**B.A. 2nd ESM. HONS**

**Paper:- ENG-HC-2016**

**FREEDOM TO THE SLAVE**

**BY HENRY LOUIS VIVIAN DEROZIO**

1. When was the poem “Freedom to the Slave” published?

Ans. 1827

1. Who wrote the ‘The Pleasure of Hopes’?

Ans. Thomas Campbell

1. From where The epigraph of “Freedom to the Slave” is taken?

Ans. Thomas Campbell’s poem “The Pleasures of Hope”.

1. What is meant by the expression “Freedom to the Slave”?

Ans.This expression is a reference to the meaning of freedom to a slave. Through this piece, Derozio describes how a freed slave appreciates his present state and implicitly contrasts it with his life before freedom.

1. What does the expression “as the slave departs, the man returns” mean in the poem “Freedom to the Slave”?

Ans. This line is an allusion to Thomas Campbell’s “The Pleasures of Hope”. It means that when a slave is freed, it gives him enough space to realize his worth. Besides, it helps him to feel the joy of being a man again.

1. Who speaks the words “I’m free as they!” in the poem “Freedom to the Slave”?

Ans. These words are spoken by the freed slave. By uttering this exclamation, he refers to the winds, birds, and rivers that are free like him.

1. How did the slave feel when he was first told that he was free?

Ans. When the slave was first told that he was freed, he became proud of the freedom he was longing for. It allowed him to explore the noblest feelings buried in his soul.

1. When was “Freedom to the Slave” written?

Ans. The poem “Freedom to the Slave” was written in February 1827. It was published in the same year in Derozio’s poetry collection, *Poems*(1827).

1. Which type of meter does use by Derozio in his poem ‘Freedom to the Slave’?

Ans. Iambic tetrameter and trimester.

1. **Qs. Discus the critical analysis of the poem ‘Freedom to the Slave’.**

**Ans**. The poem “Freedom To The Slave” is about a slave who regains his freedom after prolonged captivity. H.L.V Derozio wrote “Freedom To The Slave” in 1827. It was the time when the Anti-slavery movement was prevalent in England. The anti-slavery movement or abolitionism was a movement to end the long tradition of slavery in Western Europe and the America in late 18th and 19th centuries. Freedom is an integral part of man’s existence. Freedom gives meaning to man’s existence. It is the freedom that adds meaning to the life of a recently liberated slave.

This poem begins with an allusion to Thomas Campbell’s poem “The Pleasures of Hope”. Then the text directly jumps into the story of a slave who was enslaved. Right now, he is freed from the shackles of slavery. First and foremost, he realizes the hidden potential and noblest feelings buried inside his soul. It makes him kneel no more to anyone. Once again, he feels himself a human being, not a creature destined to serve, suffer, and follow. The epigraph of “Freedom to the Slave” alludes to Thomas Campbell’s poem “The Pleasures of Hope”. Derozio quotes this line in order to give a hint to readers regarding the main idea of the poem. In this line, Campbell uses an epigram. He says that as a slave is freed from the chain of subjugation, he becomes a man again. Here, the terms “slave” and “man” are used to refer to the concepts of “slavery” and “humanity”. So, this line also contains the use of synecdoche. The meaning of this line is that slavery kills the basic essence of humanity from a man’s heart. The slavers treat a slave as a creature inferior to them. Thus, when a slave is emancipated, he can enjoy the pleasures of being a man.

The poem directly begins with the essence of the epigraph. Besides, the title “Freedom to the Slave” also hints at a slave who is given freedom. Derozio anticipates in the first two lines regarding his state of mind. When he was first told he ceased to be a slave, it gave him pleasure, inexpressible with words. By hearing that he was free, his heart leaped up in joy. He became proud to know that he could live as a human being. Here, the poet focuses on the term “heart” in order to refer to the emotions of the person. Besides, he uses a rhetorical exclamation in the fourth line to portray his happiness after seeing the slave freed to be a man again. Derozio refers to the “noblest feelings of the soul”. The noblest feelings in a man’s heart include happiness, pride, compassion, and benevolence. It does not end here. Rather such feelings include all the qualities that make a person, a human being. Previously, the slave was treated as an inferior creature that was destined to serve his superior. As he ceased to be a slave, he could explore those feelings once again. He had to kneel to nobody. This feeling of self-confidence and self-esteem elevated his thoughts. He could think freely. In this way, he felt himself a man. Here, the poet uses an epigram. He conveys that when a man is free in his mental space, he can explore the true meaning of being a human. The thoughts of selfhood are what make him complete as a man.

Derozio describes how the freed slave draws inspiration from his surroundings. After being completely free internally and externally, he could appreciate the nature around him. He could breathe the freshness of air once again. Here, the poet uses a metaphor in “breath of heaven”. The “heaven”, a reference to the sky, is invested with the idea of breathing. Its “breath” is a reference to the air human’s breath.

He looked around at the wild birds. Their flight filled his heart with happiness. It is important to note the term “wild” here. By this term, Derozio connects the untamed spirit of the person to that of the wild birds. He looked upon the “running stream” that rolled away beneath his feet. So, the person was standing near a river and appreciating the beauty of nature. The “running stream” contains the use of personification. Here, the stream is invested with the idea of running away. The scene filled him with pleasure. It made him wonder about his own freedom. Thus he said, “I’m free as they!”. The exclamation reflects his mental happiness. In this line, Derozio uses the repetition of “and” in order to emphasize the terms mentioned here. Besides, these terms “winds”, “birds”, and “floods” are symbols of freedom.

Then Derozio shifts from his subject and describes how he sees “Freedom”. Firstly, he personifies the abstract idea by invoking it as a human being. According to him, there is magic in the very word itself. Indeed, if we pronounce the term by closing our eyes, we can feel the essence tied to it. It transcends the soul, elevates the mind, and frees the spirit. Not only that, it lights the “altar of the soul”. In this phrase, the poet compares the human soul to an altar. It is like a temple where the lord resides. Freedom is the priest who lights the temple with its “everlasting flame”. In this way, freedom enlightens the spirit and the darkness fades from there. Besides, its flame has an eternal quality. As long as the man lives, the light of freedom stays with him.

Derozio’s poetic persona directly addresses the spirit of Freedom. He blesses the patriotic spirits who unsheathed their swords to free their country from the shackles of colonial rulers. The “unsheathed” sword is a symbol of protest as well as war. By using this symbol, Derozio voices against the subjugation of his dear countrymen. He glorifies the brave hearts who bleed to emancipate themselves as well as their nation. His spirit salutes those who devoted their lives for the noble cause. Readers can find the repetition of the word “bleeds” that creates a resonance of the idea in their minds. It is meant for the sake of emphasis.

In the last section of “Freedom to the Slave”, the poet blessed the generous humans who felt pain when they saw their fellow humans were tied by the chain of slavery. By “generous hand”, the poet refers to the generous people. They broke the chain which a tyrant gave to the slaves. The “chain”, a symbol of subjugation or dependence, was meant for holding them back. By freeing them from these symbolic fetters, the abolitionists helped them to realize their true potential. The last two lines show the poet’s sympathy for the degraded state of the slaves. He blesses the hearts of those who had fellow feelings for the slaves. The feeling of compassion is what gives them freedom

The poem “Freedom to the Slave” taps on the themes of freedom, slavery, and patriotism. As the title says, this piece is all about the idea of freedom. But, Derozio explores this theme from the perspective of a slave who is freed from the chains of subjugation. In order to appreciate the theme, one has to look deeper into the mind of the slave. His exploration of the things that he was not able to cherish before reflects the inherent desire of a man to be free like the nature around him.

In conclusion we may say that by writing this poem, Derozio uses the character as a metaphor of all the Indians, enslaved by the colonial rulers. Their life was no different than the life of a slave. But, the slave in the poem can lead his life freely. Indians could not. Hence, the poet is sympathetic towards the sufferings of his countrymen and tries to infuse the spirit of freedom in their hearts. “Freedom to the Slave” is one such poem where Derozio’s love for his country is reflected.

**THE ORPHAN GIRL**

1. How was the hair of the orphan girl?

Answer: The hair of the orphan girl was as black as the raven’s wings.

1. How was her cheek?

Answer: The cheeks of the orphan girl had the hue of tulip flower on them.

1. To what was the voice of the girl compared? How was her voice?

Answer: The voice of the girl was compared to the singing of night’s wind. Her voice was as soft as the sound of the night’s wind.

1. How were the eyebrows of the girl?

Answer: The girl’s eyebrows had the beauty of moonbeam.

1. Who was the father of the girl? / How did her father die?

Answer: The girl’s father was a soldier who died in the battle field.

1. How did her mother die?

Answer: The girl’s mother died grief-stricken not enduring the widow’s part due to her husband’s death in the battle field.

1. What is the guerdon/ prize of the brave in the battle field?

Answer: The soldier who shows bravery in the battle field, gets a glorious grave and it is his guerdon.

1. “She sunk beneath her soul’s distress

And left her infant parentless.”—Who sunk beneath her soul’s distress and why?

Answer: The girl’s mother mentioned in the poem The Orphan Girl sunk beneath her soul’s distress because her husband died in the battle field.

1. What will happen if anyone gives the orphan girl a shelter?

Answer: If anyone gives the orphan girl a shelter in her misery, his name will be blessed with honour forever.

1. How did the orphan girl lose her parents?

Ans:- The orphan girl lose her parents when her father was killed in the battlefield and her mother died listening to the news.

1. How does Derozio describe the physical stature of the orphan girl?

Ans:-Derozio describes that she had black hair like raven's wings, her cheek was painted with tulip, her voice was as soft as night winds, her brow was like fair moonbeam.

1. What message Derozio gives in the end?

Ans :-  Derozio says in her lonely journey the orphan girl would scorn her.  Her shame might have enough to wretch ha breathe with sorrow and oppressed guilt.  She was a coldly cruel act to wound the bossom of a woman whose blood would gush unbound.  When a fear comes out from the erring woman's unpitied woes then it is the brightest.  In canclusion the poet, Derozio, makes an appeal to a man with sympathy and compassion.  He says that the man who shelters such an orphan girl from sorrow and shame, his honored name will be blest for ever.

1. Discuss the Summery of the poem ‘The Orphan Girl’ by Derozio.

**Ans.**

The poem The Orphan Girl by Henry Louis Vivian Derozio is about a young girl whose father died in a war and the mother died in the sorrow of her husband. She is left orphan and the poet is concerned about her future in the cruel world. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio is a well-known and predominant nineteenth-century poet. Derozio, in the poet The orphan Girl speaks of a young girl father has died in the war while his mother died lamenting her husband’s death. In the cruel world, the girl is left orphan having no one to take care of.

The speaker begins by telling the appearance of the orphan girl. The speaker says that she has black hair like Raven’s (crow) wings and checks as bright as the tulip flower. Moreover, she has a soft voice just like the rustling, calm and gentle wind or air at night time. Similarly, her forehead is as cheerful as the moon rays.  In the beginning, the speaker has a quite pleasing tone, yet after the fourth verse, the tone changes and turns to illustrate the dark realities of life.

The speaker informs the readers about the death of the young girl’s father. Her father went to the war and bravely fought there, yet eventually died. Before dying, the father knew that he will die. The speaker mourns that in this world, the brave are rewarded by the martyrdom. This phrase shows the brutality of the world and how it treats the courageous and brave people. Her mother couldn’t bear the death of her husband and died of the heart attack. Ultimately, the girl is left orphan in the cruel world.

The speaker in the second part of the poet refers to the young girl’s uncertainty in this world. In this cold and bleak world, the world that lacks human warmth and hope, the little young orphan has no friends at all. She is friendless, had no relatives to provide her shelter, home, and little affection. She is destined to live a desolate, dull and depressing life. The world is compared to the desert. The poet reiterates the verses and warns the young girl to be good and kind as the world is full of cruel people who will scorn her, mock her and abuse her. Ultimately, the cruel world will kill her.

Furthermore, the poet laments over the fact that as a girl, the shame she will have to suffer will be sufficient to bleed her breasts. She will be oppressed by the world by putting the weight of sorrows and guilt on her shoulder. To wound a woman (bosom) who is already bleeding from the breast because of the sorrows and shame is very brutal. The tears of the woman coming out of sorrow and oppression are the most painful tears.

At the end of the poem, the speaker appreciates those who shelters an orphan from sorrow and shame. According to the poet, those people are the most blessed and honorable people. Though the poet ends the poem with hope, yet he still is uncertain about the future of the young orphan girl.

The poem has various themes. Initially, the poet discusses the bad effects of the war and the cruelty of the world for brave and courageous people. The poet moans that in this world, the brave are rewarded by the martyrdom. This phrase shows the brutality of the world and how it treats the courageous and brave people. Moreover, the dead leave their children alone in this cruel, friendless world, having no one to take care of them.

The poet moves our attention to the circumstances that a woman faced when she is left alone in this world. The poem has a universal impact; it is not specific for a particular area and time. Even today, a lonely woman faces a lot of tortures. A woman, who has no one to take care of, lives a shameful life full of physical, mental, and sexual abuse and are enormously tortured by the so-called humans. The poem gives an insight into the condition of the woman and the suppression which she faced during the time of the poet. A girl whose parents would die had to live a shameful life and was physically, mentally and sexually tortured by the people.

In “The Orphan Girl”, Derozio taps on the theme of the sorrow and suffering of an orphan child. This poem also showcases the themes of the futility of war, distress, the hypocrisy of society, and loneliness. The main idea of Derozio’s poem concerns the predicament of a girl after losing both her parents. In the first few lines, the poet implicitly says that none could anticipate that such a tragedy could happen with her. However, when she was all alone, hypocritical society came with their criticizing words. They taunted her at each step that caused her to suffer internally. Through this poem, the poet’s sympathy for the helpless and unfortunate girl is portrayed.

Thus the poem ‘The Orphan Girl” throws light on the condition of an orphan girl who becomes a target of society’s oppression and criticism. It recounts the plight of an infant girl who loses her father and later her mother and the uncertain fate of the orphan girl. At the outset, the poet describes the beauty of the girl and tells the death of her parents. In the next stanza, the poet projects the unpredictable life of an orphan in a callous world.

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**‘My Grandmother’s House’**

**by Kamala Das**

**1. What is Kamala Das’ profession?**  
Ans. Housewife.

2. Name one more poem by Kamala Das where she fondly cherishes her childhood memories?

Ans. “A Hot Noon in Malabar”

**3. Name the poetess’ grandmother’s house?**

Ans. The name of the poetess’ grandmother is Nalpat House

**4. Which expressions reinforce the idea of desperation?**

Ans. The expression is ‘blind eyes of windows’ and ‘the frozen air’

**5. Which feeling does the poetess miss in her married life?**

Ans. The poetess misses the sense of security and protection.

**6. Why has the poetess become a beggar for love?**

Ans. She has become a beggar for love who knocks helplessly at strangers’ doors to receive it at least in a small measure.

**7. How is the present life of the poetess?**

Ans. Her present life is sans love, sans pride is emphatically conveyed by her begging for love at ‘strangers’ doors.

8. Why is the speaker so nostalgic about her grandmother’s house?

Ans. The speaker’s grandmother’s house is a place full of memories for her. Her grandmother had died some years before, and she is nostalgic about the house because she had spent many happy times there. The speaker is also nostalgic about the house and the time she spent there because it is now full of memories of her grandmother for her.

9. Why was the speaker filled with a sense of pride while leaving in her grandmother’s house?

Ans. The speaker was filled with a sense of pride while living in her grandmother’s house because she was raised in her home. She did not want to leave her grandmother’s house because it was filled with memories of her childhood and a sense of pride.

10. What is the central idea of the poem ‘My Grandmother’s House’?

Ans. The central idea of the poem “my grandmother’s house”is a longing for the past , poets happy days with her grandmother. “my grandmother’s house ” is an expression for the poetess ,longing for the grandmother’s house where she was proud and loved. So the central idea of the poem “my grandmother’s house” is longing for love and the failure to achieve love runs throughout the poem.

11. “That woman died” ……… ’Who is the woman referred to here?

Ans. Grandmother of Kamala Das

**Qs. Write a Critical Appreciation of the Poem ‘My Grandmother’s House’ by Kamala Das**

**Ans.** My grandmother’s house is a poem written by Indian poet Kamala Das. The poem first appeared in an anthology of verse entitled ‘Summer Time in Calcutta 1965). It is an autobiographical poem in which the speaker’s nostalgic desire for home reflects through the inability to visit the happy past.

The poem describes the speaker’s happy life before her grandmother’s death and sad life after her grandmother’s death. The speaker of the poem is a married woman. She is reminded of her parental home which is the symbol of immense love. The poem describes the clear difference between past and present. In past, the life was full of activity whereas now it has turned into deadly silence. The intensity of sadness is expressed by dark and negative imagery.

Kamala Das, the most eminent feminist voice in the postcolonial era, has created an everlasting place for herself in Indian Writing in English. The poem My Grand Mother’s House in India is an expression that discloses her sentimental longing for her family home in Malabar where she had spent some of the cheeriest days of her life with her grandmother. The poem first appeared in Kamala Das’s first collection of verses titled Summer Time in Calcutta. Love is an optional and it arises from escalating goodness. It need not occur but can make it happen. Love is active and robust. Love sees good in others rather than the immoral. Love is worldwide and love can also be unqualified. Anunrestricted love is selfless, non-egoistic and surrendering. It expects nothing, expresses everything, bears and holds even the worst of anything, accepts aches and stripes and bears contusions, suffers long and kind. Kamala Das then lived in a city, far away from her grandmother’s place. Here she agonized from an acute sense of distancing after having left grandmother’s place after her marriage. She recollected the days she spent in her grandmother’s house and the love and affection showed by her.

She was reminded of her grandmother’s house where she spent her unforgettable childhood. It was the only place where she could obtain love from her grandmother. She became sensitive and grieved penetrating anguish. After the demise of her grandmother, the poet says that even the House was filled with anguish, and she accepted the isolation with resignation. With the death of her grandmother the house withdrew into silence. Only dead silence haunted the House, feeling of unhappiness wandering throughout. Kamala Das was too young to recite the books at that time. The books in the house seemed to her as atrocious as snakes and her blood turned cold like the moon. When her grandmother died, even the house seemed to share her grief, which is distressingly expressed in the phrase “the House withdrew”. The house soon became deserted and snakes sneaked among books. Her blood became cold like the moon because there was none to love her the way she wanted.

Since then the poetess was thoughtful of going to her grandmother’s house again. She had a sturdy desire to be in there and sought to look through the windows of the house. She called the windows blind because there was no one in the house to stare through the windows. She wanted to sit there isolated and heeded to the blowing of the cold winter wind. Her heart was itself like a dark window where the fresh air did not blow.

