Academy Award-2005 etc.

Notes and explanations

Ghanashyam: Lord Krishna

Arbour: bower

Astir: make energetic

Red eyes of death: death is taking away life and here, death is the cruel one

Unveiled: come out

Sauna: a treatment of using steam and cold punch

Morgue: mortuary

Raiment: clothes

Fervid: energetic

Husk: lusty

Panic: with fear; here the fear about her existence

Climes: climates; in the lines it means new places where love is available

Your names are many: refers to Krishna who appear in different forms and names

Umbilical cord: placenta which connects the child in the womb with the mother

Eternal: everlasting

Tote: carry

Enchanted: attracted

Meaning of the poem

Kamala Das starts the poem by describing about the image of Ghanashyam who had made a nest in her heart and makes her energetic with his music. He had drawn her through the ways which are unknown to her. But whenever she reaches near him, he vanishes like a spectral flame. She realizes that, this flame is going to decide her future. Without him, she is waiting the red eyed death. According to her life is moisture with water, blood and semen. i.e. life includes everything related to a human being; being alive and living with every enjoyment in life. But death is the cruel thing that takes away the warmth from the body and touches with the cool hands. It includes the last sob of the relatives.

She made clothes for Ghanashyam with her words, and created a sky with her songs. And with her music she created the oceans of merriness. With her husband she enjoyed the married life. They played lusty games. But when he became old, he approached her only for his satisfaction. When he turned around she became panic; panic about her future which depended upon him. She always wanted love. When her husband failed to love her, she searched for love. She tried to find out love around her to survive. She lost her sleep and in her world, she was alone. She could not accept the sleepy love that her husband showed to her.

Ghanashyam appears with in everyone. When all are the same, it is not easy to identify who is who, who is lusty and who is kernel. Ghanashyam appears in different forms and with different names. She is in confusion that can she weaken the bonds consciously? When a child is born to the world, it cuts the connection with the world, but at the same time new relations begin. With each new connection, new traps and pain arise. Her loneliness in the life leads her in to the search of the new ones. She wanted peace which she can carry all the time with her. She wanted peace which will be reflected through her eyes. Among the people she kept silent and thought about what they kept unsaid and when they left her home she used to think about the wisdom which was included in the depth of the silence. In the shut room, under the silence, she thought about Ghanashyam and ran into the dreams of him just like an enchanted fish to the net.

Answer in a sentence or two

1. How does Kamala Das portray Ghanshyam in the opening of the poem?

Answer: In the beginning of the poem, the poet portrays 'Ghanshyam' as a koel who had made his nest in the arbour of her heart.

2. How are life and death pictured in '*Ghanshyam*'?

Answer: Kamala Das pictures life as moisture which is moisture by water, semen and blood. Death is draught which leads us to the cool rest rooms along with the sobs of the relatives.

3. "We played once a husk-game, my lover and I"

What does the poet mean through these words?

Answer: Through the lines, the poet refers to the love between her and her lover. These lines show that once they were in deep love.

4. Why does the poet become panic when her husband turns back?

Answer: The poet becomes panic because it is a question in front of her about her existence in his world. When he turns back, that means he cannot show his love to her. Here the poet openly speaks about female sexuality.

5. "Like bird I migrated to warmer climes" Explain.

Answer: Here Kamala Das through this simile, talks about her quest for love. She searched for love in the concept of Ghanshyam who appeared in various names.

6.my lover.... His ageing body in its pride needing the need for mine' What confessional element can be traced here?

Answer: Here the poet speaks about the love her husband keeps in his mind for her. Even though he is much older than her, he needs her love in life.

7. What is the concluding idea of the poem?

Answer: The concluding lines of the poem speak about the attractive power of Ghanshyam. His love is like a trap/net which is spread in her mind where her thoughts fly and get trapped like an enchanted fish.

Answer in a paragraph

1. Explain the Radha-Krishna myth in the poem.

Answer: Radha-Krishna is the most recurring love image in Indian mythology. Their love is portrayed as the love which breaks all concepts of love. Krishna is the Lord who appears among the people in different forms with different names. Radha is seeking his love with all her devotion. Her devotion leads her to fly into his feet and get salvation. Here in this poem, Kamala Das uses this image to picturise her quest for love. When her husband fails to show his love to her, she seeks some warmer climes to get love. She finds the same Krishna in each body and soul. When the concept of soul refers to the same spirit, she

could find Ghanshyam everywhere. Love came to her with different names and features as Krishna used to be. She was attracted into his love as an enchanted fish into a net.

2. Discuss the confessional elements in the poem.

Answer: Confessional poetry means the poem which deals with the facts and intimate mental and physical experiences of a poet's own life. The poem '*Ghanshyam*' deals with some of the personal experiences of Kamala Das. The poem speaks about women's sexuality. In this poem, she explains what kind of love she has kept for Ghanshyam she worshiped and loved him. She mentions her relationship with her husband. She points out that once they used to be in love. But along with the time, her husband's lust towards her was quietened and she realized that his ageing body has lost the love for her. But her quest for love searched some warm atmosphere where her wishes for love will be satisfied. She believed in the spirit of '*Ghanshyam*' which exists in every man. She suffered from the pain which was created out of love.

3. How does Kamala Das throw questions into the face of patriarchy?

Answer: Kamala Das can be considered as the one who started speaking in terms of feminism in Indian English literature. In a patriarchal society, women are treated as the objects which are made for the fulfillment of the happiness of men. The duty assigned to them is to keep men happy in all aspects. They have to make food according to the will of men, take care of them and the children they had given birth for them, make them happy in the bed etc. when a woman is married in the patriarchal society, her freedom ends and she is supposed to love only him. Hence, Kamala Das makes an explosion by openly speaking against the man's nature of turning back to a woman after his satisfaction. Also, she asks for love from everyone in whom she could find her Ghanshyam. By this way, Kamala Das speaks against patriarchy in this poem.

Answer in words less than 300

1. Analyse *Ghanshyam* as poem which discusses confessional elements?

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9. DADDY

Sylvia Plath

About the Author

Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on 27 October 1932. Her father, Otto Plath, was a German émigré and her mother, Aurelia Schober, was an American of Australian –Jewish descent. She loved and worshipped her father ardently. He died when she was only eight. The

death of her father was a traumatic event of her childhood. It later figured as an obsession in her poetry.

She married the British poet Ted Hughes in 1956 and had two children. The couple separated in 1962. Plath suffered from depression from the age of 20 and underwent psychoanalytic treatment. She made many suicide attempts. The first attempt was in 1953, by taking her mother's sleeping pills. Another one was a car accident she had in June 1961. She committed suicide by inhaling coal gas (carbon monoxide) in 1963. Plath's grave stone bears the inscription that Hughes chose for her: 'Even amidst fierce flames the golden lotus can be planted.'

After teaching for a year at Smith College, Sylvia Plath decided to devote her full time to writing. Sylvia Plath's first book of poems "The Colossus" was published in 1960. Her only novel "The Bell Jar" appeared in 1963. "Ariel" (1965), "Crossing the Water" and "Winter Trees" (both 1971) were published posthumously.

Summary of the Poem

The poem 'Daddy' is a dramatic monologue in which a daughter verbally assassinates her father. The poem is a phantasy created out of the poet's obsessive belief that her father's pure Prussian ancestry could have made him a Nazi and her mother's Jewish background might have consigned her to a concentration camp. The tension that develops from this situation is the main spring of the poem.

Sylvia Plath's own note to this poem reads: 'The poem is spoken by a girl with an Electra Complex. Her father died while she thought he was god. Her case is complicated by the fact that her father was also a Nazi and her mother very possibly part Jewish. In the daughter the two strains merge and paralyze each other. She has to act out the awful allegory once over before she is free of it.'

Based on the 'Electra Complex' of Freudian psychology, the poem presents a situation in which the daughter is 'in love' with the father. She simultaneously hates and admires him and the conflicting emotions restrict and dwarf her life to such an extent that she must get rid of the situation by killing him. But first she tries to join him through suicide, later through marriage to a man who shares many of the father's qualities.

The suffocation the poetess suffered due to the Electra complex is identified with that of a foot shut up in a black shoe. The colour black and the shoe are emblematic of the Nazi persecution. The poetess says for thirty years she has lived like a foot in the black shoe daring not even to breathe. The poet confesses that she had to kill her father. But she was absolved from the sin of patricide as her father had died before she had time to assassinate him. The poetess's ambivalent attitude to the father with its mingled admiration and hate is effectively brought out by the images of 'marble- heavy, a bag full of god' and 'ghastly statue with one grey toe'.

Otto Emil Plath, the poetess' father immigrated to America from a Polish

town. The poetess blindly believed that her father's pure Prussian ancestry could have made him a Nazi. She says: "I never could talk to you/ the tongue stuck in my jaw/ the tongue stuck in barbed wire snare/ Ich. Ich. Ich. / I could hardly speak'. Barbed wire snare is a reference to the concentration camps where Jews were incarcerated by the Nazis during the World War II. The poetess makes a reference to the trains carrying Jewish prisoners to various concentration camps. She had an obsession that every German she met was her father.

The poetess has always been scared of her father- his Germaneness. She has been afraid of the German air force, Luftwaffe, her father's gobbledygook, his neat moustache, his Aryan eye. She refers to her father as a Panzer-man (armored man). The superiority complex and the savagery and violence of the German race are brought out by the sex_ and such other images as swastika and 'boot in the face'. ('Swastika' was an emblem associated with prehistoric Aryans, revived by the Nazis as their symbol). The poetess' mind was complicated with the fact that her father was a brute German with a brute heart.

In the picture she has of her father, he appears to have a cleft in his chin instead of his foot. (The idea is that her father seems crueler than devil to her. Proverbially, a devil is supposed to have a cleft foot.) Sylvia Plath was only eight when her father died. He died while she thought him a God. Yet it was he who tore her pretty red heart into two with his seeming Naziness. At twenty she made an attempt to commit suicide by swallowing a large number of sleeping pills. This attempt of her to join her father ended up in failure. When they rescued her, she tried to join her father by another way: 'I made a model of you/ A man in black with a Meinkampf look'. The implication is that Sylvia married a man who resembled her father. (Freudian psychology endorses what the poetess has done). Thus the poetess obliterates her memories of her father by having a stake driven through the heart of his heartlessness. The verbal assassination of the father by the daughter is complete with the utterance of the words 'Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through'.

Comprehension

1. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences.

a. What does Electra complex signify?

As per Freudian psychology, Electra complex signifies a daughter's excessive love for her father.

b. How did Sylvia Plath manage to get rid of her father's influence?

Sylvia plath managed to get rid of her father's influence by a verbal assassination of the man.

c. How did she try to unite with her father?

At first she tried to unite with her father by trying to commit suicide. But when she failed in her attempts, she married a man who resembled her father.

d. What is the suffocation, the poet suffered due to Electra complex, identified with?

The suffocation the poet suffered due to Electra complex is identified with that of “a foot shut up in a black shoe”.

e. What is the black shoe emblematic of?

The color black and the shoe are emblematic of the Nazi persecution.

f. What does “the barbed wire snare” mean?

The barbed wire snare means the concentration camps set up by the Nazis to persecute the Jews during World War II.

g. How does the poet’s father appear in the picture she has?

Her father appears to have a cleft in his chin instead of his foot. The idea is that her father seems crueler than a devil. Proverbially, a devil is supposed to have cleft feet.

h. “I made a model of you

A man in black with a Meinkampf look”. Explain.

These lines imply that Sylvia married a man who resembled her father. The colour black and Meinkampf are emblematic of Nazi Germany.

II. Answer the following in a paragraph.

a. What are the poetic devices employed in ‘Daddy’? Explain with the help of examples from the poem.

The excellence of Sylvia Plath’s poem “Daddy” lies not only in its horrible theme but also in its technical greatness. The poet makes use of the nursery rhyme, rhythm to suggest the innocence and vulnerability of the daughter. The pattern of rhyme is irregular, but the same rhyme is used in all the sixteen five-lined stanzas of the poem. As a result the poem acquires an unnerving chant preparing us for the final ritual –murder of the persecutor. The opening line starts with a steady rhythmic beat “you do not do, you do not do” and culminates in a hysterical and brutal outburst, “Daddy,daddy, you bastard, I am through. A variety of tones is created with broken sentences, incomplete sentences, and sentences without a main verb, repetition of certain words and use of German words. The language is simple, but the content is horrible and the rhythm is hypnotic. Colour symbolism is used abundantly and effectively in the poem. Various colours like black, white, grey, green, and bright blue and red are used to represent different qualities.

b. The autobiographical element in the poem “Daddy”

In the poem “Daddy” written by Sylvia Plath, the father figure is modeled on Otto Plath, her own father. In the poem we observe a mixture of love and hate for her father. She is perhaps thinking of the last days of her father whose one leg had to be imputed to check the spread of gangrene in his body during his last illness. This autobiographical detail from Plath’s life provides her with an opportunity to find an apt symbol (of the “shoe”) for her childhood and early youth inhibitions. The child Sylvia Plath was certainly in awe of her father, a man of commanding presence whom his wife Aurelia adored and slaved for. “The black man” is ‘Daddy’ who has “cleft”. The “black” devil merges with the “black man” who bit my pretty heart in two.” In other words, Ted Hughes whom Sylvia Plath married replaces the father. He was tall, handsome and clad in black leather-jackets popular in America and Western Europe then.