Kamala Das was very delighted about her grandmother and the love she acknowledged. The Abridgment after the word loved displays how much she laments at the loss of the person who unreservedly loved her and satisfied her to the core. She was so induced by the atmosphere in which she lived, that the loss of it was indigestible, and un opposable. She senses so proud of her grandmother and the house in such a way that she wants all others to know how hopeful and sustaining the situation at the grandmother’s house was. Kamala Das told her adorable that it would be problematic for him to trust that she had survived in such a wonderful house. She treasured it so much that she was honoured of it. At Present day the love exposed by her grandmother was not there for her. So, she had been entreating even the strangers to show at least some of their love on her. But her wish persisted unsatisfied. The failure of love and the birth of poetry were associated to each other in Kamala Das. Her understanding with her husband was purely physical. Under such situations love be smirched into lust and vicious condition. So, she had been pleading unfamiliar person to show true love to her like her grandmother who shared her love and fondness for Kamala Das.

Kamala Das sums up the poem proclaiming that it is, to some scope, problematic for anyone to have faith in that she once lived in such a house filled with love and affection and was so loved by all and she lived her life with full self-importance. It is also solid believe for every one that her world once occupied with contentment is a shrill contrast to her present situation where she is entirely bereft of love and pride. She says that in her distressed search for love, she has misplaced her way. Since she didn’t receive any spirits of love from the people whom she called her own, she now has to knock “at strangers' doors” and beg them for love, if not in substantial totals, then at least in small measure. When there are numerous things that grandparents could influence grandchildren noticeably the feelings of the poetess Kamala Das evidences true and everlasting. The poem helixes from her own disappointment with her anticipation of unconditional love from the one she loves. In the poem, the picturesque of the ancestral home stances for the strong ardent support and unqualified love she received from her grandmother. The imagery is private and attractively enunciates her predicament in a loveless wed lock. Thus, the old house was for her a residence of representational extraction to a world of innocence, purity and effortlessness, an Edenic world where love and happiness are still conceivable. A note of pessimism runs throughout the action of the poem. It reveals the poet’s painful unfulfilled desire to visit her grandmother’s house to which she is deeply and emotionally attached.

Kamala Das sums up the poem saying that it is, to some extent, difficult for anyone to believe that she once lived in such a house filled with love and affection and was so loved by all and she lived her life with full pride. It is also to hard believe for every one that her world once filled with happiness is a sharp contrast to her present situation where she is completely devoid of love and pride. She says that in her desperate quest for love, she has lost her way. Since she didn’t receive any feelings of love from the people whom she called her own, she now has to knock “at strangers' doors” and beg them for love, if not in substantial amounts, then at least in small measure.

**'An Introduction'**

**by Kamala Das**

1. “ I am Indian”- Who refers herself as an Indians? Where was the speaker born?

Ans. The poetess refers herself as an Indian. The speaker born in Malabar.

1. How many languages did the poetess know to speak and write? What was her native language?

Ans. The poetess knew three languages to speak and two languages to write. Malayalam was her native language.

1. “Don’t write in English” Who orders to whom? Why does the speaker say so?

Ans. All the critics, friends, and the visiting cousin order the poetess not to write in English because English is not her mother-tongue.

1. Which languages are Kamala Das’s own languages? How does Kamala Das describe her own language?

Ans. According to Kamala Das, the languages that she likes to speak and write are her own language that may be incomplete with distortions, queerness because with that languages she can express her joys and longings.

1. Why is English Kamala Das’s own language in the poem ‘The Introduction’?

Ans. According to the poet, English is her own language because she speaks in it and uses it as a medium to interact with others. She has the freedom to chose whatever language she wants to speak in. Hence, English is her own language.

1. Why Kamala Das’ s poem ‘An Introduction’ as an autobiographical poem?

Ans. An Introduction by [Kamala Das](https://englishsummary.com/lesson/kamala-das-poetry-characteristics/) is a [confessional poem](https://englishnotes.com/what-is-confessional-poetry/) in which she is talking about herself. The whole poem is about her miserable life as a woman in the patriarchal society. In the very beginning the poet says that the names of all the rulers of our country that she remembers do not have females. So our country is patriarchal in which woman have no place.

She then narrates how she is often criticised for talking in english. She further tells us that she was married off to an old man in young age as her body seemed to be mature. According to her, her husband would use her for satisfying his lust. He had no intention of loving or understanding her.

Kamala further says that she did not like her womanly body and hence she tried to become a man. But the society did not accept this and she was criticised for taking on the attire of men. Finally she says that she is a human being and thus desires to be treated like one. She does not want to be a toy or an object of sexual pleasure. Thus the whole poem is about Kamala Das and her own life.

1. Why Das’s poem ‘An Introduction’ is known as confessional poem?

Ans. ‘An Introduction’ is a confessional poem because it is the poetry of the personal. It is the poetry of “I.” Reminding us of the poets like Sylvia Plath or Anne Sexton, this poem delves us into the multifarious aspects of being a woman. Kamala Das shares crucial details from her private history which makes the poem confessional.

1. From which work of Kamala Das, the poem “An Introduction” is taken?

Ans. Summer in Calcutta

1. Who is called a ‘nympho’?

Ans. Poetess, Kamala Das.

1. Name the autobiography of Kamala Das.

Ans. My Story(Ante Khatha)

1. In which year, the autobiography of Kamala Das was published?

Ans. Ante Khatha published in 1973, and English My Story published in 1976.

1. In which year Kamala Das was converted to Islam?

Ans. 11.12.1999

1. In which year, she received the Sahitya Academy Award?

Ans. 1968

1. Name three works of Kamala Das.

Ans. My Story, Summer in Calcutta, Alphabets of lusts, etc

1. Who was Kamala Das’s husband?

Ans. Madhav Das

1. What is the childhood name of Kamala Das?

Ans. Madhavikutti

1. Name the great politician whose name is referred in the poem ‘An Introduction’.

Ans. Jawaharlal Nehru

1. What name did Kamala Das take after converted to Islam?

Ans.Kamala Suriya

1. When and where Kamala Das was born?

Ans. 31st March, 1934, in Malabar, Kerala.

1. Name an English confessional poet contemporary to Kamala Das?

Ans. Silvia Plath.

1. **How does Kamala Das introduce herself and her poetry in**‘An Introduction***?’***

**Ans.** She introduces herself as “Indian,” “born in Malabar,” “very brown,” and as a speaker of three languages. Two, she says, she writes in, and one she dreams in. She also notes that the languages she speaks are “mine,” tinted by her history and ideas.

1. **What is Kamala Das poetry known for?**

**Ans.** Her poetry is for its open exploration of women’s lives, sexuality, oppression, and contemporary Indian life and politics.

1. **What did Kamala Das want to say in**‘An Introduction***?’***

**Ans.** Kamala Das wanted to promote equal rights for women. She was concerned with the confines of marriage, societal restrictions and how they differ for men and women.

1. **Why is**‘An Introduction’ **a**[confessional](https://poemanalysis.com/genre/confessional-poetry/)**poem?**

**Ans.** ‘An Introduction’ addresses personal emotions and experiences, trademarks of confessional poetry. Often, this type of poetry also engages with “taboo” feelings, or those that society normally doesn’t engage with.

1. **How does Kamala Das speak for women in**‘An Introduction***?*’**

**Ans.** She promotes independence for women and a respect for their individual lives. She spends parts of the poem talking about herself but does so in a way that advocates for equal rights between the sexes.

1. **Qs. Critically analyse the poem 'An Introduction' by Kamala Das in your own words.**

Ans. “**An Introduction” is an autobiographical poem by Kamala Das.** It is confessional in tone and modern in style. It is blunt, bitter and straightforward. The poem, in a very cryptic and epigrammatic way, dives deep into the inner chambers of mind and digs out the real self which generally remains subdued. It also contains some beautiful images and symbols, words and phrases which often attract the attention of the readers. In ‘An Introduction*,*’ Das explores her complex emotions regarding the system controlling her life and the lives of countless suffering women. She also has the experience to back up her assertions about freedom and oppression as she played a critical role in the establishment of the Indian feminist movement.

Kamala Das introduces a new trend in Indian poetry in English with her bold, original and concentrated approach to the theme of love, language, sex and self identity. Her love-experience involves the predicament of an Indian woman compelled to obey the traditional ideals of womanhood. She revolts against conventions.

The poem, An Introduction by Kamala Das was included in Kamala Das's first volume of poetry, Summer in Calcutta (1965). The poem begins with a statement that shows her frank distaste for politics, especially in politically free India ruled by a chosen elite. The poet asserts her right to speak three languages, and defends her choice to write in two-- her mother-tongue, Malayalam, and English. She doesn't like to be advised in this matter by any guardian or relations. Her choice is her own: authentic and born of passion. The poet looks upon her decision to write in English as natural and humane. From the issue of the politics of language the poem then passes on to the subject of sexual politics in a patriarchy-dominated society where a girl attaining puberty is told about her biological changes by some domineering parental figure. As the girl seeks fulfillment of her adolescent passion, a young lover is forced upon her to traumatize and coerce the female-body since the same is the site for patriarchy to display its power and authority. When thereafter, she opts for male clothing to hide her femininity, the guardians enforce typical female attire, with warnings to fit into the socially determined attributes of a woman, to become a wife and a mother and get confined to the domestic routine. She is threatened to remain within the four walls of her female space lest she should make herself a psychic or a maniac. But the poet is an individual woman trying to voice a universal womanhood and trying to share her experiences, good or bad, with all other women. Love and sexuality are a strong component in her search for female identity and the identity consists of polarities. The poem ends with repetitions of the 1st person singular 'I' to suggest vindication of the body and the self. The poet truly discloses herself and the position of women in society particularly in that time to reveal the abuses in the society.

Das explores powerful themes of feminism/equal rights, freedom, and marriage in ‘An Introduction’. This poem is a very clear feminist statement that advocates for free choice for all women. This is in regards to every aspect of life, but the poet puts a special emphasis on marriage. She compares and contrasts the roles of men and women in society and explains for the reader how her life, the rules she’s forced to obey, infringe on her freedom. Readers should be able to ask themselves while moving through the poem how, if at all, the things Das is talking about apply to their own life. If nothing matches up, they might ask themselves why and if some kind of unaddressed or unacknowledged privilege is making their lives better.

In conclusion, we may say that the poem Introduction tells much about Kamala's thought. Through the poem, she wants to emphasize her identity as both a feminine and personal. The poem also talks about the patriarchal society, the shackle to women in daily life, fulfillment love and the superiority of males in a relationship. Even though the poem takes place in Indian context, the discrimination an d inequality toward the women happen not only in India, but also in any other regions of the world. Cultural and mental revolution is needed accompanying constitutional safeguard for the rights of the women. Her poem reflects the urge to change the society. Woman deserves the equal status in the society. She complains that woman should not be considered as belonging to someone, she should have her own identity.

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**Two Lady Rams**

**Mulk Raj Anand**

1. From where the short story ‘Two Lady Rams’ is taken?

Ans. It is taken from short story collection book ‘The Tractor and the Corn Goddess’.

1. Name the two wives of Lalla Jhinda Ram.

Ans. Sukhi, a 50 years old lady (elder wife) and Shakuntala, a 25 years old lady (younger wife).

1. What title did British offer to Lalla Jhinda Ram?

Ans. Knighthood.

1. Name the party where Lalla Jhinda Ram was offered the knighthood title.

Ans. Garden Party.

1. With whom did Lalla want to meet to get a solution of his problems?

Ans. ADC to the Governor.

1. When did Mulk Raj Anand receive Sahitya Academy Award?

Ans. 1971

1. When did Mulk Raj Anand receive Padma Bhusan Award?

Ans. 1968

1. Who did advise Lalla to take both the wives to the Garden Party?

Ans. The driver (chauffeur) of Lalla.

1. Why does the governor invite Lala jhinda RAM to attend the garden party?

Ans. The story revolves around a corrupt contractor, Lalla Jhinda Ram who has been conferred with the title of 'knighthood' for the services rendered to the British Raj. Therefore, the governor invites him and the Lady Ram to attend the garden party.

1. Why did Lalla Jhinda Ram marry for the second time?

Ans. He married Shakuntala to have child that his first wife could not able to produce.

1. Who are the two 'Lady Rams' of Mulk Raj Anand's short story?

Ans. Sukhi and Shakuntala, two wives of Lalla Jhinda Ram.

1. **Discuss the significance of the title of ‘Two Lady Rams’**

**Ans.** The plot revolves around the two wives of Lalla Jhinda Ram who are at tug of war with each other for their husband's attention. Since the two wives were incessantly quarreling with each other Lalla Jhinda Ram decides to divide his house into two separate wings, one for each wife to manage. He divided his household chores among the two wives so as to keep them at distant with each other. Gradually, along with the division of the house hold the chaos was under control. An unsaid routine was followed among Lalla Jhinda Ram and his two wives. He used to sleep with each of his wives on alternate days and showered both with equal attention. The mayhem started uprising once again when Lalla Jhinda Ram was awarded Knighthood and was invited to the garden party along with Lady Ram. Since the invitation card read "Lady Ram" instead of "Two Lady Rams". Lalla Jhinda Ram had to choose one of his wives to take along with him to the garden party. In those days it was not officially notified that among the wives of a person awarded Knighthood, which of his wife or wives would be entitled to be called as Lady

The two Lady Rams referred to in the title are Sukhi and Sakuntala. They are called two Lady Rams because they are the wives of Lalla Jhinda Ram. These two Lady Rams have been engaged in a constant cold war for many years. Both want the attention of their mutual husband. Their husband Jhinda Ram is a contractor who works with the white officials and, for his service, he is awarded the title of Knighthood. The governor invites him to come with his wife to confer the title on him at the garden party.

The invitation card is addressed to Sir Jhinda and Lady Ram. Ram initially decides that he will attend the party with his second wife, Sakuntala. But Sukhi, the first wife of Ram, thinks it is an insult to her, and therefore she protests. She too, insists on taking her to the party. Sukhi’s insistence makes him worried. If he rejects Sukhi then she will never let him live in peace for life. On the other hand, if he takes back his word of going together to the party from Sakuntala, then he will never be able to enjoy the company of young Sakuntala. Since both of them want to go with him to the party therefore it creates tension in the house. Sir Jhinda can deny neither Sakuntala nor Sukhi. He is perplexed. Therefore, he thinks that “the Governor of the province, the king’s representative, the shadow of the monarch” can easily resolve the issue. But he does not get help from the Governor rather, it is the chauffeur of Jhinda Ram who proposes the idea of taking both Lady Rams. Since he marries them, therefore he certainly has the right to call them both Lady Rams. Moreover, the Governor cannot stop their entry to the party. The only problem for him is the invitation card. Therefore, he alters the words to “The two Lady Rams”. This is how Jhinda Ram copes with the conflict between two wives.

The title can be interpreted in two ways. First, changing the words from Lady Ram to The Two Lady Rams implies Ram’s expertise in forgery. His alteration of the words from Lady Rams to “Two Lady Rams” is not his first experience of modification as he had altered many more intricate documents in the past. This suggested his cunningness.

Second, it points out the indifference of the colonial administration towards its subject. Because it is never thought who should be addressed as Lady in case of a man with multiple wives is promoted to knighthood.

Through this witty story, Mulk Raj Anand has points subtly to the social condition of that time. For instance, the Hindu Mitakshara Law was practiced in those colonial days. This law allowed the man to practice polygamy, but the colonial administration has not paid any concern to the women. There was no rule whether all or any of those wives of a man could hold the title of Lady in case the husband is honored with any high rank.

 It is shown that a woman's only value is her ability to produce heir for the family portraying a certain double standard that existed in the Indian society where woman were defined according to their spouse. The story brings out the constant struggle between two wives to get the attention of their husband. It is also astonishing as a reader to find a woman willing to marry an already married man. It is also noticed in the story that Jhinda Ram is able to bend or make new rules according to his will as he had the power and money to do so which concludes that irrespective of time and eras power and money has always been the deciding factor in most fields

1. **Qs. Discuss the summery of the short story Two Lady Rams in your own words.**

**Ans.** The hilarious story The Two Lady Rams by Mulk Raj Anand is majorly about the government contractor Lalla Jhinda Ram and his domestic complications in a pre-independent India. Lalla Jhinda Ram has two wives, the fifty seven year old Sukhi, and the thirty-two year old Sakuntala. Although the English laws practised in the then India did not allow polygamy, it did not oppose the mitrakshar law, according to which a man could marry more than one wife in order to beget a male heir.

The story, Two Lady Ram is about Lalla Jhinda Ram and his two wives. Lalla Jhinda Ram, an ordinary shopkeeper. He married two women, Sukhi and Shakuntala. He was forced to call both of them “Lady Rams” to calm the furious bitterness and high-blow war between his two wives. And the question was of naming his one of the as “Lady Rams”. If he chose one the other one will be creating disaster.

The elder wife of Jhinda Ram, Sukhi cannot give comfort to him and she was unable to perpetuate the race of giving him child. Due to this reason he married Shakuntala. The first wife gave Jhinda Ram a financial puss to his life as she brought a big dowry along with her while the second wife introduced romance in his life. The colonial regime had conferred the knighthood to Jhinda Ram, elevating his social rank thereby to that of the elites, “in recognition of his sundry services to the British Empire.” There was problem arising as both the wives wanted to the title of Lady Ram. The trouble worsened with the news that for conferring Jhinda Ram with the title of Knighthood, there was invitation to attend the Garden party which was to be held the next day at the residence of his Excellency he Governor, specially for the ceremony of investiture of all those dignitaries who had been titles, medals and scrolls of honour.

inda Ram and Lady Ram that was very big problem for him that whom to take with him. He asked his second wife get dressed in a new sari for the party. This information reached the ear of his first wife and she got so furious and a war started between them. After receiving Skuhi’s abuse and curse, Jhinda decided to put it to an end by dragging the first wife by her hair, to her part of the house.

After ending of the drama Jhinda Ram’s chauffeur witness all the event. Both of the wives appeared in the flashing saris and after all the dressing-up ritual none of them considered having her “prolonged toilet” ruined for the day. Thus Jindal aft into his car with both of his wives for party at the Government House. The arrival of Two Lady Rams instead of one became a matter of discussing during their reception at government House by “His Excellency and Her Excellency”. The governor’s wife and His Excellency conferred Jhinda Ram with the title of “the Star of the Knight Commander of the Indian Empire”. The story concluded happily on the note from that day onwards Sir Jhinda and the two Lady Rams.

1. **Qs. Discuss Two Lady Ram as hilarious story.**

**Ans.** The hilarious story The Two Lady Rams by Mulk Raj Anand is majorly about the government contractor Lalla Jhinda Ram and his domestic complications in a pre-independent India. Lalla Jhinda Ram has two wives, the fifty seven year old Sukhi, and the thirty-two year old Sakuntala. Although the English laws practised in the then India did not allow polygamy, it did not oppose the mitrakshar law, according to which a man could marry more than one wife in order to beget a male heir. Jhinda Ram too took a second wife as Sukhi, the older was barren. As expected, this young girl came from a economically weaker home. She was chosen for her age and her fair skin. She too married the old Jhinda Ram because it was a sure way to climb the social ladder. Things moved on as usual in Lalla’s bungalow; the usual fights between the two wives, the expected division of the home into two equal halves beyond the common living room, the usual servant grapevines doing the rounds, and the older wife maintaining her suoerior position in spite of Jhinda Ram now tilting towards the younger.

The domestic front that operates at the backside of the house, beyond the quiet verandah and the common living room in front, manages to shift to a position of priority when Jhinda Ram is conferred Knighthood by the Raj. Congratulatory messages and visits on the same purpose flood the Lalla. However, storm brews once he is invited to the Garden party at the Governor’s; the invitation is only for Lalla Jhinda Ram and Lady Ram. As expected Lalla asks Sakuntala, the younger wife, to buy a new sari for the occasion. Sukhi, the older wife learns about this from the servants. She feels thwarted as her position and existence in the house is at stake if Sakuntala gets to be called “Lady” instead of her. A wounded tigress, she barges into the quarters of her co-wife cursing and calling her names.

Lalla and Sakuntala are not yet out of bed. Rubbing his eyes the husband takes a moment before he can try to control the situation. Lalla Ram is brave enough to try pulling Sukhi by her hair, but she is desperate and he cannot move her. The five foot obese small time contractor, the son of a small time shopkeeper, whose only achievement seems to be an expertise in forgery that enabled British Officials of the Raj to earn some extra, who is to become equal to a six foot six sahib very soon cannot allow such domestic drama to thwart his chances. He has to bow before Sukhi’s demand as she had brought a huge amount of dowry that enabled him to rise in business. On the other hand, Sakuntala cannot be left out as the man depends solely on her for fulfilment of his carnal pleasures, and then she is the only chance he has of getting an heir. Lalla begins running from pillar to post. He tries to meet the ADC first, and then the Governor. Both prove absolute failures. Finally it his chauffeur who gives him a probable solution. He should take both his wives, and both should be called Lady Ram. He scoffs the chauffeur but being a shrewd man knows that this is the best he can do, adept as he is in forging documents. The chauffeur dextrously tricks each wife into believing that it is only she who is going. When they finally discover the truth it is too late to engage in any altercation. So both bundle in with their husband into the car. On the other hand Lalla Ram replaces “Lady Ram” with “the two Lady Rams” on the invitation card from the Governor. This alteration is never noticed and the trio successfully make it to the party where both the wives are congratulated by the Governor’s wife for the beauty of their saris. The Governor bestows the title of Knighthood on Lalla Jhinda Ram; the trio never missed any occasion to be with the Sahibs.

The story is an excellent commentary on the position of women in society. The prestige and influence of women depended on the amount of dowry they brought. Further the onus of begetting an heir was also squarely laid on their shoulders, without the husband sharing the burden. The husband could keep on marrying until he got his heir. Girls who couldn’t fetch grand dowries from their father’s often met the fate of Shakuntala; had to marry rich men, much older, as a means to climb the social ladder, and also for social and economic security.

The comedy of the story is born from a wise and proportionate mixture of ‘grandiloquence, irony and mock-heroic’. The central character, Jhinda Ram, is bestowed the Knighthood because he helps corrupt British Officials to earn commissions. It is also ironical that he can neither snub Sukhi, nor can he avoid the ire of Shakuntala. Sukhi with her dark skin andadvanced age calls the cards only because of the fact that the dowry she brought helped Lalla Ram to further his business. Shakuntala is the prized wife for her fair skin; an obsessions of most Indians even to this day. The language used throughout the story is to say very lightly, bombastic. The Governor of a Province is referred to as “shadow of Monarch” and “the king’s representative” is rather going overboards. When describing an essentially domestic fight, war jargons like, “trenches were dug”, “barricades were raised”, “gunpowder”, and “all the tricks of Al Capone” are freely used. Mock-heroism embedded into the matrix of the narration adds to the hilarity. The reactions of Jhinda ram, when he receives the news of the conferring of Knighthood arouses laughter. The way he looks into the mirror to watch his obese short self, imagining his raised stature, almost makes him see his reflection as equal to any six feet six Sahib. However, the title is no more than a decoration; he does not have any direct access to the Governor, not even to the ADC whom he has helped earn illegal commissions. His origins, unlike any conventional hero, is less than ordinary. Neither had he worked to be conferred with Knighthood!other sources of laughter is the almost word for word translation of the Punjabi expressions to plkain and literal English. Instances abound in “Eater of her masters, I’ll pull every hair on your head”, or “don’t eat my life!” these also lend a desi flavour to the story.

The Two Lady Rams gives us an in-depth understanding of the psychology of colonised India. It reveals the darkness lurking behind the “Angerezi Sarkar of India”. This is a story placed at the cusp of a fading tradition and modernity. Lalla boasts of an English style bungalow, but he has two wives according to the traditional Mitrakshara law of the land. He might be raised to the status of a Sahib, but his wives must dress the traditional way, and follow traditional rules within the premises of the home. Here is a story that strikes as a vitriolic social-satire as we traverse the layers within the narration.

1. **Discuss ‘Two Lady Rams’ as a criticism on Colonialism**

**Ans.** “The Two Lady Rams” has a strong nationalist perspective and it is a sharp critic of the British colonial regime.“Two Lady Rams” is a simple short story that revolves around a conflict between two wives of contractor Lalla Jhinda Ram, but upon close reading, the story unveils many interpretations. One of them is that we can read the story as a critique of the colonial era in India. Mulk Raj Anand sets the story in the colonial era in India. It was an era of deception, exploitation, and domination. In those days, to govern a colony like India, the foreign masters needed the help of the rich natives. In most cases, the rich merchants, contractors, employees, etc. cooperated with the white masters with no hesitation for the sake of selfish motives. For instance, in the story, Jhinda Ram, a contractor, is a master of trickery who cooperated with the white masters in the corruption.

It is implied in the story when Sir Jhinda calls A.D.C to arrange a meeting with the governor immediately to solve his domestic issue. The A.D.C does not receive his call and assumes “Sir Jhinda Ram was only after some deal or contract as usual, and though the commissions the sahib had received from this knight had always been generous, Captain Forbes had made his pile and did not want to get involved in these shady negotiations any more.” (Anand 31) The above lines suggest Sir Jhinda usually meets the A.D.C for deal or contract purposes. Through him, the A.D.C usually receives a decent amount of commission. Not only the privileged natives like Jhinda Ram but also the colonial masters engaged in duplicity to exploit the common mass, who were mostly uneducated and unaware of the corruption.

The colonial government not only tricked the common people but also the rich native class. They used them for their economic gains. To continue their exploitation, they made sure they were in good contact with the affluent class. To appease them, they used medals, awards as tools to appease their subjects. It is like appeasing a baby with candy so that he would not whine. For instance, the government confers the title of Knighthood to Ram because of his support of the white masters. They organize a ceremony, the Garden Party, to honor the title at the residence of the Governor. The Garden Party is organized “specially for the ceremony of investiture of all those dignitaries who had been granted titles, medals and scrolls of honour.”

In reality, the title of Knighthood is nothing but a mere decoration and medium to befool the rich natives. The reality of Jhinda Ram’s position is disclosed when he calls to the A.D.C to meet the governor in person. After the first failed attempt through the phone, he goes straight to the residence of the governor. There he disguises himself as a contractor who has taken the charge of management of cutlery, but the gatekeeper prevents him from stepping into the residence because the governor is taking a nap. His position is of no use in reality. Neither the Governor respond him in the hour of his need, nor the A.D.C who usually receives a fair amount of commissions from Jhinda Ram.

Moreover, Lalla Jhinda Ram does not deserve such a title. He has no such qualities like bravery, honesty, truthfulness, etc. Even the government is aware of that. The only reason for entitling him the title is because without people like Jhinda Ram, the officials cannot engage in corruption and hide it from the common people. Jhinda Ram’s trickery practice is pointed out when he alters the words from Lady Rams to ‘The two Lady Rams’ on the invitation letter for the garden party “as he had altered many more intricate documents in the past.” Lalla Jhinda Ram is an example of the rich class of the pre-independence era of Inda. The colonial officials have never prohibited corruption because first, they themselves are part of it, and second, they don’t care about the welfare of the common people. Thus, the rules, laws are not properly laid down and reviewed.

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**‘The Free Radio’**

1. From which book the short story ‘The Free Radio’ is taken?

Ans. East West, published on 1994

1. Who is the narrator of the story ‘The Free Radio’?

Ans. In The Free Radio, the narrator is a former teacher of the main character, a young man named Ramani. He was also the friend of Ramani’s father.

1. From whom does Ramani get brand-new first-class cycle rickshaw?

Ans. Ramani got the rickshaw from his father before his death.

1. Who is called donkey’s child in ‘The Free Radio’?

Ans. Ramani

1. Thief’s was ------- years older than Ramani.

Ans. 10 years.

1. How many children did the thief’s wife has?

Ans. She must have been 5 children alive and two death.

1. What did thief’s widow buy from bania shop?

Ans. She bought some three grains of dal from bania shop.

1. With which film actors did the armband youths compare Ramani?

Ans. Shahi Kapor and Amitabh Bachchan.

1. Whose speech is compared with cobra poison in ‘The Free Radio’?

Ans. The narrator.

1. What is caravan?

Ans. During 70s people were tempted to sterilization by offering a radio in free, and the sterilization was done in motor van is called caravan.

1. To whom did Ramani sell his rickshaw and why?

Ans. Ramani sold his rickshaw to a Muslim crook who runs a bicycle shop. Ramani sold the rickshaw to go to Bombay to become an actor.

1. **Write a short note on the narrator of ‘The Free Radio’.**

**Ans**. The narrator was an old retired teacher who is respected in the town. He spends most of his time sitting under the banyan tree and smoking hookah. The narrator does not like the widow for two reasons: first; the widow is almost ten years older than Ramani. She is the mother of seven children; out of seven five are alive. He thinks Ramani could have had a better partner than her. Another reason for disliking the widow is that she could have stopped Ramani’s dreams of becoming a star. Instead, she too flatters him in the public by comparing him to Lord Krishna for her own benefit.

The story is written in the first person. The narrator is an old teacher who is an important part of the community. He used to know Ramani’s parents. The narrator often switches between the singular ‘I’ and the plural ‘we’, which means that he assumes the role of the community’s spokesperson. The narration is unreliable, as it is filtered through the narrator’s biases and preconceptions. What is more, his knowledge is limited to gossip and what he can witness. Unreliable narrators are fairly common in modernism and postmodernism. The narrator is particularly prejudiced against the thief’s widow. The fact that he never addresses her by her own name reveals a lot about the narrator’s views on gender. The widow is only defined by her disreputable dead husband as if her identity were tied inextricably with his. In the narrator’s view, women are not independent beings. The widow was certainly attractive, no point denying, in a sort of hard vicious way she was all right, but it is her mentality that was rotten. Ten years older than Ramani she must have been, five children alive and two dead, what that thief did besides robbing and making babies God only knows, but he left her not one new paisa, so of course she would be interested in Ramani.

The narrator also safeguards conventional morality by frowning on the fact that Ramani and the widow are seen in public: But after that Ramani and the thief’s widow were seen everywhere, shamelessly, in public places, and I was glad his mother was dead because if she had lived to see this her face would have fallen off from shame. The fact that the narrator is a teacher is significant, given the story’s clearly didactic tone. The narrator wants to lecture the reader about the importance of listening to elders and the dangers of succumbing to fantasies.

1. **Narrate the summery of ‘The Free Radio’ in your own words**.

**Ans**.

The narrator tells the story of Ramani who is young, good-looking, and rides a rickshaw he inherited from his father. He is seduced by a thief’s widow. The narrator disapproves of this relationship: We all knew nothing good would happen to him while the thief’s widow had her claws drug into his flesh, but the boy was an innocent, a real donkey’s child, you can’t teach such people. The narrator has a vested interest in snatching Ramani out of the widow’s clutches, because he used to know Ramani’s parents. The widow is described as attractive and vicious. She is ten years older than Ramani and has five children from her previous marriage. She is poor, as the thief didn’t leave her any money.

The narrator tells the story of how Ramani and the thief’s widow met. One day, Ramani rides his rickshaw into town. The thief’s widow is in the bania shop. The narrator insinuates that the thief’s widow is a prostitute: I won’t say where the money came from, but people saw men at night near her rutyputty shack, even the bania himself they were telling me but I personally will not comment. The thief’s widow and her children catch Ramani’s rickshaw. The narrator implies that the widow wants to prove that she can afford a ride in a rickshaw even though her children must be hungry. The narrator thinks that the widow decides then to seduce Ramani. After that, Ramani and the thief’s widow are seen everywhere in public. The narrator is glad that Ramani’s mother is dead, because otherwise her face would have fallen off from shame.

Ramani gets into bad company. He starts drinking illegal liquor in the back of the Irani’s canteen. The narrator tries to persuade Ramani to stay away from his new friends but in vain. Ramani’s friends wear the armbands of the new Youth Movement. The narrator disapproves of them and hints at beatings-up in which they might be involved. Ramani has no armband but his new acquaintances exert a strong influence on him. The armband youths always say that Ramani is handsome and should be a film star. This flattery is designed to con Ramani out of free drinks and money at cards. The widow only makes the situation worse by reinforcing Ramani’s dreams about becoming a film star; the narrator once overhears the widow flattering Ramani in public. From this day on, the narrator has a feeling of impending disaster.

The next time the widow comes to the bania shop, the narrator decides to get involved for the sake of Ramani’s dead parents. The narrator uses his social status to force the widow to talk to him. The narrator tells the widow that she should stop seeing Ramani. The widow responds in the following way: “Let me tell you, mister teacher sahib retired, that you’re Ramani has asked to marry me and I have said no, because I wish no more children, and he is a young man and should have his own. So tell that to the whole world and stop your cobra poison.” From then on, the narrator takes less interest in Ramani’s affairs, as he thinks that there is nothing more he can do. There are more interesting things happening in town; the local health officer has parked a white caravan in the street. The vehicle, guarded by the armband youths, is used for sterilising men. At this time, Ramani starts dreaming about receiving a transistor radio as a gift from the Central Government in Delhi. Everyone is convinced that Ramani makes this up due to his predilection for fantasies. The boy believes in his dream and seems to be happier than at any other point in his life.

Soon after, Ramani and the widow get married. The narrator accosts Ramani to ask him if he’s been to the caravan. Ramani implies that he has because he is in love with the widow. The narrator says: ‘My idiot child, you have let that woman deprive you of your manhood!” Ramani replies: “It does not stop love-making or anything, excuse me, teacher sahib, for speaking of such a thing. It stops babies only and my woman did not want children anymore, so now all is hundred per cent OK. Also it is in national interest.” Ramani adds that his free radio is sure to arrive shortly as a thank you gift from the government. The narrator doesn’t tell Ramani that the radio scheme was abandoned many years ago. After that, the widow is seen rarely in town.

Ramani, on the other hand, starts working more. Every time he rides through town, he puts his hand up to his ear and mimics radio broadcasts. The community is almost fooled into thinking that Ramani has the real thing. Ramani continues to carry an invisible radio but he seems strained from his feat of imagination. The narrator had divined that Ram had poured into the idea of the radio all his worries and regrets about what he had done, and that if the dream were to die he would be forced to face the full gravity of his crime against his own body, to understand that the thief’s widow had turned him, before she married him, into a thief of a stupid and terrible kind, because she had made him rob himself. The white caravan is back in town. Ramani waits a few days, hoping that government officials will bring the radio to his place. On the third day, he rides to the caravan with the widow. Ramani comes into the caravan alone. After a while, there are sounds of disagreement. Ramani, visibly beaten, is marched out of the caravan by his armband friends. One day, Ramani sells his rickshaw and tells the narrator that he and his family are leaving for Bombay to fulfil his dreams of becoming a film star.

After a few months, the narrator receives a letter from Ramani. The teacher deduces it was dictated to a professional letter writer, as Ramani can’t write. The narrator receives more letters filled with stories from Ramani’s new life. According to the letters, the rickshaw rider’s talent was discovered at once and now he lives the excellent life of a rich film star. The narrator says: They were wonderful letters, brimming with confidence but whenever I read them, and sometimes I read them still, I remember the expression which came over his face in the days just before he learned the truth about his radio, and the huge mad energy he had poured into the act of conjuring reality, by an act of magnificent faith, out of the hot thin air between his cupped hand and his ear.

1. **Write a short note on the thief’s widow.**

**Ans.**

The Thief’s widow is a beautiful woman whose husband was a thief. After the death of her husband, she has nothing to support herself and her five children. Her hardship can be sensed from the words of the narrator when she comes to bania shop “to buy some three grains of dal”. She is so poverty-stricken that she can afford only three gains for the whole family. She is so needy that “Her children must have gone hungry to pay for the ride” in Ramani’s rickshaw.

Under compulsion, she probably takes the path of prostitution to earn a little for her family. This is suggested when the narrator comments on the thief’s widow during her visit to bania’s shop to buy dal. He tells us, “people saw men at night near her rutputty shack, even the bania himself they were telling me but I personally will not comment.”

Like the other men, the narrator seems interested and passes a comment on her personal life. But he feels ashamed when he decides to talk to her on behalf of Ramani, he tells, “I risked being shamed by a . . .no, I will not call her the name, she is elsewhere now and they will know what she is like”. He feels ashamed as he thinks of himself as someone who is “not without importance in the town”. He feels his image of a respected schoolmaster will be stained by talking with her.

The narrator fails to understand that she is a woman whose husband has not left a single paisa except five children on her back. In such utter poverty and dire need, Ramini stands for her as a savior. Though she initially starts the relationship by taking Ramani for a ride in his rickshaw and courts Ramani to make him fall in love with her. Once she tells him he looks like Lord Krishna in public so that others also see and hear them. She probably does that first, to express herself as someone who wants others to accept her as not as a widow, but as a woman who has a life to live on, second, to allure Ramani.

From her point of view, she comes closer to Ramani for her security and her children. That might be the reason for remarrying Ramini. Her marriage to him is more for economic support and less for love. Seeing her with Ramani, the narrator blames her for her ongoing relationship with Ramani. He thinks that she uses Ramani as her target. The narrator’s usage of words such as “the witch”, “the thief’s widow had her claws dug into his flesh”, and “she had decided already to put her hooks into Ramani.” suggest that he compares her actions with that of a predator.