3. Answer the following in not more than 300 words

Discuss Sylvia Plath’s poem Daddy as a poem about a girl with an Electra complex.

Sylvia Plath’s poem ‘Daddy’ is a dramatic monologue in which a daughter verbally assassinates her father. The poem is a phantasy created out of the poet’s obsessive belief that her father’s pure Prussian ancestry could have made him a Nazi and her mother’s Jewish background might have consigned her to a concentration camp. The tension that develops from this situation is the main spring of the poem.

Sylvia Plath’s own note to this poem reads: ‘The poem is spoken by a girl with an Electra Complex’. Her father died while she thought he was God. Her case is complicated by the fact that her father was also a Nazi and her mother very possibly part Jewish. In the daughter the two strains merge and paralyze each other. She has to act out the awful allegory once over before she is free of it.

Based on the ‘Electra Complex’ of Freudian psychology, the poem presents a situation in which the daughter is ‘in love’ with the father. She simultaneously hates and admires him and the conflicting emotions restrict and dwarf her life to such an extent that she must get rid of the situation by killing him. But first she tries to join him through suicide, later through marriage to a man who shares many of the father’s qualities.

The suffocation the poetess suffered due to the Electra complex is identified with that of a foot shut up in a black shoe. The colour black and the shoe are emblematic of the Nazi persecution. The poetess says ‘for thirty years she has lived like a foot in the black shoe’ daring not even to breathe. The poet confesses that she had to kill her father. But she was absolved from the sin of patricide as her father had died before she had time to assassinate him. The poetess’s ambivalent attitude to the father with its mingled admiration and hate is effectively brought out by the images of ‘marble- heavy, a bag full of god’ and ‘ghastly statue with one grey toe’.

The poetess has always been scared of her father- his Germaneness. She

had an obsession that every German she met was her father. She had been afraid of the German air force, Luftwaffe, her father's gobbledygook, his neat moustache, his Aryan eye. She refers to her father as a Panzer-man (armored man). The superiority complex and the savagery and violence of the German race are brought out by these and such other images as swastika and 'boot in the face'. The poetess' mind was complicated with the fact that her father was a brute German with a brute heart.

In the picture she has of her father, he appears to have a cleft in his chin instead of his foot. Sylvia Plath was only eight when her father died. He died while she thought him a God. Yet it was he who tore her pretty red heart into two with his seeming Nazi ness. At twenty she made an attempt to commit suicide by swallowing a large number of sleeping pills. This attempt of her to join her father ended up in failure. When they rescued her, she tried to join her father by another way: 'I made a model of you/ A man in black with a Meinkamph look'. The implication is that Sylvia married a man who resembled her father. (Freudian psychology endorses what the poetess has done). Thus the poetess obliterates her memories of her father by having a stake driven through the heart of his heartlessness. The verbal assassination of the father by the daughter is complete with the utterance of the words 'Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through'.

10. ***ANOTHER WOMAN***

Imtiaz Dharker

About Imtiaz Dharker

Dharker was born in Lahore to Pakistani parents. She was brought up in Glasgow where her family moved when she was less than a year old. She was married to Simon Powell, the founder of the organization Poetry Live, who died in October 2009 after surviving for eleven years with cancer. Dharker divides her time between London, Wales, and Mumbai. She says she describes

herself as a "Scottish Muslim Calvinist" adopted by India and married into Wales. Her daughter Ayesha Dharker, {whose father is Anil Dharker}, is a well known actress in international films, TV and stage.

Dharker has written five books of poetry *Purdah* (1989), *Postcards from God* (1997), *I speak for the Devil* (2001), *The Terrorist at my Table* (2006) and *Leaving Fingerprints* (2009) (all self-illustrated).

The main themes of Dharker's poetry include home, freedom, journeys, geographical and cultural displacement, communal conflict and gender politics. All her books are published by the poetry publishing house Bloodaxe. *Purdah and Other Poems* deal with the various aspects of a Muslim woman's life where she experiences injustice, oppression and violence engineered through the culture of purdah.

This mixed heritage and itinerant lifestyle is at the heart of her writing: questioning, imagistic and richly textured poems that span geographical and cultural displacement, conflict and gender politics, while also interrogating received ideas about home, freedom and faith. Yet for all the seriousness of her themes, Dharker is a truly global poet, whose work speaks plainly and with great emotional intelligence to anyone who has ever felt adrift in the increasingly complex, multicultural and shrinking world we inhabit.

Meaning of the poem

The poem is about the domestic violence happening against women all over India. The poem starts with the picture of a woman who is in the market for purchasing vegetables. She buys 'methi' for the daily purpose of the kitchen. She wishes for a radish which is white and sweet, but thinking it as an extravagance, she leaves her wish. She returns it. She counts the coins carefully and carefully ties them in the bundle at her waist. At home, she has to face to face the harsh behavior of her mother-in-law. She handles the 'methi' with care and chops them and other vegetables with care and makes curry. At the time of this, she tries to protect herself from the heat.

The mother-in law starts cursing her spending much money in the market. Mother-in law harasses her with words. She utters cursing words against her parents for sending this girl to take every good feature off from this home. The girl listened to all by sitting bended in front of the kerosene stove. She doesn't face her husband who comes home by listening this and keeps quiet. She bends a little more when he comes. In that home there was no right for her to speak. She quarreled with the curry which was being cooked in the pot since she had no other option to resist.

Hence, this is the house where she has been sent to by her parents as a daughter-in-law. This is the man to who she has been wedded to. This is the world about which she has been getting the lessons of suffering. From the childhood onwards she has been getting lessons about how to behave at in-law's houses. So the only option left in front of her is to take her life. At that

moment, she submits her in to the hands of the flames.

It is only her end. Along with that it is a beginning. She is not the single victim of domestic violence. There are other girls, she is only a representative. There are woman in our society who are struggling much like this; who are escaping like this. But the society pays no attention to this and turns face in order to escape from the blames.

Notes and explanations

Methi: fenugreek

Extravagance: extravagance means more than money, the person is important here.

Dark looks: harsh eyes which thoroughly examines her

Shielding her face: to protect her face both from heat and light. She suggests her mother-in-law shouldn't see the expression on her face

Crouched: here the way in which she sit means her situation and sufferings

Another torch: another girl in another family

Shield: to protect or to escape from the blame

Answer in a sentence or two

1. Explain the title "*Another Woman*"

Answer: The title suggests that domestic violence is not a case which could be applied to a single woman. It is a wide crisis that can take away even the life of the women.

2. How does Imtiaz Dharker show the poverty of the woman?

Answer: From the market, the woman buys cheap vegetables and she leaves her wish to buy the radish that attracted her. Along with that she had limited coins with her.

3. What are the usual words which beat her?

Answer: The usual words which beat her were the words of her mother-in-law. Her mother-in-law cursed her for spending much money in the market and also cursed her parents for sending her to their house to as a bad omen to spoil their fortunes.

4. How does her husband behave to her?

Answer: Her husband never gives her concern even though he listens to the speech of his mother. He never looks at her when he comes home.

5. 'The future she had been born into' Explain?

Answer: The line refers to the lessons given to the girls at home at their childhood. The elders will be talking to them about the manner in which they have to behave at the other home.

6. What was the only choice left for her?

Answer: The only choice left in front of her was to take her life to escape from the world which was torturing her.

7. What was the 'brilliant spark'?

Answer: It was the idea to kill herself by throwing kerosene. The spark she had thrown to her was the key to escape from this hell.

Answer in a paragraph

1. Comment on the gender issues discussed in another woman.

Answer: Intiaz Dharker discusses the gender issues of the women in India. Sex is a biologically constructed identity and gender is sociologically constructed identity. In the context of India, both these identities decide the status of the people. The girl child born to a family is considered as a curse. From her own house she will not get proper food since the boy is going to earn for the family and his health should be considered more than that of the girl. The poem portrays the life of a woman at her in-law's house. The first point Dharker tries to bring about is that of malnutrition. The house in the poem has poor condition and the woman does not spend much money to fulfill the wish of her mouth. She cooks for the whole family in which she will not get enough food to fulfill the need of her belly. The other woman in the home i.e., her mother-in-law shouts at her without any reason. Here we can see that the women themselves become enemy for themselves. According to the social structure one cannot harass the other, who is having a position which is higher than them. The mother-in-law cannot resist the oppression she has been suffering. The only way to satisfy herself is to throw her anger upon the daughter-in-law who is lower than her. From the husband also the woman will not get care. Here in the poem the husband never pays attention to the sufferings of the woman. She tries to save her face from the light which will show the face filled with emotions to the others. She do not have the right to raise her voice against the injustice insisted upon her. Finally she committed suicide by putting fire upon her. She is a typical example of the woman who are imposed to the domestic violence.

2. Do you agree that under the patriarchal system, women consciously become the enemies of women?

Answer: A patriarchal system means the social system where men hold the power of economy, rule and all the aspects of the society. In such a social system, women are considered as commodities of men from which they will get all kinds of pleasures. The women work in the house and surroundings from morning to night without any payment for the welfare of the male members of the family. They sacrifice good food and other good living conditions for them. At night after the whole work and childcare, they have to satisfy the husbands who never pay attention towards them. All these facts also are accepted by the elder women and these things are accepted as the rules for the women to be

followed throughout their life. From the childhood onwards the girls start getting lessons about the behavior they have to follow at their in-laws. Among the women, the priority is for the age and the marital status. A woman's life goes through different stages like learning, practice etc. They practice the lessons at their youth with bitter experiences. These bitter experiences make them out raged and they have no other option to show it. Hence they take the opportunity of throwing their anger upon the women who are lower than them. The women had learned that their status is lower compared to that of men and they are taught like that. Education was forbidden to them and the women were following how they were constructed in the society. As the part of their existence, they have no other option other than following the rules. So more than the conscious act, it can be considered as an unconscious one.

3. 'We shield our faces from the heat' explain the sarcasm hidden in the lines?

Answer: In the poem *Another Woman* the poet portrays the sufferings of a woman who finally commits suicide out of domestic violence against women. The woman in the poem tries to protect her face in order to protect herself from the heat and also save her face from the others. She does all the jobs in the family by listening to the complaints against her. But she never makes a complaint and silently listens to them all. In that house, she does not have the right to speak even though they try to kill her. The poet suggests that it is not an odd event in the society. She is a representative of the whole women in the society who are experiencing the same condition. We are turning our face from the harsh realities of our society. We talk about much things but never act. The society knows that women are getting killed and oppressed in the name of birth, dowry etc. But there is no one to act against it.

Answer in 250 words

1. How does Dharker explain the situation of the married woman in a patriarchal society?

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The poem is about the domestic violence happening against women all over India. The poem starts with the picture of a woman who is in the market for purchasing vegetables. She buys 'methi' for the daily purpose of the kitchen. She wishes for a radish which is white and sweet, but thinking it as an extravagance, she leaves her wish. She returns it. She counts the coins carefully and carefully ties them in the bundle at her waist. At home, she has to face to face the harsh behavior of her mother-in-law. She handles the 'methi' with care and chops them and other vegetables with care and makes curry. At the time of this, she tries to protect herself from the heat.