On one hand, the narrator disregards the widow with total contempt for her means of living, but on the other hand, he also can’t accept when she comes into a relationship with Ramani. This is an example of sexism. No doubt Ramani is innocent, but he is aware of the predicament of marrying a woman who has five children. Though initially, the widow is more interested than Ramani, soon he becomes equally interested in her. Ramani loves her and hadn’t he loved her he would not have proposed to her to marry him. However, she rejects him for not willing to bear any other children. If her sole intention is to get married to him for economic dependency, then she would have accepted him. No matter what the point is, the narrator blames her for Ramani’s vasectomy because he thinks the widow is a femme fatale who has brought disaster to Ramani’s life.

The narrator’s view of her is a sexist view. Therefore he could not see anything good in her. His discrimination against her is apparent because he never addresses her by her name throughout the short story. Therefore, we never get to know her actual name. A woman bears the stain of her husband, that is thievery. He addresses her by the stain of her dead husband. Just because she is ten years older than Ramani, therefore her advancement towards a young man, according to the narrator, is inappropriate. His view on a widow like her is reflected when he meets the widow while she visits the bania shop. He tells her: “you must find some person of your own age, or, better still, go to the widows’ ashrams in Benares and spend the rest of your life there in holy prayer, thanking God that widow-burning is now illegal.” According to him, the best thing for a widow would be leaving everything behind and devoting the rest of life to God.

1. **Sketch the character of Ramani in your words on the basis of your reading ‘The Free Radio’?**

**Ans.**

Ramani is the protagonist of the short story. Ramani is a naïve, poor rickshaw driver. We have **Ramani**, a young non-educated but good looking man, who in the beginning of the story lives his life without ambitions and works as a ‘**rickshaw wallah**’. Strangely he is the only one in the story who has a name. He has a stable business. He could have married someone his age, had his own children and led an average life. Unfortunately, he also happens to be very easily manipulated and thus he ends up marrying a thief’s widow and becomes the father of her five children. They made him do and even believe things he in a traditional environment ever would have done, like the vasectomy and dreaming about becoming an actor in Bollywood. All these factors lead to a change in Ramani’s perspective on life and this change symbolizes how the culture of India due to the West’s intervention fell apart.

He falls in love with the widow and later marries her. It is the widow who first steps into the relationship, and Ramani accepts her with her five children and loves her. His love is revealed when he meets the narrator after his marriage. The narrator asks him if he has gone to the caravan. He replies everything is totally fine and says, “I am in love, teacher sahib, and I have made it possible for me to marry my woman.” He makes it possible to marry the woman through vasectomy.

However, it seems his wife does not value his sacrifice. Ramani’s cold relationship is later unveiled when he is beaten inside the caravan, his wife doesn’t come down from the rickshaw to see her man. Had she cared for him, she would have come down from the rickshaw and come to Ramani. Her unmoved posture compels the readers to think that she marries him not out of affection but because of her security and her five children. She befools him to believe that she also loves him. So the gullibility of his nature makes him vulnerable. We can explain this based on some instances of the story. The first example is when he believes he will receive a free radio for his sterilization and next, when he decides to pursue acting career after the encouragement of his friends. .

Because of his gullibility, the narrator advises him at certain points in his life since he had a good relationship with his late parents. For example, the narrator warns him of his rowdy friends by telling him he is wrong. However, he never regards them seriously and follows what he likes.

As it is the case with the“ free radio”, **Ramani**is made to believe that with the vasectomy he makes the thief’s widow happy, thus serves his country’s interests and on top of these he will get a**free radio** in return. It must be mentioned at this point that the dream of **the free radio** comes before the dreams of being a Bollywood actor and therefore a radio would have played a significant role in his life. It would mean entertainment and information; it represents the western world and would attract new customers to the rickshaw. So, he blindly puts all his faith into the space between his hand and ear, which represents the burden he is to carry.

1. **Discuss the various symbols and the messages it symbolises in the story The Free Radio**

**Ans.** "The Free Radio" reflects a true occurrence in Indian History. A symbol is something such as an object, picture, written word, sound, or particular mark that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention. For example, a red octagon may stand for "STOP". In "The Free Radio", the importance and focus on the free radio from the protagonist and narrator results in readers being able to observe the various symbols which the free radio adopts and thus allows readers to see beyond its literal meaning to its intended symbolism for better understanding of the text and the messages in which it holds. Young, handsome Ramani- the protagonist of the story was unfortunate enough to fall in love with the "Thief's Widow" The introduction of the decision Ramani made to "Rob himself of his manhood" comes hand in hand with the introduction of the Free Radio. Firstly, To Ramani the Radio directly represents a symbol of achievement and loss. It represents a memorandum to the pain he has suffered, the manhood he has lost however it more importantly signifies the widow's hand in marriage which he has gained.

The free radio is a perfect symbol of delusion and self deception, the ability to think clearly is instrumental to separating humans from lower forms of animals, a failure in our system however is demonstrated in Ramani where he adjusts his thinking so much that he deceives himself for almost a year "His young body was being poured into that space between his ear and his hand... by a mighty and impossible act of will." Once he receives his radio everything would be made worth while. However one does not dispute Ramani's happiness during that year when his "rare quality of total belief in his dreams" allowed him to lead a happy life-" A happiness which could not be explained by the supposed imminence of the transistor" However in the end, this further humiliation contributed to his decision to leave the village. It is also interesting to note that with his departure, he follows his original true dream and ambition of being a bollywood star in the city and how this dream is juxtaposed against the pseudo fantasy of the free radio, however this bollywood star ambition can also be interpreted as comparable to the free radio , a further assault on the inability Ramani has to embrace reality and deal with failure. "I remember... the huge mad energy which he had poured into the act of conjuring reality."

This further encourages readers to trust and believe in teacher Sahib and understand the message being suggested that respecting and listening to the generally wise and experienced elderly is the correct path to safety. Also towards the end of the story "Maybe the views of the old can be discounted now, and if that's so , let it be." This martyr like sentence garners pity and sympathy readers have towards teacher Sahib who although tried his best could not save the foolish Ramani who refused to listen and heed warnings from him. This again emphasises the point of respecting the elderly. In conclusion, the free radio may seem simplistic in the story, a mere gift from the Government, but in reality it has been developed extensively .Through diction , sentence structure , and most importantly the use of the free radio as a symbol in moving the plot along , the free radio not only represents the delusional sentiments of Ramani , the wickedness of the widow but these symbols it takes on of escapism , achievement and loss , restriction of sex , delusion , deception all work together to emphasise the author's messages of importance of being realistic , wary of the consequences of ones actions, negligence of the opinions of the aged and most importantly the criticism of the government.

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**In Trusion**

1. From which book the story ‘The Intrusion’ has been taken?

Ans. “The Intrusion and Other Storie”

1. When was the story ‘The Intrusion’ published?

Ans. In 1993

1. In which year did Shashi Deshpande win ‘Sahitya Academy Award’?

Ans. In 1990

1. Name any two major novels of Shashi Deshpande.

Ans. i. That Long Silence, ii. If I Die Today

1. How many stories are there in Shashi Deshpande’ “The Intrusion and Other Stories”?

Ans. 19 stories.

1. What are the major themes of the short story ‘The Intrusion”?

Ans. Male dominated society, Women’s identity, etc.

1. For which novel Shashi Deshpande won ‘Sahitya Academy Award’?

Ans. ‘That Long Silence’

1. **Justify the title of ‘The Intrusion’ in your own words.**

**Ans.** “The Intrusion” is a story written by a very renowned Indian writer Shashi Deshpande. Shashi Deshpande works are woman-centric narrative. This is a story about a newly-married woman. This woman is the protagonist of the story and she tells her own story about the act of violation by her husband. During the act of intrusion, she wants to cry out not for the physical pain, but the intrusion into her privacy. He intrudes not only into her body physically, but he also violates her right to her 'self' but also humiliates her dignity. Woman’s struggles in the context of contemporary Indian society, to find and preserve her identity as wife, mother and most important of all, as human being is Shashi Deshpande’s major concern.

Since the beginning, the narrator’s husband is excited because of his physical hunger and gaining authority over her body as a result of marriage. Therefore, one after another, he approaches her not out of love, as an act of dominance over her body. When she keeps resisting his advancement, finally, he bursts out. Later, his selfish act of hunger turns into an act of brutality, an act of intrusion. His act of intrusion is no less than rape, domestic rape. The physical hunger in the husband makes him go against his wife’s will to fulfill his lust. Her husband forces her to cooperate with him in their respective sexual roles. She is reduced to an object of sex. Her feelings, her willingness, have no place in front of her husband’s hunger.

The story “The Intrusion” expresses the nasty experience of a helpless married woman. Through the story, Shashi Deshpande voices out the domestic issue of marital rape, which often is suppressed under the feet of patriarchy. The short story “The Intrusion” revolves around the consent of a woman. Her parents don’t give importance to her consent before her marriage. Later, her husband also ignores her consent. Consequently, her husband intrudes into her ‘privacy’ and she cannot protect herself from the intrusion into her body. The short story was published in the short story collection The Intrusion and Other Stories.

The short story begins with a trip. The narrator, along with her husband, crosses a fishing village and goes to the top of the steep uphill. At last, they reach their destination, a house on the hilltop. The newly married couple hardly knows each other. Therefore, the narrator feels uneasy about her partner. Soon, silence predominates in the room between them. Therefore, to break the silence, her husband suddenly starts talking. He tells her he feels fortunate for coming to the place as their honeymoon destination. He is happy because they have “complete privacy”. On the other hand, she feels fears, nervous at the thought of being alone with a strange man in a strange land. Because of the tedious journey, the narrator feels tired. Therefore, she relaxes in the chair, and she is lost in her thoughts. Suddenly, he breaks the silence and asks why she is so silent. She tells that she is a little tired. He comes closer and puts his arm around her firmly, which causes her uncomfortable. However, she pretends to act normal and gets up. She suggests to him they should go out to the veranda since she wants to see the sea. On the veranda, she also suggests to him they should go down to the sea. But her husband tells her they should go in the morning as it is already dark. The man approaches her again. He puts his arm around her waist and pulls her inside. Upon seeing the bed, she remembers her own narrow bed at home. She feels homesick.

However, her state of emotion does not bother him. He changes his dress in an exciting manner. On the other hand, the narrator feels low and lonely. She sits quietly for a while, then dashes to the veranda. She wishes to be anywhere in the world except in the strange place. When he does not find her in the room he calls her to change her clothes. She follows his words unwillingly. She again opens the door to the veranda. But he forbids her to go out. She reluctantly goes to him. He puts his arms around her tightly.

The sudden and tight grip of his embrace makes her too uncomfortable. She struggles to get rid of his approaching rough chin. He tries to kiss her, but she averts her face and, in the struggle, his glasses fall down. Her defiance makes him furious, and he demands to know why she is avoiding him. Finally, she breaks the unbearable silence and says that they don’t know each other. He is astonished to hear that.

She wants to express her feelings that she wants to know all about him. But she can’t say a word anymore because his fierce look frightens her and she knows it is futile to express her feelings to him. Discontent fills his face and he lies still in the bed uttering nothing. After him, she also tries to sleep. At the midnight, she finds herself in a dreamy state. She is lying on the beach; she feels the waves are hitting her hard. When she comes into consciousness, she realizes that the sound of the sea is real, but it is not the wave, rather her husband is hitting her body. She makes an attempt by pushing his chest away from her body, but she fails. He has intruded into her private space.

Thus, her husband intrudes into her ‘privacy’ and she cannot protect herself from the intrusion into her body. The story depicts the expectations of a newly married husband and the fears of a new wife. It is the honey moon trip of a newly married couple to an isolated house on a hillock near a sleepy fishing village. It is the place where couples come to celebrate their honey moon or men come with the other women to enjoy. The protagonist has a feeling of homesickness and wants to go back to her parents as she doesn’t like the atmosphere of the house, the food served there and her husband’s advances. The husband yearns a different experience altogether and expects his wife to co-operate with him. But to his surprise, his wife reacts differently. On being pinioned, she replies that she wants them to know each other well before undergoing any type of experience. In the night, the protagonist wakes up to see herself being forced by her husband and cries “not for the physical pain but for the intrusion into her privacy”.

1. **Analyse the story "The Intrusion" as a quest for identity.**

**Or**

**Describe how Shahi Deshpande draws the plight of the modern Indian woman in her novel "The Intrusion".**

**Or**

**How does Shashi Deshpande illustrate man woman relationship and its implications in the modern day society in her story "The Intrusion"**

**Answer .** “The Intrusion” is a story written by a very renowned Indian writer Shashi Deshpande. Shashi Deshpande works are woman-centric narrative. This is a story about a newly-married woman. This woman is the protagonist of the story and she tells her own story about the act of violation by her husband. The story depicts the expectations of a newly married husband and the fears of a new wife. It is the honey moon trip of a newly married couple to an isolated house on a hillock near a sleepy fishing village. It is the place where couples come to celebrate their honey moon or men come with the other women to enjoy. The protagonist has a feeling of homesickness and wants to go back to her parents as she doesn’t like the atmosphere of the house, the food served there and her husband’s advances. The husband yearns a different experience altogether and expects his wife to co-operate with him. But to his surprise, his wife reacts differently. On being pinioned, she replies that she wants them to know each other well before undergoing any type of experience. In the night, the protagonist wakes up to see herself being forced by her husband and cries “not for the physical pain but for the intrusion into her privacy”.

Shashi Deshpande is one of the eminent novelists of contemporary Indian literature in English. Deshpande creates characters that take her readers through the social strata of urban society; but her interest comes to centre more and more on women of the middle and upper middle classes. She talks about well-educated women who fight for their own space, for their place in the family and in their social and cultural setting. This setting is the backdrop to almost all her stories. Women, in Deshpande's works, are not simply victims of circumstances, of family, of society, they suffer from a self consciousness till the end of their lives. Hence, over the decades that Deshpande's work embraces, they have come to stand out as self-assured, self-empowered, articulate personalities. She introduces a painful topic that had already been there, as ‘marital rape’, in one of her early stories, “The Intrusion", the meaning of which clearly tells one’s forceful entry into another’s private world denying the latter’s self-respect.

"The Intrusion", a title story deals with a newly married woman, whose sense of worth is dishonored by the appalling treatment by her husband, whom she thinks as an intruder. Deshpande emphasizes the self-effacing role of female protagonists in the short stories under study in a scathing manner. In the story, there is the newly married protagonist whose selfrespect and sense of self are violated by her crass and insensitive husband. The wife who finds herself conscious of her being but her husband's forceful pressure to indulge sex with her at the very first night after marriage, considering it his legal right makes everything futile. She has to surrender herself to the vindictive will of her husband. The female protagonist considers this relationship as 'marital rape' where the society and its norms win over one's self consciousness. The psychological being of a woman doesn't have any value to the male chauvinistic nature. Throughout the story, the female protagonist's sense of suffering makes no room in the traditional sociological approach and she has no way left but to surrender. Although marriage is a legal institution by which a man can have sex with woman freely, but the writer is of the view that one should develop a friendly relation before indulging to sex. He should not remain a stranger to her. An air of trust and dependence must chill both of their hearts so that he should not appear as intruder, as the title of the story implies. Forceful implementation of rights does never reflect manliness, rather earnest efforts to honour others’ sentiments and self consciousness defying the self ego brings real laurels for a man. The story speaks not only about the male's intrusion over female's body and mind, but it intrudes over woman's own identity from the psychological perspective.

She feels humiliated when her husband forces himself on her. It is not the physical pain she feels, but the emotional pain. His movements had the same rhythm, the same violence as the movements of the sea; yet I could have borne the battering of the sea better for that would hurt but not humiliate like this. She is very practical and wants to know more about anything before getting involved in it. Hence before her wedding she reads a book on sex. Unlike the other girls who have their own dreams of their husband, she thinks of the realities of her would be husband. She is shocked at the tradition which demands that a woman should try to protect her chastity from other men and which asks her to submit to a man called husband. She wants her husband to become her friend and understand her before they undergo any of the experiences a husband and a wife undergo. But finding him keyed for a different experience, she is unable to communicate none of these things to him and as a result feels humiliated when her husband forces himself on to her. On the whole she finally becomes submissive and compromises with life as any other Indian wife does. Thus Deshpande shows that a proper co-ordination, a reasonable mutual understanding between husband and wife is essential for a happy married life.

Thus, Shashi Deshpande has presented in her novel modern Indian women’s search for this definition about the self, society, and the relationship that are central to women. Deshpande’s novel deals with the theme of the quest for a female identity. The complexities of man-woman relationship especially in the context of marriage, the trauma of a disturbed adolescence is evident in the story. The Indian woman has always been a silent sufferer. While she has played different roles-as a wife, mother, sister and daughter, she has never been able to claim her own individuality. Shashi Deshpande’s novels deal with the women belonging to Indian middle class. She deals with the inner world of the Indian women in her novels. She portrays her female characters in a realistic manner.

1. **Narrate the story of ‘The Intrusion’ in your own words.**

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The man approaches her again. He puts his arm around her waist and pulls her inside. Upon seeing the bed, she remembers her own narrow bed at home. She feels homesick. However, her state of emotion does not bother him. He changes his dress in an exciting manner. On the other hand, the narrator feels low and lonely. She sits quietly for a while, then dashes to the veranda. She wishes to be anywhere in the world except in the strange place.

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**In Custody**

1. **In which year did Anita Desai get Sahitya Academy Award?**

**Ans.**

1. **In which year was the novel In Custody published?**

**Ans. 1985**

1. **How many chapters are there in In Custody?**

**Ans. 11 chapters.**

1. **Name the college where Deven worked.**

**Ans. Lala Ram Lal college, Mirpore.**

1. **Name the journal that Murad published.**

**Ans. Awaaz**

1. **Mention the setting of the novel In Custody.**

**Ans. Delhi and Mirpore.**

1. **In which year Anita Desai got married and to whom?**

**Ans. In 1958 Desai got married to Ashvin Desai.**

1. **Name any two major novel of Anita Desai.**

**Ans. i. The Zigzag Way, ii. Clear light of Day, iii. Fasting, Feasting, etc.**

1. **Name the daughter of Anita Desai who got Man Booker Prize.**

**Ans. Kiran Desai won the ‘2006 Man Booker Prize’.**

1. **Who is Deven’s wife in the novel ‘In Custody’?**

**Ans. Sarla**

1. **Who is Deven’s son in the novel ‘In Custody’?**

**Ans. Manu**

1. **Who were Nur Sahajanbadi’s wives?**

**Ans. Safia Begom (Nur’s first wife), and Imtiaz Begom (Nur’s second wife).**

1. **Who is the head of Urdu department at Lala Ram Lal College?**

**Ans. Abid Siddique.**

1. **Who is the head of Hindi department at Lala Ram Lal College?**

**Ans. Mr. Trivedi**

1. **Who were Chinku and Pintu?**

**Ans. Mr. Jain’s nephew**

1. **Who is Deven’s colleague of Hindi department at Lala Ram Lal College?**

**Ans. Jayadev**

1. **Who is Murad in the novel In Custody?**

**Ans. Murad is the friend of Deven.**

1. **What is the nickname of Siddique in the novel In Custody?**

**Ans. Mr. Jackal**

1. **Who were the people surrounded with Nur Sahajehanbadi when Deven saw him?**

**Ans. Shopkeepers, clerks, bookies and unemployed parasites.**

1. **Who is Bhalla in the novel In Custody?**

**Ans. A neighbor and a widow whose grandson studied in Deven’s college.**

1. **Name the servant boy of Nur in the novel In Custody.**

**Ans. Ali**

1. **Who is Raj in the novel In Custody?**

**Ans. Deven’s old school-friend who lives in Cairo nowadays.**

1. **What is the significance of Urdu in this text?**

**Ans.** The language of Urdu is a key aspect of this text. Urdu is Deven's first language and is the language of Deven's favorite poetry, which he uses to escape from his mundane life. Additionally, part of the reason Deven idolizes Nur so much is that he writes in Urdu, which therefore makes him more eager to interview the great poet. The divide between the Hindi and Urdu languages is something that Desai pays close attention to, as it reflects the conflict existing in India between different cultures.

1. **Write a short note on women characters in the Novel ‘In Custody’.**

**Ans.** There are three major women characters in the novel. They are Sarla, Deven’s wife and Imtiaz Begum and Safia Begum, two wives of Nur. It is a general tendency in Anita Desai to see the world from women’s perspective. But in In Custody, she does something different. Instead of seeing the world from women’s perspective, Anita Desai looks at the world from the perspective of men. Apparently, this may look as if Anita Desai is changing her perspective; but that does not lead to any major difference, because the three women characters that she creates in the novel show three different aspects of women. Whereas Sarla is a housewife who is least interested about anything else, leave apart Deven’s pursuit and love for Urdu Poetry or Nur. She had her material ambitions in life but all those ambitions are thwarted by her marriage with Deven, a college lecturer who does not earn enough to give her the luxuries of life. She has made some arrangement with herself and have accepted the fact that in this life, she has no means of achieving her dreams and therefore he has become “naturally embittered.” As against Sarla, is the character of Imtiaz Begum, the second wife of Nur Shahjehanabadi who has come from the world of prostitution; but has some natural flair for Urdu language and literature and herself claims that she is an “intellectual partner” of Nur. She writes poetry and wishes to get some recognition as a poetess which she does not get in the novel apart from one instance when on her birthday she gets a chance to perform before the admirers of Nur. She is an authoritative figure who has much influence on Nur and manages the household according to her own wishes. She is the aspiring “new woman” in the novel.

1. **Qs. Discuss Deven’s Relationship with Sarla in the short story ‘In Custody’**

**Ans.** ADeven and Sarla share the relationship of husband and wife in the novel In Custody; but in real terms they both behave to each other as if they are strangers. They probably feel this way because they both know that they are victims of some kind or the other. Anita Desai in the novel writes -- “Although each understood the secret about the other, it did not bring about any closeness of spirit, any comradeship, because they also sensed that two victims ought to avoid each other, not yoke together their joint disappointments. A victim does not look to help from another victim; he looks for a redeemer. At last Deven had his poetry; she had nothing, and so there was an added accusation and bitterness in her look.” This passage seems to be the central statement in understanding Deven – Sarla relationship in the novel as both of them are victims of their circumstances and in no way can help each other get over their anguishes. Throughout the novel, there is no moment that is being portrayed where Deven and Sarla are shown to be close to each other; they live together as they are married. Sarla does not understand the poetic concerns of Deven and cares least about his trips to Delhi; whereas Deven is fearful that Sarla with her tantrums will make the family atmosphere such which can become detrimental for the house. In other words, it can be said that Deven and Sarla are individuals who are very unlike each other and therefore at no point of time they can aspire for any kind of emotional or intellectual bonding.

1. **Qs. Discuss Nur’s relationship with his two wives.**

**Ans.** Nur has two lives – Safia Begum and Imtiaz Begum. Whereas Safia Begum is a money minded person who sees Deven’s intention of taking Nur’s interview as an excellent opportunity to earn some money. So she arranges for Deven a place outside her home where Deven can interview the poet peacefully. As against Safia Begum, Imtiaz Begum has a literary taste and a poetic sensibility which finds manifestation when she takes over Nur’s admirers with her poetry on the day of her birthday. She equally wants to be famous as that of Nur and therefore urges Deven to look at her poetry too. Though, both of them are fixed in their own worlds – they care for Nur which often makes them censure Nur’s admirers. We see Imtiaz Begum saying to the poet – “You have reduced him to that, making him eat and drink like some animal, like a pig.” This shows that Imtiaz begum does not want Nur to live in such a pathetic condition and moreover wants him to carry on producing great poetry in not for anything else but for the sake of art.

1. **Qs. Write a short note on the character of Safia Begum**

**Ans.** Safia Begum is the first wife of Nur Shahjehanabadi, the famous Urdu poet in the novel In Custody by Anita Desai. She is of practical bent of mind and is often seen to be very money-minded. When she sees Deven practically a failure to get an interview of Nur, she thinks that she can make money by arranging the interview. She advises Deven that he can take the interview somewhere outside Nur’s house where Nur’s second wife Imtiaz Begum will not be there to be an impediment. So she arranges for the interview in the 49 neighbouring house where Deven and Nur can be at peace with themselves without any intervention from Imtiaz Begum. She does this for money and says that without money she will not allow Nur to go out of the house. At the end of the novel we see that Deven receives a letter from Nur where Nur has asked for Rs. five hundred as a bill for the rent for using the premises for an interview. Here too Safia Begum shows her money-mindedness as she tries to take out as much money as possible from Deven. It is to be reminded that poets and their passion for art often makes them forget about the material needs. To counter that aspect of Nur’s life, probably Safia Begum has become money-minded as she had to run a family.

**Qs. Sketch the character of Deven Sharma.**

**Ans.** Characters. Deven Sharma – a Hindi professor in Mirpore in Lala Ram Lal Collège, who is tired of his mundane life. He loves Urdu and is a hero-worshiper to Nur, a famous Urdu poet.Deven, the protagonist is fond of Urdu poetry. The whole novel is cleverly woven around Deven’s preparations and efforts to interview Nur. Deven has not been able to do much in life. He lacks confidence. In spite of being aware that the people around him are constantly pouring out benefits from his simplicity, weakness of not able to put forth his ideas, and innocence, he acts like a puppet in their hands because when it is a choice between head and heart, he chooses heart. When Murad approaches him to interview Nur, Deven realizes it is a dream come true.

The protagonist of the novel, a disillusioned Hindi professor in his thirties. Much of his life disappoints him, as he is unhappily married, loves Urdu but has to teach in the Hindi department, and has not achieved the literary fame he had always hoped for. His negative character traits include whininess, lack of self-confidence mixed with the occasional desire to overinflate his ego and lie to himself and others about his capabilities, pettiness, a proclivity for judging others unfairly, and shortsightedness. When he is asked to interview Nur, he believes his fortunes have changed, but the aforementioned shortcomings, coupled with bad luck and other obstacles, mean that this is a tedious process and an ultimate failure.

In her pursuit to find out the true meaning of existence, Anita Desai makes her characters her mouthpiece. They are not simply representatives or cardboard creatures. They do not simply stand for a certain society or a certain moment in history. Deven Sharma is the main character of the novel In Custody. He is introduced as a character who seems to have known more disappointments in his life than the sense of fulfillment. He is far from being a passionate Hindi professor and he reminds readers of the character of Krishna, from R.K Narayan’s The English Teacher. Deven is a ‘two-cigarette’ man, that is a victim of imposed limits. He is in a forced-marital relationship with his wife, Sarla, practicing a profession he is not passionate about and living in a garbage-filled and restricted area, Mirpore.

Urdu language is what makes Deven feel alive. He is a dedicated and die-heart passionate of Urdu poetry. His strong love for Urdu poetry and mostly Nur, the Urdu poet even makes him violate certain rules in his life. Urdu poetry makes him forget his family and professional duties when he decides to travel to Old Delhi, more specifically , Chandni Chowk, to meet his idol, Nur. He indeed becomes “in custody” of Nur and his wives and most importantly his friend, Murad. Deven’s meetings with Nur are highly symbolical as they reflect his ultimate love and passion for Urdu poetry. He describes Nur as a divine figure and even among all the cacophonies at Nur’s place, Deven’s worship of Urdu poetry remains unchanged. He is a determined character and does not want to give up despite the numerous obstacles.

Deven’s character is made appealing by the fact that despite being the protagonist of this novel, he bears many characteristics of an antagonist. He is portrayed mostly as someone who is rather self-focused. His marriage had rendered him slaved to his family. He has been working as a Hindi Lecturer at Lala Ram Lal College mostly to sustain his family. However, Murad’s proposal to interview Nur triggered a major shift in him. His focus changes from his family to Nur. He is certainly a failure as a husband, a father and a Hindi lecturer. Anita Desai’s elementary concern in her novels is to explore and to expound human psyche and self. In the contemporary socio-political set up the predicament of the modern man does seem to be one of the dominant interests of the novelist and Deven's character speaks volumes about it.

Deven Sharma is the novel’s central character and protagonist. Though there are occasional detours into the perspectives, actions, and inner lives of other characters, the story unfolds mostly from his point of view. His age is never explicitly identified, but given both his relatively young family and his level of professional accomplishment, there is a sense that he is perhaps in his late thirties or early forties. He is a lover of the Urdu language, but feels as though he has to speak the more widely spoken Hindi language in order to make a living and provide for his family.

In general, Deven is portrayed as being intensely insecure, self-doubting and lacking in confidence. He is also portrayed as having a short, sharp temper, frequently erupting in anger at his wife as a means of finding some way to release his frustrations and insecurities. Deven, the middle aged man, is drawn to this old poet, wishing to help and protect him though he cannot defend himself. His repeated visits to Nur’s place and the experiences chase him even after returning home. He gets acquainted to some new aspects of life. Nur has two wives and feels guilty of not providing a good living to his family. This forces Deven to think that he too does not give any time to his wife Sarla and son Manu. Anita Desai always has a character with psychological disorder in her novels.

# Qs. Discuss the role and significance of women characters in ‘In Custody’.

**Ans**. There are three major women characters in the novel. They are Sarla, Deven’s wife and Imtiaz Begum and Safia Begum, two wives of Nur. It is a general tendency in Anita Desai to see the world from women’s perspective. But in In Custody, she does something different. Instead of seeing the world from women’s perspective, Anita Desai looks at the world from the perspective of men. Apparently, this may look as if Anita Desai is changing her perspective; but that does not lead to any major difference, because the three women characters that she creates in the novel show three different aspects of women.

The women in the ‘In Custody’ are sealed in silence still they speak lot through their narrative and action. While the novel ‘In Custody’ is mostly male oriented, it cannot be denied that the female characters have decisive roles to play in I. there are three major women characters – Deven Sharma’s wife Sarla, Nur’s older wife Safiya Begum, his second younger wife Imtiaz Begum. There are several minor women characters such as: Raj’s widowed aunt, the wife of Principal, the female customer of the tailor, unnamed prostitutes of the house, Mrs. Bhalla and the other widows who pass Deven’s house in the course of their early morning procession. These women are part of the weakest and most exploited social groups – housewives, widows and prostitutes. Desai has represented the social reality of Indian women’s life in the 1980s which is suffered under the patriarchal male dominance and gender-power politics. Domestic space is the specific arena for the women’s exploitation. It is succinctly revealed in the novel through Deven Sharma and Nur’s families. Sarla, Safiya Begum and Imtiaz Begum lead dismal lives in physical, material and emotional terms. These female characters are mostly secondary ones but there is certainly a common denominator in their portrayals: they all are strong wives who seem to exert control over their husband.

Sarla is Deven’s wife and mother of his son, Manu. She does not approve of Deven as husband, as she is disatisfied with his income and character. She is thoroughly unhappy. Sarla is introduced as being “plain, penny-pinching and congenitally pessimistic”. As a girl and a new bride, she had dreamed of having a home filled with a phone, a frigidaire and all luxuries but she ended in a small town with an equally disappointed husband. She is an unhappy wife as she feels abandoned by a husband who seems to be more interested in poetry than his family life. Her control over Deven is shown by her power of turning Deven into a “two cigarette” man.

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Sarla’s power over Deven can be seen from the opening lines of the novel. Deven Sharma and Sarla’s marriage is arranged marriage. Sarla is not Deven’s choice. She has been chosen as his life partner by his mother and aunts. They are very crafty and cautious women. Sarla was the daughter of Deven’s aunt’s friend. Sarla lived near about Deven’s Aunt’s house so she knew her well.Her “penny pinching” traits have been permeated into Deven turning him into a “two-cigarette” man. Deven even thinks so intensely before spending his own hard earned money. He would rather have homemade food rather than canteen food.Her empowered features also seem to go against the orthodox patriarchal Indian society which believes that husbands should be the controlling ones and not vice versa. Deven’s hesitance to buy lunch for Murad actually shows the power of Sarla over him. She might not have the power of restraining Deven’s travelling back and forth between Mirpore and Delhi but she certainly contributes in bringing him back to Mirpore at the end of the novel.

AdvertisementsREPORT THIS Despite these praiseworthy traits, Sarla is a victim of her thwarted dreams. Her arranged marriage to Deven seems to have brought more disappointments than achievements. Their marital relationship is more a ‘love-less’ one. Manu, their son, might actually be the only string holding them together.

The second noteworthy female character is Imtiaz Begum. Imtiaz Begum is the second wife of Nur Shahjehanabadi, the famous Urdu poet in Anita Desai’s novel In Custody. She seems to be too fascinated by the poet Nur and also presented in the novel to be jealous of his poetic achievements as she herself strives to be a poetess. She is being presented in the novel to be a “female mafia” who is a terror to the supposed admirers of Nur and often she even vexes Nur for his excesses. In other terms we can say that she is “the new woman” in the novel which Anita Desai paints with much concern to show how women are taking up the arenas which was traditionally thought to be that of males such as poetry. Imtiaz Begum’s Fascination for Nur: Imtiaz Begum is fascinated by the world of Nur’s poetry to such an extent that she marries him knowing full well that Nur has a wife. She is not from well off background – she was the quarters where dancing and singing is the norm of the night. But within that world of muddy waters, she is like a lotus who has shined so brightly that Nur could not but not only notice her beauty and talent; but at the same time fascinated to such an extent so as to marry her. As she herself has a poetic bent of mind and often endorses herself in poetic creations therefore she is portrayed in the novel to be having an advantage over Nur’s first wife, Safia Begum.

The young wife of Nur is the third major female character who shares the same overpowering characteristics as Sarla. She has effectively used her youth and beauty to go from a prostitute of Chandni Chowk to become the wife of the well known Urdu poet, Nur. Like Sarla, she seems to have imposed limits on her husband. She actually becomes a major obstacle for Deven’s interview as she snatches the freedom of speech and movement from the Great Nur. Her acting skills, her youth and enticing beauty are her main weapons and these certainly make her an impressive female character. Her strength also lies in her ability to move from being a prostitute to a begum. The title ‘begum’ is actually used for a Muslim woman of high rank. We can probably come to the conclusion that Imtiaz Begum is the image of the new woman that Anita Desai is painting in the novel In Custody. She is bold and authoritative – she wants to take control of things and wants to prosper as a poetess. She does not want to live a life in the darkness and in the world of infamy; but has every aspiration to come forward and let the world know about herself. In these terms, when we see that character of Imtiaz Begum she seems to be a new kind of woman is willing to take charge of life and live life according to her own terms.

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Third woman character is Safia Begom. Safia Begum is the first wife of Nur Shahjehanabadi, the famous Urdu poet in the novel In Custody by Anita Desai. She is of practical bent of mind and is often seen to be very money-minded. When she sees Deven practically a failure to get an interview of Nur, she thinks that she can make money by arranging the interview. She advises Deven that he can take the interview somewhere outside Nur’s house where Nur’s second wife Imtiaz Begum will not be there to be an impediment. So she arranges for the interview in the 49 neighbouring house where Deven and Nur can be at peace with themselves without any intervention from Imtiaz Begum. She does this for money and says that without money she will not allow Nur to go out of the house. At the end of the novel we see that Deven receives a letter from Nur where Nur has asked for Rs. five hundred as a bill for the rent for using the premises for an interview. Here too Safia Begum shows her money-mindedness as she tries to take out as much money as possible from Deven. It is to be reminded that poets and their passion for art often makes them forget about the material needs. To counter that aspect of Nur’s life, probably Safia Begum has become money-minded as she had to run a family.

Thus’ we see the role and significance of women characters in the story ‘The Custody’. All the women characters play an important role for overall development of the plot. Through these women Desai has represented the social reality of Indian women’s life which is suffered under the patriarchal male dominance and gender-power politics. Domestic space is the specific arena for the women’s exploitation. Desai’s novels deal with the women belonging to Indian middle class. She deals with the inner world of the Indian women in her novels. She portrays her female characters in a realistic manner.

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**TARA**

1. When was the play Tara published? **By--- Mahesh Dattani**

Ans. In 1995

1. Who is Roopa in Tara?

Ans . Friend of Tara.

1. Who performed the surgery of Tara and Chandan?

Ans. Dr. Umakant Thakkar

1. Which year did Mahesh Dattani win Sahitya Akademy Award?

Ans. In 2000

1. Who does donate kidney to Tara in the play?

Ans. Tara’s mother Bharti

1. Who are the parents of Tara?

Ans. Mr. Patel (Father), and Bharti (mother).

1. Who is called freak repeatedly in the play Tara?

Ans. Tara

1. How old were the twins when surgery was done to them?

Ans. Three months old.

1. Who is the twin brother of Tara?

Ans. Chandan.

1. When was Tara written by Mahesh Dattani?

Ans. In 1990.  It was first performed as Twinkle Tara in Bangalore in 1990 by Playpen Performing Arts Group.

**Qs. Discuss how Dittany presents the theme of gender discrimination and parental authority in ‘Tara’.**

**Or**

**Mahesh Dattani’s play Tara: A tale of gender discrimination. Justify your answer.**

**Ans.**

The play Tara carries the theme of unequal treatment given to male and female children even when they are born physically attached twins. The point of equality between male and female, and equal opportunities given to both are very superficial. In reality, a female has to face inequality at every level, whether it be a family or society. Tara is the story of a girl who wants to twinkle and shine, just like her name. Right from the beginning we can see the difference between male and female, like in the scene in which Bharati has finished her pooja, and Patel is getting ready to go to work. These are stereotypical gender roles and Dattani makes full use of them. Discrimination is between herself and her brother; right from the time when Bharati was three months old, her mother insisted on giving the best to her brother which rather incited her more.