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Imtiaz Dharker discusses the gender issues of the women in India. Sex is a biologically constructed identity and gender is sociologically constructed identity. In the context of India, both these identities decide the status of the people. The girl child born to a family is considered as a curse. From her own house she will not get proper food since the boy is going to earn for the family and his health should be considered more than that of the girl. The poem portrays the life of a woman at her in-law's house. The first point Dharker tries to bring about is that of malnutrition. The house in the poem has poor condition and the woman does not spend much money to fulfill the wish of

her mouth. She cooks for the whole family in which she will not get enough food to fulfill the need of her belly. The other woman in the home ie., her mother -in-law shouts at her without any reason. Here we can see that the women themselves become enemy for themselves. According to the social structure one cannot harass the other, who is having a position which is higher than them. The mother-in-law cannot resist the oppression she has been suffering. The only way to satisfy herself is to throw her anger upon the daughter-in-law who is lower than her. From the husband also the woman will not get care. Here in the poem the husband never pays attention to the sufferings of the woman. She tries to save her face from the light which will show the face filled with emotions to the others. She do not have the right to raise her voice against the injustice insisted upon her. Finally she committed suicide by putting fire upon her. She is a typical example of the women who are imposed to the domestic violence

MODULE III: SHORT STORY

11. ZERO-SUM GAME

Bibhas Sen

About the Author and the Story

Bibhas Sen's *Zero-sum Game* is a short story which discusses the issues that emerged in a third world country like India on account of globalization. It reveals how developments in international politics and economics touch our humble and mundane daily lives. The author Bibhas Sen who works in the field of advertisement was inspired by the news paper reports about the impact of the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) on the lives of common men and women.

Summary

The signing of the new GATT treaty by India triggered a state of violent disturbance and disorder in Indian economy and politics. Kinsangunj is an obscure town in UP. Shewprasad Tiwari was the owner of a weekly titled 'Kisangunj Samachar' whose office is situated in Kisangunj. Tiwari's extended family had been wheat farmers for five generations and he was very well aware of the consequences of Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). He knew that TRIPS would possibly increase the cost of high yielding variety of seeds and would dwindle his family income. Therefore he gave expression to his feelings in an editorial which was essentially an attack on the shamelessness of the American policy.

When Mr. Tiwari's attack reached the editorial department of 'Hind Times', it was found both amusing and interesting and so it appeared translated into English as a box item on the Front-page of the next days issue of 'Hind Times'. The editorial was under the title 'The Ugly Face of American Trade Policy'.

The gist of the editorial

The farmers of India have been growing wheat for more than five hundred years, long before America was 'invented'. But the Indian farmers will have to pay more for the high yielding variety seeds because the Americans have done the genetic engineering on them. The seed therefore is now the intellectual property of America. It is only because of their obsession with the property that they preferred the phrase intellectual property to words like invention, patent and royalty. The author illustrates the futility of the concept of the intellectual property right with an illustration. The concept of zero was given to the world by Aryabhata, the Indian intellectual. The concept was first borrowed by the Arabs and from them through Phoenician it reached the western world. Therefore the

intellectual right to property of zero belongs to Indians. But we have never even thought of charging royalty for this right. If we do so, even the enormous wealth of America may not be enough to pay a single month's bill.

The responses of the Indian political elites on reading the editorial:

The editors of various news papers published this piece as a bit of comic relief from the monotony of journalistic activities. The members of the Lok Sabha rushed to the well of the house during the zero hour with Tiwari's editorial before the speaker. They demanded that the government accept Tiwari's suggestion and teach a lesson to the arrogant Americans. The speaker agreed to have a debate on the subject. The leader of the right wing nationalist opposition claimed that when the western worlds were populated by savages, only the genius of the Hindu tradition could have produced zero. The left front leader described the situation as an example of shameful exploitation by capitalist imperialism of the material resources of India as well as its intellectual treasures. Some of them used unparliamentary words and the speaker was forced to adjourn the house more than once. But every time the house reconvened, the members walked out leaving the spectator and Prime Minister alone in the vast hall.

The government agreed to constitute a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) to examine the entire issue and submit its report within six months.

The Role of Media in Sensationalizing Aryabhata Zero and its Impact in American Politics:

The Aryabhata zero became front page banner headline right across the country. The international news agency was quick to pick up the news and Shewaprasad Tiwari's personal attack became thundering global news. From the foreign embassies and consulates, reports and analysis sped towards their respective capitals. The following report went out from the American embassy. The entire cabinet of America requested the American President to convene an immediate meeting. The American Attorney General consulted the chief justice of the Supreme Court and the chief of the World Court at Hague. They were unanimous in this opinion that it would be difficult to dismiss Indian claim on Aryabhata zero, unless it could be proved that Aryabhata was not the originator of the zero. The American president asked whether the Indians could prove their claim. The Attorney General pointed out that the fact was documented primarily by western mathematicians and historians and no one has made a contrary claim since then. He added that the Indians are trying to make commercial capital out of it. The president asked the opinion of the secretary of commerce who said that the number of times zero is used would defy calculation. The Treasury Secretary remarked that whatever would be the rate fixed by the Indians for the zero, the Americans wouldn't have enough money to pay them. The Secretary of the State suggested for a compromise. He pointed out that zero is not a commodity which the Indians could sell to the Americans. Hence they cannot enforce their claim. The secretary of the state warned that many third world countries who signed the GATT may sympathize with India. He reminded that the Americans have many dependents but few friends. He suggested that the Americans must be a little bit generous about seeds, fertilizers and

pesticides. He also said that they could throw in a few obsolete pharmaceutical products and also drinks like coco cola, pepsi etc. and their automobiles which has no world market. The president considered Mikes' suggestion a workable solution acceptable to the Indians. The JPC report was submitted to parliament within the stipulated time. Various legal authorities confirmed that India's claim to the intellectual property right on the Arybhata zero was legally tenable. But it was not easy to be enforced even with legal sanction. Since keeping track of the zeros used by American computers would be impossible, another solution was devised. It was that America will place at the disposal of India a sum of two billion dollars every year to be used by India to defray the additional import cost burden caused by TRIPS on items like seeds, pesticides, pharmaceuticals etc.

The Indian proposal was duly made through proper diplomatic and legal channels and was predictably rejected by America. After the unending arguments, India felt the need for a formula to end the deadlock.

The final agreement between India and America

The finance and commerce ministers of India and those of America met at Barbados. India demanded five billion dollars in exchange for revoking all future claims by way of properties rights on the Aryabhata zero. This was grudgingly accepted by the Americans. They had also to accept the demand of India for price-status quo on specific items. The Americans insisted on a sole condition that, in pursuance of the guidelines of the World Bank and the IMF, Indian farmers should be asked to pay the full cost for electricity and water. The condition was imposed because America was concerned about the set back to the forces of liberalization that could take place if India continues with such subsidies which distort free market mechanism. India was forced to accept the condition prescribed by America, because her economy is dependant on assistance from the World Bank and the IMF, the two institutions financed by USA.

Both the sides felt relieved at the mutually accepted retreat from a difficult situation. In India the positive solution of the Arybhata riddle was hailed as a moral victory. The media telecast an interview with Shewprasad Tiwari. He was hailed as the champion of the farming community and the embodiment of the spirit of Indian nationalism. Various political parties were coaxing him to accept their nominations to contest for the state assembly. It was said that he might get a Padmashri. In spite of the excessive flattery Shewprasad had not changed his thrifty habit. He had saved at least Rs.3780 on the cost of seeds as a result of the American stand to be liberal on items like seeds and pesticides.

The Impact of the Indo-American Agreement on Indian farmers

In the meanwhile the Finance minister favoured the American demand that the Indian farmers must be asked to pay the full cost of electricity and water. This was mainly to expedite the one time payments of five billion dollars. Shewprasad had not paid much attention to these developments. But about a week later he received his first bill for the

electricity and water at the revised rate. He was asked to make an extra payment of Rs. 2835 for electricity and Rs.945 for water. The charges had been more than he had expected. But they were still within his means. But the savings on seeds i.e., Rs.3780 had to be spent on the extra charges on electricity and water i.e., Rs.2834 + Rs.945 = Rs.3780.

The story thus illustrates the plight of the Indian farmers as a consequence of signing of GATT treaty and implementing TRIPS.

Comprehension

1. Answer the following in two or three sentences.

a. How did the signing of the new GATT treaty affect the farmers of Kisnangunj?

The signing of the new GATT treaty by India triggered a state of violent disturbance and disorder in Indian economy and politics. As a result of Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), the cost of high yielding variety of seeds increased and family income of the Indian farmers dwindled.

b. Who was Shewprasad Tiwari? How did he express his annoyance at TRIPS?

Shewprasad Tiwari was the owner of a weekly titled 'Kisangunj Samachar'. He gave expression to his annoyance at TRIPS in an editorial. He illustrates that the claim to the intellectual property right of zero belongs to the Indians.

c. How did Tiwari's editorial in his local tabloid gain wide publicity?

The editors of various news papers published Tiwari's editorial as a bit of comic relief from the monotony of journalistic activities. Thus it gained wide publicity.

d. "And instantly all hell broke loose". What incident is referred to here?

When Mr. Tiwari's attack on the American claim for intellectual property right on GM seeds reached the editorial department of 'Hind Times', it appeared translated into English on the Front-page of the next day's issue. The editorial was under the title 'The Ugly Face of American Trade Policy'. It illustrated the futility of intellectual property right on the ground that the intellectual property right to zero belongs to the Indians. This news happened to be the source of a violent debate in international politics.

e. How did Tiwari establish through his editorial that America has no moral standing to charge extra for GM seeds?

Tiwari established through his editorial that America has no moral standing to charge extra for GM seeds on the ground that the claim for intellectual property right to zero belongs to India as it was the contribution of Indian intellectual Aryabhata.

f. How does Tiwari assert the Indian claim to Aryabhata's zero?

Tiwari asserts the Indian claim to Aryabhata's zero by illustrating that the concept of zero was first given to the world by Arybhata, an Indian intellectual.

g. What was the Indian proposal to resolve the Aryabhata zero issue?

India demanded five billion dollars in exchange for revoking all future claims by way of properties rights on the Aryabhata zero

i. What was the sole condition imposed on India for granting intellectual property right to Aryabhata zero? Why was the condition imposed?

The Americans insisted on a sole condition that, as per the guidelines of the World Bank and the IMF, Indian farmers should be asked to pay the full cost for electricity and water.

The condition was imposed because America was concerned about the set back to the forces of liberalization that could take place if India continues with such subsidies which distort free market mechanism

j. Why was India forced to accept the condition prescribed by America?

India was forced to accept the condition prescribed by America, because her economy is dependant on assistance from the World Bank and the IMF, the two institutions financed by USA.

k. what is a zero-sum game? How does TRIPS prove to be a zero-sum game for Indian farmers?

Zero sum game is a term used in game theory to describe both real games and situations of all kinds usually between two players, where the gain of one player is equal and opposite to the loss suffered by the other. To the Indian farmers the TRIPS proved to be a zero sum game since they were asked to bear all cost on electricity and water inspite of a concession allowed to them on the cost of GM seeds.

II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph.

a. How did the signing of the GATT Treaty affect the Indian farmers?

General Agreement on Tarrifs and Trade is a trade treaty, reducing barriers to international trade. According to this treaty, member nations agreed to reduce tariffs, quotas and subsidies, to recover from the economic crisis following the World War II. GATT was signed in 1943. It was replaced by world trade organization (WTO) in 1995. The signing of the GATT treaty generated a world wide upheaval. It adversely affected the farmers of the third world nations like India. The signing of the new GATT treaty by India triggered a state of violent disturbance and disorder in Indian economy and politics. As a result of Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), the cost of high yielding variety of seeds increased and family income of the Indian farmers dwindled. To the Indian farmers the TRIPS proved to be a zero sum game since they were asked to bear all cost on electricity and water inspite of a concession allowed to them on the cost of GM seeds. Bhibhas Sen in his short story, zero- sum Game reveals how developments in international politics and economics are in favour of developed nations and how such developments touch our humble, mundane daily life. The author shows how the Americans insisted on a sole condition that, as per the

guidelines of the World Bank and the IMF, Indian farmers should be asked to pay the full cost for electricity and water.

The condition was imposed because America was concerned about the set back to the forces of liberalization that could take place if India continues with such subsidies which distort free market mechanism. India was forced to accept the condition prescribed by America, because her economy is dependant on assistance from the World Bank and the IMF, the two institutions financed by USA.

b. How does Bibhas Sen establish that the treaties on trade are infavour of developed nations?

Bibhas Sen in his short story, zero sum game, establishes that treaties on trade are in favour of developed naions. The signing of the new GATT treaty by India triggered a state of violent disturbance and disorder in Indian economy and politics. As a result of Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), the cost of high yielding variety of seeds increased and family income of the Indian farmers dwindled. The farmers of India have been growing wheat for more than five hundred years, long before America was 'invented'. But the Indian farmers will have to pay more for the high yielding variety seeds because the Americans have done the genetic engineering on them. The seed therefore is now the intellectual property of America. The concept of the intellectual property right is futile. If America claim right on GM seeds, the intellectual right to property of zero belongs to Indians. However, to the Indian farmers the TRIPS proved to be a zero sum game since they were asked to bear all cost on electricity and water inspite of a concession allowed to them on the cost of GM seeds. Bhibhas Sen in his short story, zero- sum Game, reveals how developments in international politics and economics are in favour of developed nations and how such developments touch our humble, mundane daily life. The author shows how the Americans insisted on a sole condition that, as per the guidelines of the World Bank and the IMF, Indian farmers were asked to pay the full cost for electricity and water. India was forced to accept the condition prescribed by America, because her economy is dependant on assistance from the World Bank and the IMF, the two institutions financed by USA.

c. What is the role of media in sensationalizing non-issues as revealed in 'the zero-sum Game'.