As far as the play Tara is concerned, the two kinds of discrimination have been dealt with in the drama. One is class discrimination and the other is gender biasing, but Dattani deems the gender issues more prominent and graver than the problems of class. Dattani presents his own views in this regard in a conversation. Bharati realizes she was committing a sin stigmatizing motherhood, by doing injustice to her daughter. Consequently, she suffers a nervous breakdown for her ill-treatment of Tara. In an effort to seek salvation from the unforgivable sin, she exhibits pretentious sympathy and empathy towards Tara, and makes many attempts to bring ill repute to Patel in the eyes of her daughter. Females are discriminated not only biologically, but also culturally. Women and girls are trained to remain confined to kitchen and courtyard.

The theme of gender discrimination is dominant in the drama Tara. The issue of cultural discrimination with women has been elaborately and comprehensively dealt with by Dattani in the play wherein females are subjugated and underestimated. Tara is killed by a social system, which controls the minds and actions of the people. The play Tara shows that all the genders, whether female or male or lesbian or gay or even eunuchs, want their own personal space for a good life. Dattani portrays how Bharati, Tara’s mother enjoyed a taste of patriarchal dominance when she plotted with her father to separate the twins, thereby giving two legs to the boy and one to the girl which led to the untimely death of the latter.

The play presents Patriarchal system as multilayered and deeply rooted in the society. There are many factors responsible for preference of boy child to girl child. These factors are not only economic but also social and religious. In this play, Patel family is both economically and politically sound. Tara is not a burden on them economically. Still Chandan is preferred over Tara due to patriarchal nature of society. Tara is enthralling in that it makes use of a rather unlikely freak case to lay bare the injustices in the conventional Indian family meted out to the girl child, a play that comments on a society that treats the children who share the womb differently. And as always, the stereotype comes in a friendly garb, covering the ugly truths. The Patels, on the face of it look like the ideal parents that special like Tara and Chandan need to survive indeed they have survived because of their dedicated parents. But there are more things that need to be revealed.

On the basis of the roles assigned to males and females, male is accorded higher status than female. Patel asks Chandan to support him in business and wants Tara to do domestic work. This division of labour based on sex is one of the root causes of gender discrimination. Dattani tries to deconstruct this separation of roles through Tara and Chandan. Chandan wants to be a writer where as Tara is inclined to join a career like her father.

Women play an important role in perpetuating discrimination against women in patriarchal society. Bharati, a women favours Chandan, a male child during surgery. Dr. Thakkar tells us that the greatest challenge was to keep the girl alive. And Patel decides to tell the children the truth. He says that all three were to blame – the grandfather, his wife, and him. The twins had three legs and the third leg was fed by the girl‟s blood system. The chances of the leg‟s survival were greater with the girl. But Bharati and her father had decided to give leg to male child despite of the risk. Patel could not protest strongly enough and the doctor was bought off with sanction of land in Bangalore by Bharati‟s powerful politician father. The leg had survived for only two days while it could have been Tara‟s throughout her life. Tara is devastated by this revelation. The social structure in which the girl child has to live and to die. We see Chandan apologizing to Tara in most of the lines at the end of the play.

Dattani’s plays deal with the social and contemporary issues Dattani’s plays are about the marginalized sections of our society:, women, gays, and hijras. His plays raise question of discrimination, including, gender discrimination and homosexuality. His plays not only bring up gender issues and the liberty fixed to women in a patriarchal society, but also they deal with gender biases and prejudices which influence the lives of girl-children even amongst middle class educated society. “Tara” is a play deals with the theme of gender discrimination, paternal authority and social consciousness in modern society. “Tara” is not only the story of the hero of the play, but it is the story of every girl child born in society whether urban or rural.

It can be concluded that Mahesh Dattani has effectively dealt with the questions of differently abled, gender and self identity in the play, Tara. He touches various issues related to gender discrimination by taking the subject of Siamese twins. Tara is not merely an individual character but emerges as an archetype, an icon of the Indian girl child who is vanquished and subdued in the factory of tradition and modernity. This play moves us deeply as Mahesh Dattani not only unravels how girls are subjected to discrimination in an educated society but also stresses upon the fact that how discrimination is encouraged by people in Indian society. The play is a mega success in depicting the plight of marginalized women. This play depicts the discrimination against women which starts from the womb of mother. The incidents of female feticide are common in our society. The patriarchal society considers a girl as a burden on her parents not only financially but also socially and emotionally. That is why this patriarchal society prefers a boy child like Chandan to Tara, a girl child. This is thus a play about the injustice done in the name of construction of gender identities. It presents gender discrimination many times. All incidents shows gender bias.

**‘Lights Out’**

**Qs. Discuss the theme of Woman Subjugation and Gender Inequality in Manjula Padmanabhan’s Play ‘Lights Out’.**

**Ans.** Manjula Padmanabhan is a prominent feminist dramatist of modern Indian drama. Lights Out‘ by Padmanabhan draws attention to the suffering of women and how they are exploited in this male chauvinist society. The dramatist displays an unambiguous impression of gender inequality and creates a dominant appeal for comprehending the women emotions in a world where she hardly finds herself to be free, independent, resilient, well thought out. The play is based on real life incident which took place in Mumbai suburb in 1982. Padmanabhan portrays a world in which women is deprived of her identity, her own voice, her freedom , her rights ; she has to implore unto men to hear to her concerns, this further leads to gender discrimination in every sphere of life.

Lights Out‘ opens at point where a critical decision has to be taken. Leela and Bhaskar ,a higher middle class married couple, have been hearing to strange sounds of sexual harassment of a woman from their neighbouring building very often. Leela is terrified and traumatised because of these sounds. These sounds make Leela hysterical, she is able to hear to the voice of the victim and her cries in her subconscious mind . Leela implores to Bhaskar to take an action against the perpetrators but all her pleas falls on the deaf ears. Bhaskar is least disturbed by all these actions and sounds. It is because for a woman the very thought of purity of her body and soul, and right over her own body is intensely embedded in her mind and conscious but for a man a woman is an object of play and to have pleasure with her body. This is the main reason why the men in the play never tries to see the matters associated with woman‘s honour and respect from female perspective. Leela begs her husband Bhaskar to call for police but he brushes away her request by saying that the sounds merely cannot hurt her.

The most ghastly offence which no women in the world can accept is body-abuse. In the play, for Leela rape symbolises the most heinous crime and voice out to help her stop it but for Bhaskar it is just an event . Further he advices Leela to practice yoga through which she can reduce her fear instead of thinking of this incident. Naina , Leela‘s friend is told that the strange sounds that she hears are the sounds of locale slum religious ceremony. But Naina grows inquisitive and looks out of the window to know what kind of religious ceremony is taking place exactly and finds to her horror four men assaulting a woman sexually. She is shaken to see three men holding a woman as the fourth attacks her brutally.

Where Naina denies to call it a religios ritual, men in the play deny to call it a rape. Through the casual attitude of Bhaskar and other male characters in the play Padmanabhan tries to project the mind set of male, usually men try to control woman , men are the one to decide what a woman should think, what a woman should do, what a woman should sense etc. The chief intention of the unconcerned outlook by Bhaskar, his two friends Mohan and Surinder is to build internal dread in the minds of Leela, her friend Naina and Leela‘s domestic help Frieda. By doing so, they can uphold and sustain the ever reigning patriarchal power inside as well as outside the home. The display of male dominance and women subversion is evidently seen in ‗Lights Out‘. There is no relation of the victim with the characters of the play but still her pain is seen through the suffering of Leela, Naina and also Frieda. These three being women feel affinity with the victim, through Leela trauma of the rape,through Naina subversion of women, through Frieda‘s silence the fear of being abused because of her economic status. Freida‘s very presence on the stage and her acute silence raises many questions like : Can she hear the terrible sounds of the rape victim? Why is she not disturbed like others? Freida has a robotic quality, she comes at every beck and call of her master and seen attending to the works even though she is not told. She arranges for knives and acids while the discussion to attack the goons is on among the verbal characters. She indirectly tells that the crime need to be stopped. Through her, the dramatist tries to show, despite belonging to economically poor background she strives to come out into an open society to earn her living and live independently under odd circumstances. But at the same time her silence acts as shield against subjugation. Feminist writer like Padmanabhan tries to project the injustice done to women for centuries by male dominance and patriarchy in society through ‗Lights Out‘. Woman is considered inferior to man and suppressed for thousands of years in human history. Challenging this male superiority , under consequent subjugation and suppression of women the play points out certain questions relating to psychology, society, culture and male-dominated economic ideology.

The male characters act as adjudicators to tag women with different words like whore, decent, possessed, respectable etc. Such reactions of men roots revulsion in women and they detest seeing the fictitious discrimination; but for men, women are mere an instrument of pleasure. Down the history women are relegate as ‗weaker sex‘ which puts them always in an inferior base to man. Such a treatment leads to identity crisis in woman which is deftly showcased in ‗Lights Out‘. Padmanabhan provokes host of questions on gender identity , equality and its impact on woman‘s identity, her autonomy and her decision making. The unanswered questions are On what account men is superior to woman? On what basis male and female are built in the name of gender? How a man is master and a woman subservient? Naina is shown as a much awaited and essential help for Leela but even her voice is made silent. She initially argues to call the police but the arrival of her husband Surinder, changes her faintly. Surinder‘s dominating demeanor overshadows Naina‘s personality and she becomes silent. The play exposes the reality that the world one lives in is a man‘s world and the gearstick is in their hands, woman must wrestle for her space. Man from time immemorial has treated woman as a liability, source of necessity and an object of pleasure to meet his requirements. This undemocratic attitude of man disturbs woman to the core. Violence and assault against a woman is not a women‘s issue its human rights issue.

The play at the end provokes the observers to comprehend where the society stands when the question of woman‘s safety, independence and her identity is concerned. Today one can see how the honour of an educated and employed women is been outraged in a traditional and democratic societies like India let the unimaginable fate of millions of illiterate women in the world over. Padmanbhan has successfully uncovered the follies of the people and made them aware through her work.

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**Enterprise**

**By-- Nissim Ezekiel**

1. How did the travelers make all their burdens light?

Ans. They were not worried about the difficulties.

2. How was the second stage explored?

Ans. They covered some distance but did not feel tired.

3. What is meant by “the sun beat down to match our rage?

Ans. There were difficulties on the way but there enthusiasm was no less.

4. What is meant by “observed and put down copious notes”?

Ans. As they moved on they observed things and took down detailed notes.

5. What were the notes about?

Ans. The notes were about the various activities of the peasants – their buying and selling.

6. What is meant by the way of serpents and of goats?

Ans. The way the serpents and the goats behaved.

7. What is meant by the word “a sage”?

Ans. “A sage” means a wise man.

8. What does the poet mean by “We stood it very well”?

Ans. They bore the difficulties well.

9. What is meant by “How to cross a desert patch”?

Ans. It means how to solve the problems that arose during the journey.

10. What do you mean by “a shadow falls on us”?

Ans. A very talented member of the group went away, this caused frustration among the members of the group.

11. What is meant by that we lost our way?

Ans. It means some confusions grew in the minds of the travellers.

12. Why did the poet try to pray?

Ans. He felt frustrated and hopeless, so in order to gain strength he tried to pray.

13. What is meant by “he smelt the sea”?

Ans.The leader tried to encourage the members by suggesting that the goal was near.

14. Why did they not notice anything as they went?

Ans. They did not notice anything because they were tired and hopeless.

15. What do you understand by “ a straggling cloud of little hope”?

Ans. Many members of the group had already left and whoever were left went on without hope.

16. What is the significance of thunder?

Ans. The thunder signifies certain omens but these ignorant people did not understand them.

17. Why had the trip darkened every face?

Ans. The trip had darkened every face because they did not get what they expected from the trip.

18. Explain the meaning of “home is where we have to gather grace”?

Ans. In a world where egoes clash, home is only place where one can live peacefully and gracefully.

19. When was the poem ‘Enterprise’ published?

Ans. In 1960, in the poem collection ‘The Unfinished Man’.

20. What is the rhyming scheme of the poem ‘Enterprise’?

Ans. ABABA

**Qs. Critically analyse the poem ‘Enterprise’ in your own words.**

**Ans.**

Nissim Ezekeil’s poem ‘Enterprise’ is an allegorical and symbolical poem. It was published in the collection of poems named “The Unfinished Man”.’Enterprise’ is a beautiful symbolic poem dealing with the theme of the rise and fall, the wishes and aspirations of India. It shows the various stages of Indian culture and civilization which got several jolts and jerks in the path of development. It covers the story of both the happiness and sorrow starting from the Great Vedantic era to the modern time. The whole poem has been visualized through an extended metaphor of pilgrimage where the main purpose of the pilgrim is to attain spiritual bliss. The poem, as we shall see, is suffused with some powerful images and symbols, words and phrases which are modern, allusive and complex in tone and temper.

The poem entitled “Enterprise” shows Nissim Ezekiel as a reflective, meditative, and philosophical poet who is not only interested in the outward life of human beings but also in their inner states. In other words, this poem shows that Ezekiel is interested not only in depicting the externals of human life but also probing the surface in order to find some inner meaning in human life. This poem is an attempt on Ezekiel's part to depict what he would, in a certain mood, think the human situation to be, or the predicament in which human beings find themselves placed by the very nature of their existence on this earth.

“Enterprise” is an allegory. A group of human beings join together to pursue a lofty and uplifting enterprise or project. They start with great zest, great courage, and great hope. But, after some initial signs of success, they begin to falter because of the divisions which arise among them and which begin to impede their progress. There are defections and there are clashes of opinion. Disunited because of the egoism of many of them, they eventually reap only disappointment when the whole enterprise collapses. The result is only frustration. Thus the basic idea behind the poem is that man is doomed to failure in the pursuit of his noble aspirations and goals because human nature is such that it retards man's progress, as much as it stimulates man's efforts to achieve his goal.

The poem begins with the spiritual journey of our great saints and sages whose mission of life for the people of the country was like a pilgrimage. They were the pilgrims of the sky who went to a pilgrimage for the enlightenment of knowledge. The phrase ‘exalting minds’ shows the great philosophers and thinkers of the olden days who wanted to make the burden of the people light through their knowledge of pilgrimage. The word ‘pilgrimage’ has u religious overtone which shows that in our past days the people had a religious mission before doing any work. On the second level of meaning, it also suggests that during the pilgrimage, a pilgrim should have a light burden so that he can go to the pilgrimage easily. The second stanza deals with the second stage of Indian culture and civilization during the callous administration of the British rule where the poor peasants of India were bought and sold like goods of the market.

The images of serpents and goats are highly symbolic. It shows the British people who ruled over India tactfully and very intelligently. The word ‘serpents’ eludes the story of the Bible in which the Satan, in the form of a serpent, lures the woman to eat the forbidden fruit. Similarly, during the British rule we see their ‘rule and divide’ policy. They lure and attract several kings and princess of India and very tactfully caught them in their fabricating net. The phrase, ‘Three cities’ seems to denote the three major metropolitan cities of India where the English, at first, set their feet strongly. ‘The way of goats’ suggests the merciless killings of the poor and innocent people of India who were butchered like goats. ‘A sage’ perhaps denotes the Great Bapu, Mahatma Gandhi. The early phase of the national movements was very kind and liberal. The freedom fighters wanted to achieve the freedom and liberty of India through requests, writings and various thoughts. The phrase ‘copious notes’ seems to denote this fact.

The third stanza deals with the partition of India in 1947. It also shows the communal riots and different castes, classes and creeds of India which hamper progress of the nation. The term ‘the differences’ denotes the various types differences-social, political and religious. We know that before partition, there were several differences of ideas, rites and rituals between the Hindu and the Muslim. In poetic language the poet says that it was a difference how to cross a desert patch. The phrase ‘desert patch’ suggests the ignorance, darkness and religious differences of the contemporary time. So, in the process of crossing the desert patch, we lost a friend whose stylish prose was quite the best. Here this connotation shows the partition of India into two lands- India and Pakistan.

Then the poet narrates the situation after this partition, there has been a recurrent shadow on both these countries. The shadow is not totally disappeared or rooted out, but it is so strongly planted that it keeps on growing every day. Terrorism is one of the biggest shadows which we face today. After the partition, India had to face two attacks which created big bumps in the path of the pilgrims. The first attack was by China, once our bosom friend but proved to be a serpent beneath the rose in 1962 and the other was by Pakistan in 1965.

In the fifth stanza, the poet has presented a realistic picture of the growing population and its dangerous consequences. It also shows the various social and religious maladies which India has to face during seventies and afterwards. The main problem was poverty which made the people broken and bent. The poet says that in spite of the various social, political and religious upheavals, we kept on going our ways of pilgrimage. We have a straggling crowd with a little hope. We were so much beaten by the constant blows of social evils and political upheavals that we were on the verge of losing our hope. But we kept the hope in our bosom ignoring what the thunder meant. Here the word ‘thunder’ denotes the economic, social, religious and political thunder which made the pilgrims afraid of going to the pilgrimage to get the truth and knowledge, light and divine bliss. In this process people had to face the blows of poverty. The poet has taken a modern term ‘soap’ which shows the common things of life

The last stanza of this poem ends with the note of uncertainty hopelessness and darkness. The poet says that though the pilgrims have reached the place of pilgrimage after facing various trials and tribulations, ups and downs they hardly knew why they were there. There was a sense of darkness on the faces of every pilgrim. The poet is of the view that whatever we, the pilgrims, did was neither great nor rare. In order to get a sense of truth and knowledge, peace and prosperity, the pilgrim has to devote himself to the home where he can gather grace. The word ‘home’ here is very apt and suggestive. It suggests our great past, culture and civilization, the great truth and knowledge, love and affection for which the people of India are known all over the world. So, if the pilgrim wants to visit the pilgrimage in the true sense of the term, he should visit to his inner being where only can he get the spiritual bliss.

Thus, the poem Enterprise begins with pilgrimage, the outward realization of truth and ends with home, the inward bliss of knowledge and truth. So, the poet’s efforts in this poem is to connect the people of modern time to its past glory and grandeur, to visit the home where they can gather grace.  Thus the journey here is a metaphor of life. The poem is a stark depiction of the condition of men on this earth who are subjected to such failures, hardships and disillusionment during their course of journey of life.

**Night of the Scorpion**

1. How was the mother bitten by the scorpion?

Ans. The poet and his family lived in a village. It was night time. There was continuous rain for 10 hours. Due to rain, a scorpion entered the poet’s house. It stung the poet’s mother and crawled under a sack of rice. The poison was spreading through the body of the mother. The scorpion may have foreseen that the villagers will search for it and kill it. So, it risked the rain again and escaped from the house. Who bit the mother? Is it the scorpion or the evil deed of the mother in the past? It is mysterious.