The signing of the new GATT treaty by India triggered a state of violent disturbance and disorder in Indian economy and politics. Shewprasad Tiwari, the owner of 'Kisangunj Samachar,' expressed his annoyance at TRIPS in an editorial. He illustrates that the claim to the intellectual property right of zero belongs to the Indians. The editors of various news papers published Tiwari's editorial as a bit of comic relief from the monotony of journalistic activities. Thus it gained wide publicity. When Mr. Tiwari's attack on the American claim for intellectual property right on GM seeds reached the editorial department of 'Hind Times', it appeared translated into English on the Front-page of the next day's issue. The editorial was under the title 'The Ugly Face of American Trade Policy'. It illustrated the futility of intellectual property right. Tiwari claims that the

intellectual property right to zero belongs to the Indians. This news happened to be the source of a violent debate in international politics. The Aryabhata zero became front page banner headline right across the country. The international news agency was quick to pick up the news and Shewaprasad Tiwari's personal attack became thundering global news. From the foreign embassies and consulates, reports and analysis sped towards their respective capitals. The entire cabinet of America requested the American President to convene an immediate meeting. The American Attorney General consulted the chief justice of the Supreme Court and the chief of the World Court at Hague. They were unanimous in this opinion that it would be difficult to dismiss Indian claim on Aryabhata zero, unless it could be proved that Aryabhata was not the originator of the zero. This incident illustrates the role of media in sensationalizing non-issues.

d. The significance of the title 'Zero-sum Game'.

Zero sum Game is a term used in game theory to describe both real games and situations of all kinds usually between two players, where the gain of one player is equal and opposite to the loss suffered by the other. Bibhas Sen in his short story, 'Zero sum Game', establishes that treaties on trade are in favour of developed nations. The signing of the new GATT treaty by India triggered a state of violent disturbance and disorder in Indian economy and politics. As a result of Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), the cost of high yielding variety of seeds increased and family income of the Indian farmers dwindled. The farmers of India have been growing wheat for more than five hundred years, long before America was 'invented'. But the Indian farmers will have to pay more for the high yielding variety seeds because the Americans have done the genetic engineering on them. The seed therefore is now the intellectual property of America. The concept of the intellectual property right is futile. If America claim right on GM seeds, the intellectual right to property of zero belongs to Indians. Bibhas Sen reveals how developments in international politics and economics are in favour of developed nations and how such developments touch our humble, mundane daily life. The author shows how the Americans insisted on a sole condition that, as per the guidelines of the World Bank and the IMF, Indian farmers were asked to pay the full cost for electricity and water. India was forced to accept the condition prescribed by America, because her economy is dependant on assistance from the World Bank and the IMF, the two institutions financed by USA. To the Indian farmers the TRIPS proved to be a zero sum game since they were asked to bear all cost on electricity and water inspite of a concession allowed to them on the cost of GM seeds.

III. Answer the following in not more than 300 words

a. Discuss the plight of the Indian farmers as a consequence of signing the GAAT treaty and implementing TRIPS.

Bibhas Sen's Zero-sum Game is a short story which discusses the issues that emerged in a third world country like India on account of globalization. It reveals how developments in international politics and economics touch our humble and mundane daily lives. The author Bibhas Sen who works in the field

of advertisement was inspired by the news paper reports about the impact of the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) on the lives of common men and women.

Bibhas Sen tries to establish that treaties on trade are in favour of developed nations. The signing of the new GATT treaty by India triggered a state of violent disturbance and disorder in Indian economy and politics. As a result of Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), the cost of high yielding variety of seeds increased and family income of the Indian farmers dwindled. The farmers of India have been growing wheat for more than five hundred years, long before America was 'invented'. But the Indian farmers would have to pay more for the high yielding variety seeds because the Americans have done the genetic engineering on the seeds. The seed therefore is now the intellectual property of America. The concept of the intellectual property right is futile. The author illustrates this point by showing that the concept of zero was given to the world by Aryabhatta, the Indian intellectual. Therefore the intellectual right to property of zero belongs to Indians. But we have never even thought of charging royalty for this right. If we do so, even the enormous wealth of America may not be enough to pay a single month's bill. If America claims right on GM seeds, the intellectual right to property of zero belongs to Indians.

Shewprasad Tiwari's editorial happened to be the source of a violent debate in international politics. The Aryabhatta zero became front page banner headline right across the country. The international news agency was quick to pick up the news and Shewaprasad Tiwari's personal attack became thundering global news. From the foreign embassies and consulates, reports and analysis sped towards their respective capitals. The entire cabinet of America requested the American President to convene an immediate meeting. The American Attorney General consulted the chief justice of the Supreme Court and the chief of the World Court at Hague. They were unanimous in this opinion that it would be difficult to dismiss Indian claim on Aryabhatta zero, unless it could be proved that Aryabhatta was not the originator of the zero.

However, to the Indian farmers, the TRIPS proved to be a zero sum game. India demanded five billion dollars in exchange for revoking all future claims by way of properties rights on the Aryabhatta zero. The Americans insisted on a sole condition that, as per the guidelines of the World Bank and the IMF, Indian farmers should be asked to pay the full cost for electricity and water. The condition was imposed because America was concerned about the set back to the forces of liberalization that could take place if India continues with such subsidies which distort free market mechanism. India was forced to accept the condition prescribed by America, because her economy is dependant on assistance from the World Bank and the IMF, the two institutions financed by USA.

The Indian farmers were asked to bear all cost on electricity and water inspite of a concession allowed to them on the cost of GM seeds. Bibhas Sen reveals how developments in international politics and economics are in favour of developed nations and how such developments touch our humble, mundane daily life.

12. THE STOREYED HOUSE

Waman Govind Hoval

About the Author

Waman Govind Hoval (b. 1938) is one of the most well-known Marathi writers to highlight the plight of Dalits. Hoval is known for his rustic style, crisp dialogue and the tongue-in-cheek humour that often startles the readers. His work is about Harijans and Dalits. But he has never differentiated between Dalits and non-Dalits. His concern has been common men and women who are the victims of social injustice. His collections of short stories include *Yelkot(1982)* and *Varasdar(1986)*. Hoval has also contributed to the rise of folk theatre in Marathi.

About the Story

Waman Govind Hoval's short story "The Storeyed House" is a powerful symbol of Dalit awakening in India. It contributes greatly to the dynamics of Dalit emancipation. It tells us the heart rending story of Bayaji, who belongs to Mahar, a dalit community of Maharashtra. Bayaji returns to his native village on superannuation after working in a dockyard in Bombay for thirty five years. The storeyed house that he had constructed in order to make life a little more comfortable invites the wrath of Kondiba Patil, a caste Hindu who consigns the newly built house into flames. Bayaji's last words are like a 'mantra' that is suggestive of Dalit empowerment. Digging the foundation of the new storeyed house, infact, is a powerful symbol of the Dalit digging into the foundations of the villain of the tragedy, the caste system with its stigma of 'purity and pollution'.

Summary of the story

Bayaji, the protagonist of Waman Govind Hoval's story, "The Storeyed House", originally belonged to the Mahar caste of Maharashtra, a caste which had to remain at the periphery of society due to the rigidity of caste system. Bayaji had embraced Buddhism in order to escape the pangs of untouchability. Bayajis who had worked for thirty five years in a dockyard in Bombay had retired from service, having attained the age of superannuation. After his retirement he returned to his native village hoping to spend the rest of his life peacefully and comfortably with his family.

As soon as Bayaji arrived at his village he saw Bhujaba, a known rascal of the village and Bayaji greeted him saying "Greetings to you, Sir, how are things with you?". On hearing this, Bhujaba became furious because Bayaji was a Mahar by caste and according to age old custom, Bayaji should have greeted him most humbly. Bhujaba asked him if he could become a Bhramin merely by saying "greetings" in a refined manner or by becoming a Buddhist. Bayaji was so confused that he failed to say or do anything. He controlled himself lest he

should incur the hostility of any one in the village. He wished to spend the rest of his life in his native soil.

Bayaji's family consisted of his aged mother, his wife and their children and grand children. As he came in, his wife concealed her joy with the tip of her sari and his grand children clung to him. His old mother poured some water over a piece of bread and moved it around Bayaji's face and flung it away as an offering.

His daughters had been married off and had children. The elder sons looked after the fields, the next two sons were in government service, the one after them was a school teacher and the sixth one was studying. They had already come home to greet Bayaji.

All of them were dissatisfied to find that the father had bought them nothing valuable. The elder daughter asked him why he had not bought anything for them. Bayaji remarked that if he had bought clothes or jewels, they would soon tear or wear out. He told them that he would give them something that would last long - a storeyed house where their extended family can make life a little more comfortable. He said that the usual three portioned house would not be adequate for the big family.

The plan was finalized and the foundation of the storeyed house was laid. The news that Bayaji was building a storeyed house spread like fire. There was only one storeyed house in the village and that belonged to Kondiba Patil, a caste Hindu. That Bayaji, an untouchable, should think of a rival storeyed house was too much for Kondiba to bear. Others also murmured that the untouchables were forgetting their position.

The construction of Bayaji's storeyed house progressed with speed. One day Bayaji was met by Kondiba. Kondiba warned him not to lose his sense only because he had earned some money and not to aspire a high social status by constructing a storeyed house. He sternly asked him to be content with his three portioned cottage. He even threatened to throw him out of the village in case he constructed a storeyed house.

Out of fear, Bayaji had to give up plans for the storeyed house. The conventional three portioned house was taken up. Work was resumed and the walls rose up rapidly. The middle portion was a little elevated and a small first story fixed up there with wooden flooring. This part could be reached by stairs rising from the kitchen. No one could guess from the outside that there was a first story to the house.

The house was complete and the housewarming ceremony was planned. Invitations were sent to relatives and a fine *pandal* was put up in front of the house with all decorations. Relatives started arriving and people looked forward to the contest among various musical troupes.

Presently, Kondiba Patil arrived with Bhujaba, and four or five other rascals. They felt uneasy at the sight of the impressive new house with grand *pandal* and the crowd of smiling faces. Bayaji led them up the stairs. The first floor looked like a drawing room. The walls were radiant with oil paint. Framed pictures of Lord Budha, Ambedkar and other great men hung on the walls.

Bayaji spread a wooden carpet for Patil and the other high caste people. Patil and his companions sat on the carpet. Bayaji offered them the customary betel leaves. Patil accepted them but gave them back. Bayaji was confused at Patil's refusal to chew the betel leaves. He enquired the reason nervously. Patil flared up and left with his companions in fury determined to teach the untouchable a lesson for constructing a storeyed house.

The music programme gathered momentum and people swayed their heads in appreciation. All on a sudden the undreamt of incident happened. Bayaji's new house had caught fire and flared up. His enemy had taken revenge on him. He climbed up to save the pictures of great men on the wall. Suddenly the stairs crumbled down. Bayaji was trapped by flames all around and in no time, Bayaji fell down along with the upper storey. He was burnt all over. He was still wailing- "my house", "my house". He expressed his last wish that his sons should build a storeyed house and with those words his head collapsed. His old mother wept bitterly that both her husband and her son passed away without giving her a funeral. His wife was sobbing her heart out. The house was burning and Bayaji was in ashes instead of enjoying the comforts of a retired life. The guests who had come to celebrate the house warming had the misfortune to attend the funeral of the host. The next morning the village officers reported that Bayaji's death was caused by an accident due to a petromax flare-up. In the end we see the children of Bayaji, instead of mourning, digging the foundation of a regular storeyed-house, not a concealed one. The final act of the children symbolizes the Dalit digging the foundation of the villain of the tragedy, the caste system.

Comprehension

I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences each.

a. Why did Bhujaba become furious when Bayaji greeted him, "Greetings to you, sir, how are things with you?"

When Bayaj greeted Bhujaba, the rascal, saying "greetings to you, sir, how are things with you"? The latter became furious because Bayaji was a mahar by caste and according to age old custom, Bayaji should have greeted him most humbly.

b. Why did Bayaji abandon his plans for a storeyed house and think of constructing a conventional three portioned house?

Bayaji abandoned his plans for a storeyed house and think of constructing a conventional three portioned house so as not to incur the fury of high caste Hindus. Kondiba, a high class Hindu, warned him not to aspire a high social status by constructing a storeyed house. He sternly asked him to be content with his three portioned cottage. He even threatened to throw him out of the village in case he constructed a storeyed house.

c. Why did Kondiba patil and his friends feel uneasy at the sight of Bayaji's new house?

Kondiba Patil and his friends felt uneasy at the sight of Bayaji's new house because it was grand in appearance with decorated panthals and the crowd of smiling faces. The thought that a mere untouchable ventured to construct a grand storeyed house made the high caste Hindus jealous.

d. What happened to Bayaji's new storeyed house?

The thought that a mere untouchable ventured to construct a grand storeyed house made the high caste Hindus jealous. They set fire on the house and it was burnt to ashes.

e. Comment on Bayaji's last wish: "sons, I want you to build a storeyed house".

Bayaji's last words are like a mantra suggestive of the rise of Dalit empowerment. Digging the foundation of a regular storeyed-house symbolizes the dalit digging the foundation of the villain of the tragedy, the caste system.

f. What was the village officer's report on the death of Bayaji?

The village officers reported that Bayaji's death was caused by an accident due to a petrol flare-up. This suggests that the political elites join hands with the caste Hindus in subjugating the marginalized section of the society.

2. Answer the following in a paragraph.

a. What is the significance of the title 'The Storeyed House'?

Waman Govind Hoval's short story "The Storeyed House" is a powerful symbol of Dalit awakening in India. It contributes greatly to the dynamics of Dalit emancipation. It tells us the heart rending story of Bayaji, who belongs to Mahar, a Dalit community of Maharashtra. Bayaji returns to his native village on superannuation after working in a dockyard in Bombay for thirty five years. The storeyed house that he had constructed in order to make life a little more comfortable invites the wrath of Kondiba Patil, a caste Hindu who consigns the newly built house into flames. Bayaji's last words are like a 'mantra' that is suggestive of Dalit empowerment. Digging the foundation of the new storeyed house, in fact, is a powerful symbol of the Dalit digging into the foundations of the villain of the tragedy, the caste system with its stigma of 'purity and pollution'.

b. Significance of the ending of 'The Storeyed House'.

The storeyed house that Bayaji had constructed in order to make life a little more comfortable invites the wrath of Kondiba Patil, a caste Hindu. Kondiba Patil arrived with Bhujaba, and four or five other rascals to attend the housewarming function. They felt uneasy at the sight of the Impressive new house with grand *pandal* and the crowd of smiling faces. They could not tolerate the idea that an untouchable like Bayya should have constructed storeyed house and aspire social mobility. Kondiba consigns the newly built house into flames. Bayaji's last words are like a 'mantra' that is suggestive of Dalit empowerment. Digging the foundation of the new storeyed house, not a concealed one but a regular one, is a powerful symbol of the Dalit digging into the foundations of the villain of the tragedy, the caste system with its stigma of 'purity and pollution'.

3. Answer in not more than 300 words.

'The Storeyed House' is a powerful symbol of Dalit empowerment in India.' Comment.

Waman Govind Hoval's short story "The Storeyed House" is a powerful symbol of Dalit awakening in India. It contributes greatly to the dynamics of Dalit emancipation. It tells us the heart rending story of Bayaji, who belongs to Mahar, a Dalit community of Maharashtra. Bayaji returns to his native village on superannuation after working in a dockyard in Bombay for thirty five years. The storeyed house that he had constructed in order to make life a little more comfortable invites the wrath of Kondiba Patil, a caste Hindu who consigns the newly built house into flames. Bayaji's last words are like a 'mantra' that is suggestive of Dalit empowerment. Digging the foundation of the new storeyed house, infact, is a powerful symbol of the Dalit digging into the foundations of the villain of the tragedy, the caste system, with its stigma of 'purity and pollution'.

Bayaji had embraced Buddhism in order to escape the pangs of untouchability. He had worked for thirty five years in a dockyard in Bombay. He retired from service, having attained the age of superannuation. After his retirement he returned to his native village hoping to spend the rest of his life peacefully and comfortably with his family. As soon as Bayaji arrived at his village, the elder daughter asked him why he had not bought anything for them. Bayaji remarked that if he had bought clothes and jewels, they would soon tear or wear out. He told them that he would give them something that would last long - a storeyed house where their extended family can make life a little more comfortable. He said that the usual three portioned house would not be adequate for the big family.

The plan was finalized and the foundation of the storeyed house was laid. The news that Bayaji was building a storeyed house spread like fire. There was only one storeyed house in the village and that belonged to Kondiba Patil, a caste Hindu. That Bayaji, an untouchable, should think of a rival storeyed house was too much for Kondiba to bear. Others also murmured that the untouchables were forgetting their position.

The construction of Bayaji's storeyed house progressed with speed. One day Bayaji was met by Kondiba. Kondiba warned him not to loose his sense only because he had earned some money and not to aspire a high social status by constructing a storeyed house. He sternly asked him to be content with his three portioned cottage. He even threatened to throw him out of the village in case he constructed a storeyed house.

Out of fear, Bayaji had to give up plans for the storeyed house. The conventional three portioned house was taken up. Work was resumed and the walls rose up rapidly. The middle portion was a little elevated and a small first story fixed up there with wooden flooring. This part could be reached by stairs rising from the kitchen. No one could guess from the outside that there was a first story to the house.

The house was complete and the housewarming ceremony was planned. Invitations were sent to relatives and a fine *pandal* was put up in front of the house with all decorations. Relatives started arriving and people looked forward to the contest among various musical troupes.

Presently, Kondiba Patil arrived with Bhujaba, and four or five other rascals. They felt uneasy at the sight of the Impressive new house with grand *pandal* and the crowd of smiling faces. Bayaji led them up the stairs. The first floor looked like a drawing room. The walls were radiant with oil paint. Framed pictures of Lord Budha, Ambedkar and other great men hung on the walls. Bayaji spread a wooden carpet for Patil and the other high caste people. Patil and his companions sat on the carpet. Bayaji offered them the customary betel leaves. Patil accepted them but gave them back. Bayaji was confused at Patil's refusal to chew the betel leaves. He enquired the reason nervously. Patil flared up and left with his companions in fury determined to teach the untouchable a lesson for constructing a storeyed house.

The music programme gathered momentum and people swayed their heads in appreciation. All on a sudden the undreamt of incident happened. Bayaji's new house had caught fire and flared up. His enemy had taken revenge on him. He climbed up to save the pictures of great men on the wall. Suddenly the stairs crumbled down. Bayaji was trapped by flames all around and in no time, Bayaji fell down along with the upper storey. He was burnt all over. He was still wailing- "my house", "my house". He expressed his last wish that his sons should build a storeyed house and with those words his head collapsed. His old mother wept bitterly that both her husband and her son passed away without giving her a funeral. His wife was sobbing her heart out. The house was burning and Bayaji was in ashes instead of enjoying the comforts of a retired life. The guests who had come to celebrate the house warming had the misfortune to attend the funeral of the host. The next morning the village officers reported that Bayaji's death was caused by an accident due to a petromax flare-up. In the end we see the children of Bayaji, instead of mourning, digging the foundation of a regular storeyed-house, not a concealed one. The final act of the children symbolizes the Dalit digging into the foundation of the villain of the tragedy, the caste system.

13. AN INTERNET BABY

Xiaolu Guo

About the Author

Xiaolu Guo (b. 1973) is a prolific, award-winning Chinese-British novelist and film maker. She was born in a fishing village in southern China. She uses literary and cinematic language to explore the themes of alienation. Guo develops, in her works of art, her own vision of China's past and its future, in a global environment.

Her novel, *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers* (2007), the winner of the Pearl Award (UK) for Creative Excellence in 2005, has been translated into 26 languages. *UFO in Her Eyes* (2011), a cinematic adaptation of her novel of the same name, was a box office hit.

About the Story

Xiaolu Guo's "An Internet Baby" unravels the shocking story of a young Chinese couple who decide to sell their baby in the internet. The story is taken from the collection *Freedom: short stories celebrating the universal declaration of human rights* commissioned by Amnesty International on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the universal declaration of human rights. The book is a rare collection of thirty six such short stories written by a host of internationally acclaimed writers who have chosen each one of the thirty rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as the inspiration.

Summary of the story

The circumstance in which Yuli and Weiming decided to sell their baby on internet is quite strange. Yuli, the eighteen year old girl from a rural village had become pregnant while she was still at school, at chongqing Technical College. It would be a huge scandal if it was known that Yuli became a mother even before she got married. She would be expelled from the school and lose all the time and money invested in her education. Therefore she told everyone that she was suffering from hepatitis and needed to stay home for a while to recover. For five months she had managed to hide her growing belly in a large coat. She gave birth to a male child in a shabby clinic in a suburb of Chongqing.

Yuli was determined not to raise the child as she wanted to continue her study. Therefore she hid the truth that she had a child. If it was known that the villagers would do everything to keep the child. But Yuli was determined not to keep the baby.

Yuli's boyfriend Weiming was motivated by monetary gains in selling the baby. The nineteen year old man had survival problems ever since he left his hometown to follow Yuli in Chongqing. It was not possible for Weiming to help Yuli with her college expenses, sending money to his family in the village and bringing up a baby.

So the young lovers agreed to sell the baby on the internet. To him, selling a baby is the same thing as selling car. The only difference being the price. Yuli took the cutest photo of the baby and put it online along with a price: 'Healthy Newborn Baby boy for sale – 8000Yuan'. They knew that 8000 Yuan was really too little money for a healthy baby boy. But they had to fix the price at a low level since most people in the promises were not rich. Besides they were in a hurry to get rid of the baby. Weiming was inspired at the thought that his girl friend could always get pregnant again in case their plan worked out.

After putting the advertisement online, Yuli fed her son a bit of milk. She was worried that if the baby could not be sold out, she would miss her examination and would not get her diploma.

The internet advertisement proved effective. As soon as it was put up Weimings' mobile phone started ringing continuously. A few people wanted to know whether it was all a joke. Weiming shouted back at them. He had no time to joke about life. What he needed was money.

Now a middle aged childless woman with a shaky voice rang him up. She told him that they did not have a child as her husband had been very ill. Now that her husband was dead. She would like to buy the baby. Weiming asked her that whether she was able to pay 8000 Yuan. But she wanted to check whether the baby was really healthy. Weiming assured her of it. But he told her that he would call her back after talking to his girl friend. He thought that negotiation would always enhance the price.

Later a couple ran from Wenzhou, a rich industrial town. They wanted the baby as soon as possible. They run a shoe factory and were very wealthy, but had no children. Weiming told them that he had some other interested customers. He felt almost sure that an auction had begun. The couple immediately offered double the price to get the baby. Thus the deal was done at 16,000 Yuan in cash. But Weiming did not want them to come to Chongqing to avoid any risk of being found out by neighbours or colleagues. So they agreed to meet in the city of Shanghai where no one knew them. The meeting point fixed was Shanghai people's park.

Weiming and Yuli wrapped their sleeping baby in a bag and hurried to the station to get the train to Shanghai. The couple had rarely taken the train before. So they were over excited. They eagerly observed every station the train passed by. Yuli fed the child from time to time. But the child kept on screaming as if it disliked the trip. After fourteen hours they arrived in the city of Shanghai. Yuli was deeply impressed by the new city whereas Weiming could not enjoy it. He was feeling hungry and powerless. They went to a wanton restaurant and had two bowls of soup each. They ate quickly and silently. The baby sometimes coughed in Yuli's arms. Yuli and Weiming came and stood at the gate of people's park at the time fixed for the meeting. The baby kept on crying till it fell asleep.

The couple arrived on time. They looked more humble than they sounded on the phone. They looked sleepless and worn out. But as soon as they saw the

baby their eyes glistened. They began to fondle the baby. The little baby woke up from its sleep and stared at the strange women who kept kissing him and speaking some strange dialect. But before giving the money, the couple wanted to check whether the baby was as healthy as was told. Both the couples agreed and entered the people's park. The wife and the husband thoroughly checked the baby turning him upside down and checking all parts of the body. The baby didn't cry this time. He seemed to enjoy the sudden attention showered upon him and started to giggle. The Wenzhou

Woman was satisfied and wanted to know the name of the child. But the child's parents told them that they had not given him a name. But they had called him Weiyu for the sake of registration at the hospital. For counting the money they found a quiet corner of the park by the side of a lake. The Wenzhou woman volunteered to stand guard. Weiming started to count the money carefully. It took a long time to count the money. Laying the baby on the ground, the Weizhou woman also started counting. When everyone was deeply engrossed in the act of counting, the baby slipped and sank to the bottom of the lake.