2. How did the villagers come to the aid of the woman?

Ans. The farmers in the village came to know that the mother was bitten by a scorpion. They rushed to her house like “swarms of flies.” They had candles and lanterns in their hand. They threw giant sized scorpion shadows on the wall. They searched for the scorpion but they could not find it. They were uneducated and they had their own village gods. They uttered the name of the God to paralyze the Evil One that had entered the mother’s body. The poet indirectly makes a contrast between the selfishness of the city people and the villagers’ concern for others.

3. How did the peasants view the stinging in a positive manner?

Ans. The peasants of the village believe in Karma theory. They believe that the sins committed in the previous birth will be purified if only the concerned person suffers in this birth. They say that the mother’s suffering by the scorpion burns away her sins in the previous birth. They also say that the mother’s suffering decreases the misfortunes in her next birth. According to them, the mother’s flesh and spirit are purified from desire because of this suffering. The writer does not say whether their belief at this critical moment is right or wrong. He just presents it to be decided over by the readers.

4. What type of man was the father? How did he treat his wife?

The father was a sceptic . He was a rationalist. So he did not compromise with the beliefs of the villagers. He applied different kinds of medicinal herbs and a certain curative powder. He also melted paraffin and poured it on the bitten toe and set fire to it. The father tested every scientific way to find the recovery. After twenty hours, the mother was saved. Again the writer keeps a neutral position. He doesn’t say whether the father’s treatment cured the mother or the belief and rites of the villagers.

5. How did the mother respond after the recovery?

The mother found recovery after 20 hours of treatment. We don’t know whether the father’s treatment cured the mother or the belief and rites of the villagers. But the poet implies that it is the mother’s love for her children that saved her. She thanks God because the scorpion has bitten her, not her children. The mother is a typical Indian mother who always cares for her children. Her whole world is her children. It is this response of the mother that gives a heart-touching end, a solution to human problems, the true love.

#### **6. What was the difference in the poet’s father?**

Ans. The poet’s father was a believer in science, and therefore, he was not at all moved by the sacred rites of the peasants. He attempted different medicines to mitigate the agony of his wife. He poured some kerosene on the injured part of her toe and then fired it to burn the poison quickly. Indeed, he was not at all unscientific in his attitude. He was out and out a rationalist and had a reasonable approach towards the possible hazards of life.

#### **7. What was the reaction of the mother after her recovery?**

Ans. The poet’s mother recovered from the wordless pain caused by the biting of the scorpion after 24 hours. After her relief, she expressed her holy wishes to God because it was her fortune that not her children but that scorpion stung her. The poet felt the nobility of his mother and realised the universal affection that is the only property of all the ladies in this universe is not absent in his mother who wants to die herself in exchange of her children’s lives.

8. **Where did the scorpion string the poet’s mother?**

Ans. On the toe

9. **How long had it been raining?**

Ans. Ten hours

10. **Where did the scorpion hide to escape the rain?**

Ans. **Beneath the sack**

**11. Why did the peasants buzzed the name of God?**

Ans. To paralise the scorpion.

12. How was the poet’s father?

Ans. **Sceptic and rationalist**

**13. After how many hours, the poet’s mother gets relief?**

Ans. After twenty hours.

14. **What did the poet’s father do to cure the poet’s mother?**

Ans. He applied powder, mixture, herb and hybrid upon the bitten toe.  
 He also poured a little paraffin upon the bitten toe and put a match to it.

15. **What was the mother laying on?**

Ans. On mat.

16. When was the poem ‘Night of the Scorpion’ published?

Ans. In 1960, in the poems collection ‘The Unfinished Man’.

**Qs. Discuss the summery of the poem ‘Night of the Scorpion’ in your own words.**

**Ans.**

‘The Night of the Scorpion’ is the story of one night in which the mother of the speaker is stung by a poisonous scorpion. She suffers for twenty hours while peasants, holy men, and her husband attempt to heal her. They try curses, blessings, prayers, herbs, and all forms of ancient medicine that are not practiced in most of the modern world. Their efforts are in vain. A sense of otherworldliness is created by the beliefs and practices of these peasants in comparison to the world in which the reader is existing, a barrier is put up. This barrier is torn down as the poem concludes and the reader realizes how similar they are to the characters in the poem, united by their common humanity. You can find the full text of the poem here.

This poem begins at the beginning, with the speaker starting the story of how his mother was stung by a scorpion. Ezekiel does not use unnecessary phrasing or extra words; he gets right to the point. He describes how the scorpion had been driven inside by “steady rain” and has decided to hide beneath a “sack of rice.” This first stanza is only four lines, a choice Ezekiel makes to urge the story forward. A quick succession of stanzas allows for the poem to flow faster. The second stanza proceeds in the same way, but this time with only three lines.

In this stanza, Ezekiel’s speaker describes the actions of the scorpion. He portrays the creature as being purposefully diabolical, a thought that will directly relate to the beliefs and actions of those that attend the speaker’s mother. The scorpion moves quickly before anyone can do anything, he “part[s] with his poison…” and runs back outside, to risk the weather again. Throughout this piece Ezekiel makes a number of language choices that continue to reference the movements and parts of different insects. These descriptors are very prevalent in the third stanza. He describes the actions of the peasants as being like swarms of flies, they “buzzed” God’s name in a hope to paralyze the “Evil One.”

The image that Ezekiel creates here is clear; the reader can easily visualize a swarm of people coming down on the speaker’s mother, all with good intentions, but perhaps so numerous that no one can do anything that would help. They are all devoted to the same purpose, praying in the hope of saving the mother. They believe that she has been inflicted by the Evil One, or the devil, and pray in an effort to drive him out.

The fourth stanza contains seven lines and describes the hunt that the peasants embark on in an effort to find the scorpion. They search with both candles and lanterns, which throw shadows on the wall in the shape of a scorpion. This image of the scorpion still being in the room (only in the form of shadow) helps set the scene for the next lines as the peasants struggle to help the mother. The shadow is representative of their primitive fears, that something Evil is lurking just where they cannot see it. This fourth stanza continues, and the search for the scorpion has failed, they do not know, as the reader does, that the scorpion fled the house at the beginning of the poem. This puts the reader in a position above those in the poem; he/she has a greater knowledge of the situation than those experiencing it.

The fifth paragraph, also seven lines, holds the poem’s momentum steady. The peasants wish the scorpion to be stilled, but offer a bit of consolation for the mother. They, deep in their superstitions, say to the mother that the poison will burn away the sins of her previous birth, and decrease the suffering of her next. This is a reference to the traditional Hindu belief of reincarnation. Due to their lowly social status it was believed that the mother must have committed some kind of grievous sin to be condemned to this life, and that perhaps this suffering she is going through will improve her chances of being reincarnated into a higher position in her next life. This stanza continues into the next in which the speaker continues relaying the words of the peasants. They wish that the pain the mother is experiencing will purify her flesh. The peasants have given up their search for the scorpion and are now sitting around the mother with her at the center of a circle. The speaker describes each peasant as wearing a face that is peaceful with understanding. The next two lines allow for quick progression of time. Ezekiel lists a number of developments and additions to the story.

The mother is “twisting” on the floor, “groaning” into the mat. It can be assumed that quite a large crowd has gathered around the mother. Many people were there to help, and probably some there just to observe. At this point in the story the father is introduced into the poem. He is described as being a very sensible man, rational, and a sceptic. His father has forgotten his reason and is trying everything he can think of in an effort to save his wife. While the reader may have felt some distance from the characters at this point, the father’s desperation feels real and acute. A man hopeful beyond reason that a curse or blessing will save his wife. He even goes so far as to burn paraffin on her toe. The speaker watches the flames it creates “feeding” on his mother. Just as the poison is moving through her body, so is the flame consuming her skin. The reader is then informed that all of this has been going on twenty hours, a truly painful and horrific.

More and more people come with candles & lanterns. His mother is however crying and rolling on the mat with severe pain but nobody cares for her except for his father who is a sceptic, rationalist. He leaves no stone unturned to cure her. He uses powder, mixture, herb and hybrid to help her recover from the pain. He even poured a little paraffin upon the bitten toe and then fires it up. The poet watches the flames of fire burning on the skin of his mother. He also watches the holy man perform his rites to tame the poison with an incantation. The phrase again refers to superstitious people of his village who believe in irrational measures to cure a person. His mother ultimately recovers from the poison after 24 hours.

The last line is quite emotional and heart touching. It reflects the motherhood of a lady. The poet says that after recovering from the poison, his mother’s words were Thank God the scorpion picked on me and spared my children. Even in such condition, his mother remains more concerned about the safety and health of her children.

The poem is not really about the scorpion or its sting. It contrasts the reactions of family, neighbours and his father with the dignity and courage of his mother. The sting of superstition seems to be more dangerous and harmful than the sting of the scorpion. The scorpion‘s poison runs parallel with the poison of superstition that had killed people of his time. The scorpion is poisonous, so is the ignorance of the village. The peasants, finally accepting the fate of the mother, try to put a positive spin on the situation by saying that even if the mother died, her next life (An Indian Belief) would be less painful , as she atoning for her future sins by enduring this pain. This poem makes us realize that times have changed drastically in our society since his childhood experience and his youth experience varies in his narration and that such changes are happening at an alarmingly fast rate. Those days they had time to chant the name of God. Magnifying small issues is still prevailing in our culture with all the developments around us.

**Very India Poe in Indian English**

1. What according to the poet is 200% correct?

Ans. Ancient Indian wisdom is 100% correct.

1. What happened to Indrabehn?

Ans. One goonda fellow threw stone at Indrabehn.

1. What does the speaker consider a ‘Lovely drink’?

Ans. Lassi with little salt is considered a lovely drink.

1. What is the speaker’s idea on wine?

Ans. According to speaker wine is for drunkards only.

1. What does the speaker not understand?

Ans. The poet stands on peace and non-violence, but the people of the world is continuously fighting with each other. The poet does not understand that why the people are not following Mahatma Gandhi.

1. What does the modern generation neglect?

Ans. The modern generation neglects the ancient Indian wisdom rather they are too much addicted to fashion and foreign things.

1. What does the poet do to improve his English?

Ans. The poet reads the newspaper namely ‘Times of India’ everyday to improve his English.

1. When was the poem ‘Very Indian Poem in Indian English’ published?

Ans. In 1960, in the poems collection ‘The Unfinished Man’.

1. What is ‘Ram Rajya’?

Ans. A country full of peace and harmony.

1. How many stanzas are there in the poem ‘Very Indian Poem in Indian English’?

Ans. Five stanzas.

**Qs. Write a critical appreciation of the poem ‘Very Indian Poems in Indian English’.**

**Ans.** Nissim Ezekiel is one of those Indian poets writing in English who creates an authentic flavor of India, by his use of Indian English - Pidgin English on Bazar English, as it is often called. In this poem, the Indian flavor has been created by stressing the various mistakes which Indians commit in their use of English, by bringing in the hopes and aspirations of free India, and also the attitudes of her two hostile neighbors, China and Pakistan. The poem Very Indian Poem in Indian English, written in a very light vein is an ‘Indian poem’ because the poet looks at the world around him through the eyes of a typical middle-class Indian. Apparently the speaker, the ‘I’ of the poem is literate but not highly educated. Here, the persona is voicing his opinions to a visitor.

Nissim Ezekiel is one of those Indian poets writing in English who creates an authentic flavor of India, by his use of Indian English - Pidgin English on Bazar English, as it is often called. In this poem, the Indian flavor has been created by stressing the various mistakes which Indians commit in their use of English, by bringing in the hopes and aspirations of free India, and also the attitudes of her two hostile neighbors, China and Pakistan.

It all started as a comment by a friend who said that you write in English no doubt and you write English well but you don't seem to even know or realise that thousands of Indians speak what can only be called Indian English, So from that time in all his train journeys from Mithibai College back home, he started to take some interest in the way English was being spoken on the train. Every time he heard an obvious Indian English phrase like, "I'm not knowing only." he would take it down. When he had about a thousand of these, he thought of creating this present poem.

Ezekiel presents that the new generation is going after 'fashion and foreign things.' He presents the typical Indian make - up. The Indian living conditions are sought to be portrayed. The India of yester years is no longer to be seen here, as modernization and industrialization have speeded up the process of change.

The regrettable thing in the modern world is the act of violence and anti – social tendencies proving to be a menace. Still the positive aspects like regeneration, remuneration and contraception could be thought of as a way out of the present muddle. One can certainly hope for the better and propagate the best that is thought as unique.

In the second stanza, the readers get a peep into things - Indians as Gandhi's heir, he would opt for peace and non - violence. He is puzzled why others are not following Gandhi's advice - while in this estimate, the ancient Indian wisdom is correct, contrastively the modern generation takes it to whatever is western and fashionable - like other Indians, he too has to improve his English language. The student interest and petty agitations make him feel sickening line Antony's appeal to the Roman mob, he will call upon the fellow citizens to think of the past masters.

Thus in the third stanza, he pronounces, In order to get away from that which is disgusting, he wants to have a cup of lassi which is very good for digestion. It can be taken as equivalent to the western wine if only a little salt is added to make it a lovely drink. The poet confesses that he is the total abstainer from drinks while it is taken by addicts to gunch themselves, he for his part would turn to simple drinks like lassi. Thus, the poet tries to receive the old Gandhian days.

In the fourth stanza, the poet is able to think aloud and offer his comments on the world situation today. The present conditions all over the world speak of a bad trend that give an edge to the production of dangerous weapons and try to be superior to others. The countries of the world often tie with each other in keeping themselves ahead of others in this mad competitive world. This retrace often leads to conflicts resulting in loss of precious human lives. If only one considers the other as the brother; the trend could be changed.

India is a land where the principle of 'unity in Diversity' is practiced. Here many communities live together even though there are some problems. This ideal situation in which one Co-exists with the other is described as Ram Rajya by the poet. He gives the hand of friendliness to the visitor and expects him to come again. The poet is optimistic when he says that he enjoys every moment of good company. So, he ends the poem by saying that he does not feel the necessity of celebrating ceremonies.

Substrate influence on grammar is quite common. It is often frowned upon as "wrong", but eventually becomes a regular part of the new language variant. "The Patriot" contains a number of Indian English examples: the reduplication of verbs in "fighting fighting", the lack of indefinite and definite articles in "threw stone at Indirabehn" and "all people of world", the use of one instead of the indefinite article a in "one glass lassi", the excessive use of the definite article the in "not that I am ever tasting the wine", the excessive use of the continuous tense (the -ing form) in "I am standing for peace and non-violence", the omission of an obligatory object pronoun in "modern generation is neglecting" (instead of "neglecting this") etc. Again, this is a satirical poem rather than a genuine example of Indian English, but the phenomena exemplified are genuine enough.

Nissim Ezekiel occupies a unique position among Indo-Anglian poets of post-Independence era. Nissim opposed the idealism and romanticism of the earlier group of Indian writers in English, and tried to look at any typical Indian situation with an Indian attitude, with a novel and dynamic Indian insight. He cleverly manipulated Indian English to bring out the Indian worldview. Nissim Ezekiel is one of those Indian poets writing in English who creates an authentic flavor of India, by his use of Indian English - Pidgin English on Bazar English, as it is often called. In this poem, the Indian flavor has been created by stressing the various mistakes which Indians commit in their use of English, by bringing in the hopes and aspirations of free India, and also the attitudes of her two hostile neighbors, China and Pakistan

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**Swami and Friends**

**R. K. Narayan**

1. What are the trilogies of novels os R.K.Narayan?

Ans. Swami and Friend, The Bachelor of Arts, and The English Teacher.

2. . Name the fictional town that the maximum novel of Narayan set in.

Ans. Fictional town of Malgudi.

3. In which year the novel Swami and Friends was published?

Ans. In 1935

4. What is the original title of ‘Swami and Friends’?

Ans. ‘Swami and Tales’.

5. Who changed the title of ‘Swami and Tales’?

Ans. Graham Green

6. Who is the teacher in Swami's school who disregards Hindu religion?

Ans. Mr. Ebenezar

7. What was the occupation of Rajam father?

Ans. Rajam's father is the Police Superintendent

8. Who are the close friends of Swami?

Ans.  Samuel, Sankar, Somu, Mani and Rajan.

9. Who is called the Pea and why in ‘Swami and Friends’?

Ans. Swami's friend Samuel is called Pea. He was called the Pea as he was very small in size

10. Name the school where Swami is a student.

Ans. He is a student of Albert Mission School,

11. What did Mani think while he was sitting at the river bank with Swaminathan waiting far Rajam?  
Ans. While sitting by the side of the river Mani was squatting on the sand with Swami. They were silent. Mani was staring at the ground with a small wooden club under his arm. He was thinking to break Rajam’s head in a short while and throw his body into the river. He was also thinking what would happen if Rajam’s body was found or if he would come to take revenge as a spirit. He thought to teach him a lesson even then.

12. Swami and Friends**is a children’s novel about a schoolboy. How does the schoolboy narrative interact with India's colonial history and struggle for independence?**

Ans. Power struggles run through the entirety of Swami and Friends*.* The underlying struggle in the novel is the historical struggle of India attempting to gain independence from Britain. By telling a schoolboy narrative in a mythical town, Narayan evokes this period of time in an intimate scale and with the lightheartedness of everyday life. In doing so, Narayan shows the insidious ways that colonialism is assimilated into everyday life by influencing how one stands in relation to another—in particular, how the parts of Swami's life deemed feminine and other are positioned as inferior, which is evident in his relationship with his granny. Swami consistently goes to her for emotional support and for a listening ear when he is bored or wants to brag about Rajam. Yet, he also consistently devalues her because she is old and doesn't know anything about cricket, an English sport that he and his friends becomes obsessed with.

Boyhood is defined as an escape from maternal figures and independence from patriarchal and colonial figures. The struggles that define Swami's boyhood involve subverting and escaping patriarchs—most prominently, his headmasters and his father. His struggles dovetail neatly with the larger historical struggle, as is evidenced in the “Broken Panes” chapter when he easily joins the protests and throws stones at the headmaster’s windows, motivated by his personal antagonism toward school emboldened by the larger political mood. True independence is something that Swami yearns for but fails to achieve, or at least stumbles toward it. The novel thus chronicles his missteps toward freedom and brings India's historic independence movement down to the level of perception of a young, small-town boy.