The story thus paints a sad picture of abused childhood. It highlights the human rights issue. The right of the children to enjoy parental affection and care. The story asks us a crucial question: "Are we doing enough to enrich the childhood of our children".

Comprehension

1. Answer the following in two or three sentences.

a. Why did Weiming and Yuli decide to sell the baby on the internet?

Yuli, the eighteen year old girl from a rural village had become pregnant while she was still at school. It would be a huge humiliation if it was known that Yuli became a mother even before she got married. Yuli's boyfriend Weiming was motivated by monetary gains in selling the baby.

b. Why did Yuli tell a lie to her school authorities and classmates? What was the lie?

If it was known that Yuli became a mother even before she got married, she would be expelled from the school and lose all the time and money invested in her education. Therefore she told a lie that she was suffering from hepatitis and needed to stay home for a while to recover.

c. What were the arrangements made by Weiming and Yuli to sell the baby on the internet?

Yuli took the cutest photo of the baby and put it online along with an advertisement specifying a price: 'Healthy Newborn Baby boy for sale – 8000Yuan'.

d. Why had Weiming and Yuli to fix the price of their baby at a low level?

Weiming and Yuli had to fix the price at a low level since most people in the provinces were not rich. Besides they were in a hurry to get rid of the baby.

e. 'Can you pay 8,000 Yuan cash in one go?' Weiming asks hastily. 'Yes. But first I need to check whether the baby is really healthy.' What does this exchange remind you of?

When an elderly woman expressed her willingness to purchase the baby, Weiming asked her whether she could pay 8000 Yuan. She wanted to check whether the baby was really healthy. This exchange reminds us of the bitter truth that even babies are exchanged as commodities in market.

f. Why was the meeting point for the sale of baby fixed at Shanghai?

Weiming did not want the couple who expressed their willingness to buy the baby to come to Chongqing to avoid any risk of being found out by neighbours or colleagues. So they agreed to meet in the city of Shanghai where no one knew them.

g. What happened to the boy in the end?

When everyone was deeply engrossed in the act of counting money, the baby slipped and sank to the bottom of the lake.

2. Answer the following in a Paragraph.

a. Describe the situation in which Weiming decides to sell the baby on the internet.

The circumstance in which Yuli and Weiming decided to sell their baby on internet is quite strange. Yuli, the eighteen year old girl from a rural village had become pregnant while she was still at school, at Chongqing Technical College. It would be a huge scandal if it was known that Yuli became a mother even before she got married. She would be expelled from the school. Therefore she told everyone that she was suffering from hepatitis and needed to stay home for a while to recover. She gave birth to a male child in a shabby clinic in a suburb of Chongqing. Yuli was determined not to raise the child as she wanted to continue her study. Yuli's boyfriend Weiming was motivated by monetary gains in selling the baby. The nineteen year old man had survival problems ever since he left his hometown to follow Yuli in Chongqing. It was not possible for Weiming to help Yuli with her college expenses, sending money to his family in the village and bringing up a baby. So the young lovers agreed to sell the baby on the internet. To him, selling a baby is the same thing as selling car.

b. Comment on Weiming's remark: 'But what is so different? Selling a baby is the same as selling a car; the only difference is the price.'

The baby's parent is devoid of any humane feelings. In a highly commercialized life he seeks to make money by selling the unwanted child that is born to him as result of his affair with his girl friend. His attitude paints a sad picture of abused childhood and violation of the child's right to be looked after by its parents. The baby's father forgets the fact that his child is a human being and ventures to sell it like a commodity on the internet.

c. Critically examine the human rights issues highlighted by the story 'An Internet Baby'.

Xiaolu Guo's "An Internet Baby" unravels the shocking story of a young Chinese couple who decide to sell their baby on the internet. The story is taken from the collection *Freedom: short stories celebrating the universal declaration of human rights* commissioned by Amnesty International on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the universal declaration of human rights. The book is a rare collection of thirty six such short stories written by a host of internationally acclaimed writers who have chosen each one of the thirty rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as the inspiration. The baby's parents Yuli and Weiming are devoid of any human feelings. In a highly commercialized life they seek to make money and save their honour by selling the unwanted child that is born to them. The attitude of both weiming and yuli paints the sad picture of abused childhood and violation of children's right. Retribution overtakes the immature parents in the form of the accidental drowning of the baby to the bottom of the lake while they were engaged in counting the money exchanged as the price for the baby.

3. Answer in not more than 300 words.

a. Narrate the shocking story of a young couple who decides to sell their baby on the internet, as unraveled in Xiaolu Guo's 'An Internet Baby'. Comment on the message conveyed by the story.

Xiaolu Guo's "An Internet Baby" unravels the shocking story of a young Chinese couple who decide to sell their baby on the internet. The story is taken from the collection *Freedom: short stories celebrating the universal declaration of human rights* commissioned by Amnesty International on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the universal declaration of human rights. . The baby's parents Yuli and Weiming are devoid of any human feelings. In a highly commercialized life they seek to make money and save their honour by selling the unwanted child that is born to them. The story paints a sad picture of abused childhood.

The circumstance in which Yuli and Weiming decided to sell their baby on internet is quite strange. Yuli, the eighteen year old girl from a rural village had become pregnant while she was still at school. It would be a huge scandal if it was known that Yuli became a mother even before she got married. She would be expelled from the school. Therefore she told everyone that she was suffering from hepatitis and needed to stay home for a while. She gave birth to a male child in a shabby clinic in a suburb of Chongqing.

Yuli was determined not to raise the child as she wanted to continue her study. She was determined not to keep the baby. Her boyfriend Weiming was motivated by monitory gains in selling the baby. The nineteen year old man had survival problems. So the young lovers agreed to sell the baby on the internet. Yuli took the cutest photo of the baby and put it online along with a price: 'Healthy Newborn Baby boy for sale – 8000 Yuan'. They had to fix the price at a low level since most people in the provinces were not rich. Besides they were in a hurry to get rid of the baby. The internet advertisement proved effective. A

middle aged childless woman with a shaky voice rang him up. Weiming asked her that whether she was able to pay 8000 Yuan. But she wanted to check whether the baby was really healthy. Weiming assured her of it and told her that he would call her back later.

Later a couple ran from Wenzhou, a rich industrial town. They wanted the baby as soon as possible. They run a shoe factory and were very wealthy, but had no children. Weiming told them that he had some other interested customers. He felt almost sure that an auction had begun. The couple immediately offered double the price to get the baby. Thus the deal was done at 16,000 Yuan in cash. But Weiming did not want them to come to Chongqing to avoid any risk of being found out by neighbours or colleagues. So they agreed to meet in the city of Shanghai where no one knew them. The meeting point fixed was Shanghai people's park. Weiming and Yuli wrapped their sleeping baby in a bag and hurried to the station to get the train to Shanghai. After fourteen hours, they arrived in the city of Shanghai. Yuli and Weiming came and stood at the gate of people's park at the time fixed for the meeting. The baby kept on crying till it fell asleep.

The couple arrived on time. They looked more humble than they sounded on the phone. As soon as they saw the baby their eyes glistened. They began to fondle the baby. The little baby woke up from its sleep and stared at the strange women who kept kissing him and speaking some strange dialect. But before giving the money, the couple wanted to check whether the baby was as healthy as was told. Both the couples agreed and entered the people's park. The wife and the husband thoroughly checked the baby turning him upside down and checking all parts of the body. The baby didn't cry this time. He seemed to enjoy the sudden attention showered upon him and started to giggle. The Wenzhou woman was satisfied and wanted to know the name of the child. But the child's parents told them that they had not given him a name. But they had called him Wei Yu for the sake of registration at the hospital. For counting the money they found a quiet corner of the park by the side of a lake. The Wenzhou woman volunteered to stand guard. Weiming started to count the money carefully. It took a long time to count the money. Laying the baby on the ground, the Wenzhou woman also started counting. When everyone was deeply engrossed in the act of counting, the baby slipped and sank to the bottom of the lake.

The attitude of both Weiming and Yuli paints the sad picture of abused childhood and violation of children's rights. The story highlights the human rights issue - the right of the children to enjoy parental affection and care. The story asks us a crucial question: "Are we doing enough to enrich the childhood of our children". This is the message conveyed by the story, 'An Internet Baby.'

14. THE FIRE IS QUENCHED

Cornelia Sorabji

About the author

Cornelia Sorabji (1866-1954) was a barrister, social reformer and writer. Sorabji was born in Nasik in the Bombay Presidency in 1866. Her father was a Parsi and mother a Hindu. They converted to Christianity after marriage. Cornelia has the distinction of being the first woman graduate in western India and the first woman barrister.

Sorabji was actively involved in social reforms. She rendered legal assistance to a large number of women and orphans. In 1924, when legal profession was opened to women in India, she began her legal practice in Kolkata. She retired in 1929, and settled in London. Sorabji died at her London home in 1954.

Sorabji's publications include *Love and Life behind the Purdah*(1902), *India Calling* (1934)and *'India Recalled'*(1936). *'The Fire is Quenched'* is taken from *Love and Life behind the Purdah*, a collection of short stories.

Summary of the story

The story begins with the description of the women folk of Zoroastrian priests weaving the sacred thread '*kusthi*' (*kusthi* is a ritual cord worn by Zoroastrians around the waist. They tie, untie and retie it several times a day in devotion to Ahura Mazda, the God. The *kusthi* is made of seventy two gossamer like white threads for seventy two angels, woven by women of the priestly class and consecrated by a priest. The making of *kusthi* is highly symbolic and reflects a number of values within the Zoroastrian faith). While engaged in weaving *kusthi*, the women kept on praying silently for future generation who may use the *kusthi*). The women bound their heads with a white ribbon which symbolizes the subjection of all action and the bondage to law. It was believed that one day the sacred *kusthi* would pass through the fingers of some pretty careless girl, or a silly boy who would tie the knots with levity and if the weaver was faithful enough, her incessant prayers would act as a charm against all future harms.

Old Avemai is a little crooked old Parsi woman. She is the mother of Khursud, the high priest to the Zoroastrians. She lives with her son and his pretty wife Makkhi (the tragic heroine of the story) in the ancestral home. In her old age, Avimai's affections are busy over her grandchild, Khutti, aged five. Khutti drives her goat-cart from the pleasure-house and Siddi, the small Negro attendant, has been entertaining her as a buffoon. Siddi also told her lovely tales about fishes and big ships.

Once when Khutti caught a little cold, people accused Siddi of having bewitched the girl. As a punishment Siddi was tied up and whipped. But he did not feel the pain of gruesome ordeal as he was aggrieved by the fact that his little mistress was ill. They tried all charms and medicines but nothing worked for

Khutti's improvement. The doctor suggested her to be taken to the hills for her speedy recovery.

The scene of action shifts to an Indian railway station. When a train reached the station, a Parsi lady came out from a reserved carriage. She was gracefully dressed. In her arms she carried a child loosely clad in a red crimson vest. In spite of the slight smile on its face, it suggested the stillness of a cold chill (the child was dead). The woman ordered for a carriage and bade them drive to the kitchen door so as not to disturb the household. The woman was none else but Makhi, the mother of Khutti. (She was returning with her child after the visit to the hills as per the advice of the doctor. But the baby died in the train on their way back). She arrived at the baby's nursery at home unobserved. She was resolved that they must never know that the girl died in the train and in her arms too. If it was known, the grandmother would accuse her of contamination and the penalty would be beating with ten thousand stripes which would mean death. She felt that without Khutti life would be meaningless.

She is determined to be firm not even shedding a tear. She knows that even the Ayah fancies that the little girl is asleep. Makhi decided to send for the dying slab and lift the baby on to it. Her plan is to let grandmother know about the death of the child by showing her in the morning the cold little body. She wished that she could warm the icy cold body of the child. She cursed the irrevocable death.

Makhi told Ayah a lie that Khutti got worse and she was brought home and the doctor has been sent for, and that the Bai Sahib has locked the baby's door and watches the child on the dying slab. On entering the nursery, Ayah was shocked by the sight she saw. The door was ajar, and Makhi stood at a discrete distance from the little dead form. Avemai dare not touch the child to test the truth of its death, for it was believed as per Zoroastrian law that contact with dead body meant contamination for which the penalty was ten thousand stripes which would mean death. The death bearers would do the final rites. The white robed procession of priests followed by the death bearers to the Tower of silence (it is a circular, raised structure used by Zoroastrians for the exposure of the dead to vultures.) They laid the baby's body on the raised structure and left it for the hungry vultures. Khursud, the father of the baby and high priest of the Zoroastrian, was agonized at the thought of his little child's body being torn by the hungry vultures. He doubted whether the burden on his soul might allow him to do his duty of keeping the fire burning at the alter. As for Makhi, she loved her husband so much that she found it unbearable to keep the secret of her heart from him. She was resolved to speak it out to have peace of mind. But she was torn in between affinal duty and her desire to live on with her loving husband. The struggle lasted for several nights. Finally, she confessed to her husband the secret of her heart.

On coming to know the shocking truth, Avemai, Makhi's mother-in-law, issued the mandate: - ten thousand stripes and khursud must administer them. Such are the cruelties of god men's tender mercies. Avemai is the stern embodiment of Zoroastrian Leviticus (a book consisting of the Zoroastrian

religious laws.) She commanded her son, the high priest to carry out his duty quickly before the altar in the name of Holy Prophet. She asked Makhi to bare her back ready to receive ten thousand stripes. Her excuse was that she loved the law and the prophet more than she loved Makhi. She handed over the lash to Khursud. The lash began to rise and fall on Makhi's back. No one counted how long it lasted. Suddenly the undreamt of incident took place. The fire on the altar had gone out. Avemai lamented that the lesser sin of Makhi had been punished. She asked who would expiate the greater sin? The silence that followed was broken by a shriek piercing an awful in its helpless horror. Thus both the sins—the contact with the dead body and letting the fire on the altar go out contribute to the tragedy of Makhis family. Makhi is a powerful symbol of Indian womanhood that has suffered centuries of cruelties in the hands of patriarchy.

Comprehension

1. Answer the following the questions in a two or three sentences each

a. Explain the significance of the title 'The Fire is Quenched'.

Makhi, a young pretty Parsi woman had to undergo the ordeal of ten thousand stripes only because her child died in her arms. Contact with dead body was considered a taboo as per the religious law. Her husband, Khursud, the high priest failed to keep the sacred fire alive on the altar as he was busy with carrying out the punishment for his wife. The holy fire had gone out.

b. Why did Siddi not feel the pain of the the gruesome ordeal that he was made to go through?

Siddi did not feel the pain of gruesome ordeal as he was aggrieved by the fact that his little mistress was ill.

c. Why did Avemai dare not to touch the child?

Avemai dared not to touch the child to test the truth of its death, for as per Zoroastrian law the contact with dead body meant contamination for which the penalty was ten thousand stripes which would mean death.

d. 'The book said ten thousand stripes, ten thousand – be it.....and Khursud must administer them'. What action attracts such a punishment according to Parsi scriptures?

As per Zoroastrian law, contact with dead body meant contamination for which the penalty was ten thousand stripes which would mean death.

e. Khursud thought the only thing which made life livable would soon be there also." What is suggested by this thought?

This thought of Khursud suggests that the dead body of his own little girl would be exposed to the scavenging birds on the circular raised structure called the Tower of Silence.

II. Answer the following in a paragraph.

1. The significance of the title 'The Fire is Quenched'.

Cornelia Sorabji's 'The Fire is Quenched' is the tragic story of Makhi, a pretty young Parsi woman who becomes the victim of cruel religious custom. The story dramatizes how superstitious custom when rigidly followed become death trap for innocent woman. As per the Zoroastrian religious law, the dead body is considered impure and contact with the dead body is a taboo, which is punished with ten thousand stripes which mean death. Apart from this, they consider letting the sacred fire on the altar go out, the most deadly thing. In the story Makhi was sentenced to be punished with ten thousand stripes only because her own little child Khutty died of fever in her hands. The punishment must be administered by her own husband, Khursud who is also the high priest to the Zoroastrians. But while Khursud was in the act of administering the duty, he failed to keep the holy fire burn on the altar. The fire goes out. Thus both the deadly sins- contamination as a result of the contact with the dead body and letting the sacred fire go out contribute the tragedy of the family. The title 'The Fire is Quenched' is most appropriate. The quenching of the fire is symbolic of the quenching of the life of the victims of the tragedy.

2. The character of Avimai.

Avimai is the crooked old woman in Cornelia sorabji's short story 'The Fire is Quenched'. She is worn out with years and with disappointed hopes. But her character and determination proclaims itself from the very furrow of her wrinkled face. She lives with her son, Khursud, the high priest to the Zoroastrians and his pretty wife Makkhi in their ancestral home. All her affections are busy over little Khutty the grandchild. The author considers her as the embodiment of Zoroastrian Leviticus (the Parsi religious commands). When she comes to know that her grandchild is dead, she did not dare to touch the child's body to trust the truth of its death. This shows her aggressive observance of the Parsi religious custom. When she comes to know that the girl died in its mother's arm, the old woman delivers her mandate. 'The book said ten thousand stripes.....and Khursud must administer them. Her excuse is that she loved the law and the prophet more than she loved her daughter -in-law. Her unflinching courage collapses when she realizes with a shock that the sacred fire on the altar is dead while her son is engaged in carrying out the punishment on his own wife. The crooked woman laments 'oh, who will expiate now. We have punished the lesser sin - but the greater?'

3. "We have punished the lesser sin - but the greater?" Comment on the sins alluded to here.

Cornelia Sorabji's 'The Fire is Quenched' is the tragic story of Makhi, a pretty young Parsi woman who becomes the victim of cruel religious custom. The story dramatizes how superstitious custom when rigidly followed become death trap for innocent woman. As per the Zoroastrian religious law, the dead body is considered impure and contact with the dead body is a taboo, which is punished with ten thousand stripes which mean death. Apart from this, they consider letting the sacred fire on the altar go out, the most deadly thing. In the story Makhi was sentenced to be punished with ten thousand stripes only because her own little child Khutty died of fever in her hands. The punishment must be administered by her own husband, Khursud who is also the high priest to the Zoroastrians. But why Khursud was in the act of administering the duty, he failed to keep the holy fire burn on the altar. The fire goes out. Thus both the deadly sins- contamination as a result of the contact with the dead body and

letting the sacred fire go out contribute the tragedy of the family. Society imposes silence upon women which is accompanied by the invisibility that patriarchy prescribes for them. Patriarchy often misinterprets religious texts to justify the cruelties directed against women. It often wears the cloak of religiosity to dominate women and woman internalizes these false assumptions. They become willing participants in their own oppression not being able to raise their voice against the patriarchal strategy of sidelining them.

d. What is the message conveyed by the story?

Refer answer to question 'c'.

111. Answer in not more than 300 words.

“Makhi is a powerful symbol of the Indian womanhood in the patriarchal order”. Discuss.

Cornelia Sorabji's 'The Fire is Quenched' is the tragic story of Makhi, a pretty young Parsi woman who becomes the victim of cruel religious custom. The story dramatizes how superstitious custom when rigidly followed become death trap for innocent woman. As per the Zoroastrian religious law, the dead body is considered impure and contact with the dead body is a taboo, which is punished with ten thousand stripes which mean death. Apart from this, they consider letting the sacred fire on the altar go out, the most deadly thing. In the story Makhi was sentenced to be punished with ten thousand stripes only because her own little child Khutty died of fever in her hands. The punishment must be administered by her own husband, Khursud who is also the high priest to the Zoroastrians. But why Khursud was in the act of administering the duty, he failed to keep the holy fire burn on the altar. The fire goes out. Thus both the deadly sins- contamination as a result of the contact with the dead body and letting the sacred fire go out contribute the tragedy of the family. Society imposes silence upon women which is accompanied by the invisibility that patriarchy prescribes for them. Patriarchy often misinterprets religious texts to justify the cruelties directed against women. It often wears the cloak of religiosity to dominate women and woman internalizes these false assumptions. They become willing participants in their own oppression not being able to raise their voice against the patriarchal strategy of sidelining them.

The story begins with the description of the women folk of Zoroastrian priests weaving the scared thread '*kusthi*'. While engaged in weaving *kusthi*, the women kept on praying silently for future generation. Old Avemai is a little crooked old Parsi woman. She is the mother of Khursud, the high priest to the Zoroastrians. She lives with her son and his pretty wife Makkhi (the tragic heroine of the story) in the ancestral home. In her old age, Avimai's affections are busy over her grandchild, Khutty, aged five. One day when Khutti caught a little cold, they tried all charms and medicines but nothing worked for Khutti's improvement. The doctor suggested her to be taken to the hills for her speedy recovery. On their way back the baby died in its mother's arms in the train. She was resolved that they must never know that the girl died in the train and in her arms too. If it was known, the grandmother would accuse her of contamination and the penalty would be beating with ten thousand stripes which would mean death. She felt that without Khutti life would be meaningless.

She is determined to be firm not even shedding a tear. She knows that even the Ayah fancies that the little girl is asleep. Makhi decided to send for the dying

slab and lift the baby on to it. Her plan is to let grandmother know about the death of the child by showing her in the morning the cold little body. She wished that she could warm the icy cold body of the child. She cursed the irrevocable death.

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On coming to know the shocking truth, Avemai, Makhi's mother-in-law, issued the mandate: - ten thousand stripes and khursud must administer them. Such are the cruelties of god men's tender mercies. Avemai is the stern embodiment of Zoroastrian Leviticus (a book consisting of the Zoroastrian religious laws.) She commanded her son, the high priest to carry out his duty quickly before the altar in the name of Holy Prophet. She asked Makhi to bare her back ready to receive ten thousand stripes. Her excuse was that she loved the law and the prophet more than she loved Makhi. She handed over the lash to Khursud. The lash began to rise and fall on Makhi's back. No one counted how long it lasted. Suddenly the undreamt of incident took place. The fire on the altar had gone out. Avemai lamented that the lesser sin of Makhi had been punished. She asked who would expiate the greater sin? The silence that followed was broken by a shriek piercing an awful in its helpless horror. Thus both the sins- the contact with the dead body and letting the fire on the altar go out contribute to the tragedy of Makhi's family. Makhi is a powerful symbol of Indian womanhood that has suffered centuries of cruelties in the hands of patriarchy.

MODULE IV: DRAMA

15. MEDEA

Nabaneeta Dev Sen

About the Author

Nabaneeta Dev Sen (b.1938) is one of the most notable women writers in Bengali. Apart from being a creative writer, she is also an academic. She has tried her hand at poetry, novels, short stories, plays, literary criticism and travelogues, with enviable success. She is also a well-known children's author. She has been a visiting professor of comparative literature and a visiting creative writer at several universities in the US, Canada, Mexico, the UK, Germany, France and Japan. She has done her post-doctoral research at the University of California. Her research interest is on the treatment of women in epic poetry in the world. She has made a study of the *Ramayana* and has translated Chandrabati's Bengali *Ramanyana* of the sixteenth century to which she has added a critical introduction. She deals with a variety of themes in her fiction and writes of social, political and psychological problems of contemporary Bengali life. They include comments on such social issues as the break up of the joint family and on problems of AIDS, homosexuality and child abuse. She has received a number of awards for her contribution to Bengali literature. These include the President's Award, the Padmashree and the award of the Shitya Akademi.

Nabaneeta Dev Sen's *Medea* is an adaptation of the Greek Medea myth that discusses some specific gender issues of current relevance. Manas is Jason transformed. Rupsa is Mesea – of course, not a woman of wild passion and revenge. Sonali is Glauce reborn. The children represent both the sexes.

About the play

Women's struggle for equality has a history. In every century there were women who were ahead of their times. They lived by their own rules of justice; they would not suffer humiliation from men without taking revenge. We may not always approve, but we should try to understand. We must remember that those were times with no laws about women's rights, no police to complain, no divorce court to approach, nothing to turn to for relief from injustice.

Ancient Greek myth speaks of Medea who was married to Jason...the same Jason who went on the famous quest for the Golden Fleece. Jason comes back to Corinth after his adventures to settle to a married life with Medea. But Jason has been unfaithful to Medea. During his travels he has married a princess for her wealth, even though he was already married to Medea. He does not deny it; he claims he could not help it, because the thought of so much money was irresistible. He declares he still loves Medea and wants to share his life with her. He asks for her forgiveness.

But Medea plans an elaborate and unusually cruel revenge on her husband, including the killing of their own children in front of his very eyes. This dramatic and gruesome story was retold by the great Greek playwright Euripides, and is

one of the classic tragic plays in the history of literature. Medea was hailed by some as 'the first feminist'. Others dismissed this as being a very unsuitable model for feminism.

Medea is born again and again in the fertile imaginations of many writers. Playwright Nabaneet Dev Sen's Medea is called Rupa/Rupsa. Jason has taken on the likeness of Manas with its complex twists and turns, Dev Sen's modern medea (an award-winning play written in 1993) shows us the intensity of a woman's hurt and loss, and how she unerringly picks the most vulnerable spots in a man's armour to take her revenge.

Summary

The scene is laid on a deserted suburban railway platform. At the time the play opens Manas is seen seated on a hold on. He is trying to strike a match and lit cigarette. Presently, a woman enters and Manas is surprised to find that it is none else than his own wife whom he had deserted years ago. He enquires their two children, Tutu and Ratan. But she pretends that she has no children at all. He calls her by her name Rupa and asks her if she remembers her husband. She admits that her name is Rupsa Mullik and the man tells her that his name is Manas Mullik. Assuming indifference she remarks that the name sounds familiar.

The woman pretends that she has adopted the children and that they are orphans and she got them from Mother Teresa. She tells him that she is going to bring the children home from the hostel for the *pooja* holidays. Manas is shocked on hearing his own children referred to as orphans.

Manas tries to convince her that he is her husband. He asks her to recall the circumstances in which they were married. She also tells her about his sister-in-law Sonali with whom he had an affair and on whose advice he left the country. But Rupa tells him that she does not have a sister-in-law Manas realizes that Rupa is still angry with him. He confesses everything to her and asks for forgiveness.

The heroine is determined to have revenge upon Manas for betraying her. She tells him that she was married off in great style and that she lived with her husband in the railway quarters. She also said that her husband had a little physical deformity and was hence unable to have children. Then she says that her husband died in a train accident. Manas is shuddered on hearing this. He reminds her that their elder son Ratan was the reason they had to marry. She implies that she became pregnant three months before the marriage and their first son Ratan was born within hardly seven months of their marriage.

Manas admitted his fault and confessed that it was at Sonali's persuasion that he had to run away. But Rupa stands firm. She is furious. She threatens Manas that she may call the police. Manas falls at her feet and admits all his misdeeds. But she walks away leaving Manas in utter confusion. When the play ends Manas stands alone on the shadowy stage. He is totally dejected and sits down on the hold on and picks up a cigarette and strikes the match.

When the play is over, the stage director comes to the stage and asks the audience whether the play belongs to Jason or Medea and the audience is left to choose the answer.

This play may be considered as one which belongs to Jason in the guise of Manas because Manas was the one who started the whole chain of events by betraying Rupa and having an affair with the sister-in-law, Sonali. He is the one who approaches Rupa and starts the whole conversation which forms the body of the play. He is the one who is left alone on the station platform when the train has departed. He is the one who will never be sure what happened to his children. He will doubt his own sanity. Was that really his estranged wife Rupa? Was she a stranger? Was she a ghost of his imagination? Manas is the real victim of this tragedy.

This drama may also be considered as one which belongs to Medea, in the guise of Rupa because she is the woman wronged; that is what the story is about. She holds the power to forgive or to take revenge. She has undergone stress and misery because her husband was unfaithful to her. She had to bring up her children without a father. Rupa is the real victim of this tragedy.

We could say the real drama belongs to the man-woman relationship because in a marriage, the husband and wife come to know each others' weaknesses. They know what will hurt the other the most. When love turns to anger, gentleness can turn to revenge. Rupa knows instinctively that Manas will be hurt if she says that he was unable to have children. He will be hurt if she suggests that the children born to them are not his children at all. The story is not about one man and one woman. It is about betrayal; remorse and revenge in man-woman relationship.

It could also be said that the drama belongs to the playwright because there was neither a Manas nor a Rupa. The Rupa whom Manas saw and spoke to was only in his tortured imagination. Similarly the Manas whom Rupa met and talked to was only in her tortured imagination. Manas actually died in the train accident eight years ago. Or may be eight days ago. Rupa has gone almost insane after that. She imagines all kinds of things. It can be also be inferred that there is a Manas, and there is a Rupa. But there is no railway station. The author imagines their meeting. After all, it is not a huge coincidence that these two should meet on a deserted station platform.

The play ends as it begins, on a deserted station platform. Everything comes full cycle.

Glossary

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Intermittent	: irregular
Suburb	: outlying part of a city or town

Hold-all : traveling case or bag

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Ridiculous : unreasonable: absurd

Two men called Manas : she recalls two images of Manas – Manas as her husband and as one who betrayed her.

Ratan and Tutu : a girl and a boy, in contrast to the two male children in Euripides's Medea

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They are orphans : a shocking insult to Manas's integrity; she takes him for dead

Adopt : legally take (another's child) and bring it up as one's own

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These are my foster children : this statement silences Manas by declaring that he has no fight over the children. The mother should be the custodian of the kids in the event of a divorce.

foster children : adopted children

Ceaseless : without stopping

Frantic : wildly excited; furious

Embarrass : perplex; puzzle

She didn'tlaughed : a new image of woman in contrast to the eternally sobbing , sacrificing stereotype

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Vague : imprecise in thought or expression

Vanish : disappear

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The registrar's office : this indicates that the marriage took place without their parents' consent

Gravely : seriously

Rancid : stench, rotten smell

Yagnya : a ritual of sacrifice, worship, a prayer in connection with the wedding

Freak : most unusual

Fetch : go and get

Vivid : clear

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Aping : imitating

Impulsive : inclined to act suddenly without thought about the consequences

Hassle : trouble; bother

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Intolerable : unbearable

Exasperated : frustrated

The pathological.....basket : how would a man respond to the infertility of his wife? Those who fail to give birth are condemned and laughed at by society. Childless mothers are ill treated as inauspicious creatures

Gone over the bend : crazy; lost sanity

Fraudulent : fake; false

Swindler : a fraud

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Devastated : to lay waste; destroyed

Nuisance : offence; annoyance

Benediction : blessing

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Cacophony : disharmony

Statuesque : suggestive of a statue

Comprehension

1. Answer the following in two of three sentences.

a. 'These are my foster children.' What prompts Rupsa to negate her motherhood?

Rupas' husband Manas betrays her by marrying another woman. Rupa takes revenge upon her husband by negating her motherhood. Rupa knows

instinctively that Manas will be hurt if she says that he was unable to have children and that the children born to them are not his children at all.

b. 'Why are you making up these strange stories', Rupsa? Why do her sorties strikes strange to Manas?

Rupsa tells him the strange story that Ratan, her first child, was brought from Mother Teresa's ashram on a rainy day. The story strikes strange to Manas because Ratan was the first child born to them. In fact Ratan was conceived before their marriage and that was the real reason behind their marriage.

c. 'I have not the vaguest idea where Sonali might be today.' Who is Sonali? Who is her counterpart in the Medea myth?

Sonali is the sister-in-law of Rupa with whom Manas had an affair. Sonali's counterpart in Medea myth is the princess of Corinth whom Jason marries for her wealth even though he was already married to Medea.

d. Why did Manas' search for Rupa prove unsuccessful when he came back home from Burma?

Manas' search for Rupa proves unsuccessful because even after their reunion at the railway station, Rupa declines him and tells him that her husband was killed in a train accident and that she has no children since her husband had a little physical deformity.

e. What specific event in their life does Manas so vividly remember?

Manas vividly remembers the birth of his first son Ratan . In fact Ratan was conceived before their marriage and that was the real reason behind their marriage.

f. what does Rupa say about her husband?

Rupa says that her husband was in the railways. They lived in the railway quarters. His frequent transfers made them move around a great deal. He died in a train accident.

g. How does Manas describe the day when Ratan was born?

There was a storm on the day Ratan was born. Rupa had been in great pain, suffering for three days. She was terrified each time the thunder rolled or the lightning struck and that was the month of *Sravan*

2. Answer the following in a paragraph

a. This play may be called Medea. Justify this statement.

Ancient Greek myth speaks of Medea who was married to Jason. Jason has been unfaithful to Medea. During his travels he has married a princess for her wealth. He still loves Medea and wants to share his life with her. He asks for her forgiveness. But Medea takes a cruel revenge on her husband by killing their own children in front of his very eyes. This story was retold by the great the Greek playwright Euripides. Playwright Nabaneet Dev Sen's Medea is called Rupa/Rupsa. Jason has taken on the likeness of Manas. Dev Sen's modern Medea shows us the depths of a woman's hurt and loss. In the play Manas who

betrays Rupa meets her years after on a deserted railway platform. When love turns to anger, gentleness can turn to revenge. Rupa knows that Manas will be hurt if she says that he was unable to have children and that the children born to them are not his children at all. This drama may be considered as belonging to Medea, in the guise of Rupa because she is the woman wronged; that is what the story is about. She holds the power to forgive or to take revenge. She has undergone stress and misery because her husband was unfaithful to her. She has had to bring up her children without a father. Rupa is the real victim of this tragedy.

b. The play belongs to Jason. Justify.

Ancient Greek myth speaks of Medea who was married to Jason. Jason has been unfaithful to Medea. During his travels he has married a princess for her wealth. He still loves Medea and wants to share his life with her. He asks for her forgiveness. But Medea takes a cruel revenge on her husband by killing their own children in front of his very eyes. This story was retold by the great Greek playwright Euripides. Playwright Nabaneet Dev Sen's Medea is called Rupa/Rupsa. Jason has taken on the likeness of Manas. In the play Manas who betrays Rupa meets her years after on a deserted railway platform. Rupa tells him that her husband was killed in a train accident and was unable to have children. This play may be considered as belonging to Jason in the guise of Manas because Manas was the one who started the whole chain of events by betraying Rupa and having an affair with the sister-in-law, Sonali. He is the one who approaches Rupa and starts the whole conversation which forms the body of the play. He is the one who is left alone on the station platform when the train has departed. He is the one who will never be sure what happened to his children. He will doubt his own sanity. Was that really his estranged wife Rupa? Was she a stranger? Was she a ghost of his imagination? Manas is the real victim of this tragedy.

3. Answer the following in not more than 300 words Essay

Examine *Medea* as a feminist play.

Feminism is an ideology of resistance to men's scheme of organizing society with women as inferiors. It teaches us to understand that women are not valued in the personal, social, political or cultural spheres. It insists that we should all act collectively to correct this situation.

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The scene is laid on a deserted suburban railway platform. Manas is seen seated on a hold on. Manas is surprised to find his own wife, Rupa whom he had deserted years ago. He enquires about their two children Tutu and Ratan. But she pretends that she has no children at all. She admits that her name is Rupsa.

The woman portends that she has adopted the children and that they are orphans and she got them from Mother Teresa. She tells him that she is going to bring the children home from the hostel for the *Poona* holidays. Manas is shocked on hearing his own children referred to as orphans.

Manas tries to convince her that he is her husband. He asks her to recall the circumstances in which they were married. He also tells her about his sister-in-law Sonali with whom he had an affair and on whose advice he left the country. But Rupa tells him that she does not have a sister-in-law. Manas realizes that Roopa is still angry with him. He confesses everything to her and asks for forgiveness.

The heroine is determined to have revenge upon Manas for betraying her. She tells that her husband had a little physical deformity and was hence unable to have children. She says that her husband died in a train accident. Manas is shuddered on hearing this. He reminds her that their elder son Ratan was the reason they had to marry. He implies that she became pregnant three months before the marriage and their first son Ratan was born within hardly seven months of their marriage.

Manas admitted his fault and confessed that it was at Sonali's persuasion that he had to run away. But Rupa stands firm. She is furious. She walks away leaving Manas in utter confusion. When the play ends Manas stands alone on the shadowy stage. He is totally dejected and sits down on the hold on and picks up a cigarette and strikes the match.

When the play is over, the stage director comes to the stage and asks the audience whether the play belongs to Jason or Medea and the audience is left to choose the answer.

If this drama belongs to Medea in the guise of Rupa then we could say that she is the woman wronged; that is what the story is about. She holds the power to forgive or to take revenge. She has undergone stress and misery because her husband was unfaithful to her. She has had to bring up her children without a father. Rupa is the real victim of this tragedy.

When love turns to anger, gentleness can turn to revenge. Rupa knows instinctively that Manas will be hurt if she says that he was unable to have

children. He will be hurt if she suggests that the children born to them are not his children at all. The story is not about one man and one woman. It is about betrayal; remorse and revenge in man-woman relationship. The gruesome Greek tragedy, 'Medea' was hailed by some as the first feminist play though it may be considered as a very unsuitable and aggressive model of feminism. Its modern counterpart Nabaneet Dev Sen's 'Medea' can also be extolled as a feminist play since the aggrieved protagonist protests to fight against the indignities she was subjected to in a patriarchal society.