**13. Discuss how does Swami, navigates his dueling desires for community and for freedom?**

Ans. Belonging and freedom are two powerful yearnings that Swami experiences. Swami desires social affirmation, especially from his father and his friend, Rajam, whom he looks up to. The problem is that belonging is conditional upon following certain rules and norms, which he struggles with because he also desires freedom from coercion, as becomes evident in his escape from school and participation in the political strike. However, whenever Swami runs aways, he is reeled back in because he powerfully misses the belonging entailed in being part of a community, whether regarding his family, his friend group, or even his school. Thus, Swami is perpetually torn between ingratiating himself into the center and escaping to the periphery. Indeed, while Swami chafes against the authoritarian style of his teachers, he happily submits himself to Rajam, who, assuming intellectual authority lectures him on cricket and the Vedas and rebukes him for participating in the political strike.

The novel begins with descriptions of Swami's close friends and how he gets along with them, demonstrating their centrality to his life in Malgudi. He works extremely hard to impress Rajam because he is ultimately afraid of being socially rejected by him. When he briefly has a falling out with his old friends over being “Rajam’s tail,” he is shocked and deeply uncomfortable. He comes to regret his expulsion from Albert Mission School because he fears that he will lose contact with his school friends. By the time he expels himself from the Board High School, he looks back longingly at his old missionary school, reflects on his old “cosy and homely” history class, and almost weeps at the memory of his friends “happy dignified and honored” within the walls of the missionary school. The image of Swami, on the verge of tears as he stands outside the boundaries of his former school, about to escape into the woods because he dreads the consequences of his actions, is reflective of the conundrum between freedom and community that he has always faced.

At the end, actually on his own in the woods, he finds himself entirely miserable, on the verge of delirium, hungering after his mother’s cooking and hallucinating about the cricket game that he was supposed to have played with his team. Precisely when he is alone, when Swami is the most “free” from the social coercion that he faced, he comes to terms with his powerful attachments and attempts to return. While he is able to return to his old school, the Board High School, and is welcomed back to his family, he has missed the cricket game and is unforgiving by Rajam.

14. Write down the summery of ‘[Swami and Friends](https://www.gradesaver.com/swami-and-friends)’

Ans. The novel [Swami and Friends](https://www.gradesaver.com/swami-and-friends) is an episodic narrative that follows the daily life of Swaminatharian, a charismatic and lazy schoolboy, in the fictional South Indian town of Malgudi with his father, mother, and granny. He attends the Albert Mission School and has an established cadre of friends, including Samuel "the Pea," [Sankar](https://www.gradesaver.com/swami-and-friends/study-guide/character-list#sankar), [Somu](https://www.gradesaver.com/swami-and-friends/study-guide/character-list#somu), and [Mani](https://www.gradesaver.com/swami-and-friends/study-guide/character-list#mani), but the arrival of a new boy in school, [Rajam](https://www.gradesaver.com/swami-and-friends/study-guide/character-list#rajam), son of the police superintendent who speaks English like a European, threatens Swami’s popular status. They become rivals, enemies even, but swiftly reconcile and become fast friends. Swami invites Rajam over to his house and gives orders for his family to change their behavior and clean up to put a good face for Rajam, whose family comes from more money. Swami’s old friends—the Pea, Sankar, and Somu—feel abandoned by his budding friendship with Rajam and begin calling Swami “Rajam’s tail” to humiliate him. Rajam eventually brings everyone together to his house and urges them to reconcile and get along, bribing them with prizes, which ends up working.

Swami and Rajam, along with Mani, a tall strong boy who can beat up almost anyone, become a loyal trio. Swami gets into some trouble with another boy, the coachman’s son, after trying to get enough money to buy a wheel. Interrupting their provincial play is a nationalist strike as part of Gandhi's non-cooperation movement. Swami is swept up in the frenzy of the crowd and throws stones at the window of the headmaster's room, breaking it. The crowd of protestors is broken up by the policemen who violently beat the protestors, led by Rajam’s father, the superintendent.

The next day, the headmaster questions and punishes him and all the students who were missing from school. Swami, acutely distressed, runs away from the school, muttering, “I don’t care for your dirty school.” He is kicked out of the missionary school and enrolls in the Board High School, deemed a more inferior institution. Rajam forgives Swami for his “political sins” and posits that they start a cricket club, which he crowns the Malgudi Cricket Club or M.C.C. for short. They gather their friends together and practice, but Swami arrives late to every practice because he is kept at school until late in the afternoon. Rajam grows exasperated by Swami’s tardiness and, with a friendly match coming up, coerces Swami to plead with the headmaster to let Swami leave class early for his cricket practice. The headmaster declines. Swami becomes desperate and asks a doctor to give him a certificate allowing him to leave early. The doctor refuses, but says that he will speak to the headmaster. Swami begins leaving class early for cricket class, until the headmaster comes in and calls his truancy out in front of the classroom. The headmaster begins beating Swami, who is overcome with a mix of rage and humiliation. He takes the cane out of the headmaster’s hands, throws it out the window, and runs away.

After the incident, Swami believes that he is doomed, kicked out of the two high schools, unable to face his father’s wrath at home. He sees his only option is to escape the town entirely, only coming back anonymously to play the cricket game. He wanders off but gets lost and very hungry and begins to miss his home. He regrets his decision to escape. He begins having wild, scary dreams and falls asleep on the road, where he is picked up by a man carrying a cart. Meanwhile, his father has been roaming the town looking for him and his mother and granny are very anxious. When the man identifies Swami, he calls his parents and they pick him up. Swami is relieved to be found but upset when Mani tells him that he missed the cricket match and that M.C.C. lost. Rajam declares that he no longer cares for Swami and they stop being friends. One night, Mani divulges to Swami that Rajam and his family are leaving Malgudi permanently because his father got transferred to another city. Swami wakes up early the next day to say goodbye to Rajam at the train station and give him a gift, a volume of Hans Christen Anderson’s Fairy Tales. They manage to wriggle their way through the crowd of police officers who are sending Rajam's family off, and Swami and Rajam face each other. Swami cries out that Rajam is going away and when will he ever come back? Rajam opens his mouth to respond, but his response is lost in the locomotion of the trains as it chugs away. Mani runs alongside the train and gives Rajam the gift of books. The train leaves, and Swami cries, wondering if Rajam will ever think about him again, and Mani tries to console him by saying that Rajam will write letters to Swami, but his answer seems flimsy and his face inscrutable.

15. Discuss the themes of the novel ‘Swamy and Friends’.

Ans. The themes of the novel can be discussed as follows.

## Innocence and Irony

The narrative is told with the innocence of its seven-year-old boy protagonist, Swami. He does not understand maps, nor the politics of the anti-colonial nationalist movements, nor how money works. A lot of the tension driving the storytelling is based on the misunderstanding and tomfoolery that results when he and his pals try to engage with matters that they do not fully understand. Their innocence also creates a sense of irony that permeates throughout the novel wherein the narrator will sometimes tell us details that Swami himself does not know. For example, while Swami is wandering through the woods, he thinks that he is on the main road on his way back to his house. The narrator, however, informs us that he is actually quite lost on a branch road because he has been following a gentle, imperceptible curve that has led him astray.

## Colonial Domination

The novel begins with Swami waking up and immediately dreading the prospect of going to school and listing the homework that he still has to do before class starts in two hours. At school, he encounters very domineering figures and hierarchical power structures. We are introduced to school first through Dr. Ebenezer, his scripture teacher, who demonizes and denigrates the native Hindu gods as "lifeless" and "dirty" objects and uplifts the Christian Jesus as a true god. This episode of British colonial domination through religious indoctrination is a more overt instantiation of a theme that runs throughout the novel. School structures his time to the extent that the central conflict by the end of the novel is that school ends too late for him to attend his cricket practice on time.

## Patriarchy and Authority

Swami is always navigating men who wield authority over his life, whether his school headmaster, the doctor, or his father. The men in the story are whom Swami both fears and resents, but also desires approval from, as evidenced by his elation when his father invites him to the club with him. In contrast, the women—primarily his mother and his granny—are the people whom he relies upon to listen to and care for him. His mother always brings his coffee and sugar as his afternoon snack after school. His granny is always available to listen to his latest story or lecture. When Swami fakes sickness, he manipulates his mother and granny to convince his father to let him stay in bed. The women, while not associated with the formal institutions of power, still exert a powerful force upon Swami. For example, hours into getting lost in the woods after trying to escape, Swami recalls his mother and her cooking as one of the most powerful sensations of home.

16. Who was Rajam? Why was Mani angry with him?   
Ans.  
 Rajam was a new student. He was the son of the Superintendent of Police. Swami admired Rajam and was much impressed by his carefree conduct, manners, and by his brilliance as a student. On the very first day, Rajam had impressed him by his nonchalance. He dressed very well. He was the only boy in the class who wore socks and shoes, fur cap, tie and a wonderful coat and knickers. He came to the school in a car. He was a very good student too.

It was said that he had come from some English boys school somewhere in Madras. He spoke very good English, exactly like a European. He assumed a certain non chalance to which Mani was not accustomed to. If Mani was the overlord of the class, Rajam seemed to be nothing less. And add to all this the fact that Rajam was a regular seventy-percenter, second only to Shankar. These were sure indications that Rajam was the new power in the class. Day by day as Mani looked on, it was becoming increasingly clear that a new menace had appeared in his life.” So, Mani was jealous of Rajam.

17. How did Mani and Rajam, instead of fighting, become friends?

Ans. It was at last agreed that they would meet the next evening on the banks of the river near Nallappa’s Grove. Accordingly, Mani came to the place with his clubs and Rajam came there with his air gun. When Mani pointed out that he should not have brought the gun as it was to be a hand-to-hand fight, Rajam pointed out that he ought not to have brought his clubs.

Both the air gun and the clubs were then dispensed with; the complaints which they had against each other were re-counted and hotly denied. The upshot was that the two suddenly decided to be friends, quite against the expectations of the readers. This conclusion was much to the relief of Swami, for he admired Rajam and wanted to be friends with him. As a sign of goodwill, Rajam offered some biscuits and Mani gladly accepted them.

18. What were the reasons of animosity between Mani and Rajam?

Ans. Rajam was a new student to the class of Swaminathan. He was a son of the Superintendent of Police. He had been transferred from an English school of Madras. He was well dressed and well mannered. He wore shoes, socks, and tie. He came in a car. He was also well built and knew all tacts. On the first day at school he came and walked up to the last bench and sat beside Mani and felt comfortable indeed till Mani gave him a jab in the ribs, which he returned. He had impressed the whole class on the very first day. He could speak English fluently.

No other student in the class was able to compete with him in any way. By that time, Mani was the boss as there was no one to challenge his strength. Rajam became a rival of Mani. In his manner to Mani he assumed a certain non-chalance to which Mani was not accustomed to. If Mani jabbed, Rajam jabbed; if Mani clouted, he clouted; if Mani kicked, he kicked. If Mani was overlord of the class, Rajam seemed nothing less. More than that Rajam was-a brilliant student which Mani was not. So, Rajam was now the new centre of power which was not acceptable to Mani. Thus, there emerged animosity between them.

19. Where did Swaminathan’s grandmother live? What were her belongings?  
Ans. Swaminathan’s grandmother was a very old lady. She lived in a room which was an ill- ventilated passage between the front hall and dining room. Here, she lived with all her belongings. The novelist makes the readers smile with an account of her elaborate bed. It was made of, “five carpets, three bed sheets, and five pillows, a square box made of jute fibre, and a small wooden box containing copper coins, cardamoms, cloves, and areca nut”.

20. What did Swaminathan tell his grandmother about Rajam?  
Ans. Swami told his grandmother that Rajam was a brilliant boy. He was the son of a Superintendent of Police. He used to secure 90 per cent of marks in arithmetic’s.

21. What did grandmother tell Swaminathan about his grandfather? What did grandmother do with grandfather’s medal?  
Ans. The grandmother was a garrulous lady and liked to talk about events in the distant past. When Swami told her about Rajam she began telling him about his grandfather. She told that his grandfather was a powerful magistrate and the police trembled before him and dacoits ran away in fear. He got 200 marks in the subject and a gold medal. She gave it to Swami’s aunt she melted it and made four bangles out of it. Initially the grandmother use to wear it as a pendant.

22. What did the Headmaster ask the students to do during the vacation?  
Ans. The headmaster came and announced the closure of school for the vacation. He also hoped that the boys would not waste their time but read story-books and keep glancing through the books prescribed for their next classes to which it was hoped they would be promoted.

23. Name the river as referred in ‘Swami and Friends’.

Ans. River Sarayu

24. Which is the first novel of R. K. Narayan?

Ans. ‘Swami and Friends’.

25. What subjects are taught in Swami’s school?

Ans. At school, Swami is taught arithmetic, history, and scripture at the end of the day.

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**‘A Poem for Mother by Robin S Ngangom’**

**By-- Robin S Ngangom’**

1. When was the poem ‘A Poem for Mother by Robin S Ngangom’ written?

Ans. In 1998

1. When was the poem ‘A Poem for Mother by Robin S Ngangom’ published?

Ans. In 1988, in his poetry collection ‘Words and Silence’.

1. Name of the mother of the poet Robin S Ngangom’ as mentioned in the poem.

Ans. Palem Apokpi.

1. Do you think ‘A Poem for Mother by Robin S Ngangom’ is a autobiographical poem?

Ans. Yes.

1. **Qs. Discuss the summery of the poem ‘A Poem for Mother by Robin S Ngangom’.**

**Ans.** Robin Singh Ngangom, born into a tribal family in Manipur, is one of those Indian poets who write in their mother tongue and English. Being born in 1959, the years of his growth saw the Indo China war, famines and epidemics rocking north-eastern India, divisive policies of the national government and exploitation and neglect of the people of the north-eastern hill states. Ngangom was uprooted early from his community and sent away for a western education conducted by Christian missionaries, which resulted in his emergence as a student and teacher of English literature, and a bilingual poet. But it also resulted in a lifelong painful sense of detachment from his own community, land and culture, and a realization of leading a futile life as a go-between among contrary ways of life. These themes dominate his poetry which otherwise records the sad plunder of the hills, and the long decades of terrorist insurgency that have transformed life in the hills to a bizarre nightmare. Much of Ngangom’s poetry is deeply autobiographical – his own predicament and experiences attain universality and grow symbolic of the life of the tribes.

The poem begins by addressing Palem Apokpi, the poet’s real-life mother. He had left home ten years ago to become a man of the world, and on returning now the hills seem foreign (‘grown on me’). However, underneath the grown man there still lives the shy boy who was always hungry and lost his teeth eating food stolen from the larder. He is still the romantic adolescent who ran after girls and caused trouble and shame for his mother. Remembering his raucous boyhood, he admits that the useful lessons from the mother were wasted on him, and that he selfishly abandoned his family and community leaving nothing of himself back. Yet, all through his exile he increasingly came to realize what mother meant for him. Next, he recognizes the hard toiling life of the mother – the traditional household worker silently serving the men of the family or fanciful daughters-in-law. Her life of hardship shows now on her face – she has forgotten to smile, the face is creased and white hairs have appeared. Even this day, she must have gone along her never-wavering routine – rising before dawn, sweeping the house, bathing and cooking. She has gone on like this all her life, also trudging to markets with loads of vegetables, earning for the family. Visualizing the life of the toiling mother, the poet is bowed down with a guilty conscience – he has learnt nothing, inherited nothing of her skills or hard work. He begs forgiveness for having betrayed her dreams and hopes of rest and comfort in old age. He has been too small and insignificant to fulfill his mother’s earnest wishes.

The first stanza records the poet’s homecoming from exile, and the pathetic attempt to reclaim his boyhood and adolescence. He is pained by the realization that his homeland has grown alien to him. Yet there was no other way – the paradox faces children of the hills that they must leave home and community in order to be educated and find a place in the larger world. This involves the loss of their individual and communal identity for which they gain no alternative. He remembers the pain of going – ‘how I hated leaving home’ – and that pain propels him to enliven his younger selves, the growing boy bursting with natural instincts like hunger and sexuality. This is a desperate and pathetic attempt to step back into a lost self, yet providing some solace.

The second stanza begins remembering, with sadness and a sense of failure, the worldly wisdom the mother had imparted to her children. With perhaps no formal education, she learnt through her life that money is hard-earned and time must not be wasted – two truths strong enough to sustain the tribal life they led. But the son was deflected from the rigorous discipline of tribal life and learned to idle and debauch, which has brought him to nothing. He feels sorry now that he trifled with the advice, and that he left so totally, taking no part in family or community life. Beyond these misgivings however, there is the sharp agony of the boy losing his mother in his exile. The figure of the mother, in absentia, had grown in the boy’s imagination as a composite memory – of Palem Apokpi, of home, of motherland. The poet’s mind, admitting its careless faults, yet goes above them to face the void in himself created by the absence of the essence – the origin signified in the mother. It is from this stanza that the mother figure grows in symbolic stature, and the moods of penitence and atonement set in.

The third stanza traces the thankless toil of the mother, growing old with pushing on household chores. The tone of sympathy and acknowledgement is clear; the lines caress her tired old face and pay silent respect. There is an unspoken penitence working through the stanza – ‘worried about us’, she has not been able to smile for a long time.

The fourth stanza continues in the same vein of acknowledgement and penitence, detailing out her harsh chores from temple bells at dawn to trudging home at dusk from the bazaars. The Manipuri tribal societies the poet is writing of are often matriarchal, and the women do all the hard work while men idle away their time. The stanza ends with a vision – of the old, haggard mother walking up her life’s road with loads on her head. The deepest chord of sorrow is struck, and the figure becomes a symbol of humanity toiling and suffering eternally. This universal note is emphasized in the question – ‘Must you end toiling forever?’ The question, standing alone outside the stanzaic pattern, rings out the appeal to social conscience – an appeal that goes without an answer. The figure of the lonely mother walking home at dusk is a timeless portrait of suffering humanity saddled to the daily drudgery of life; the portrait recalls the Greek sufferer Sisyphus, pushing his stone up the hillside.

The fifth and last stanza is an apologia – the poet admits himself a complete failure. His failure is a fall from natural grace – he has not learnt anything of the traditional customs and lifestyle of his race, signified by the ‘stable ways and culinary skills’ of his mother. The word ‘stable’ is important here – it means the authenticity of tribal life he has given away in favor of a floating, meaningless existence. He has failed his mother’s dreams and his own, denied her repose in old age, been no worthy son. The stanza ends with absolute self-negation, with a feeling of smallness, insignificance, hollowness, like T S Eliot’s Gerontion, and an admission of being the modern man tossed by inscrutable forces out of his natural orbit.

The poem joins the moods of apologia and elegy – apology to mother and motherland for debts unpaid, elegy for the death of the natural, responsible, dutiful son he could have been had he not gone away. Emptiness and helpless grief emerge as major feelings in the end, and we are left speechless before a destiny cruel and ironic, failing human comprehension. The poem is in a way a record of a failed emotive journey for selfhood, with the mother as the focal centre that would give meaning to the self. Thus the motherhood (centrism) is manifold – Palem Apokpi on the surface, family/community as mother, the north-eastern hills as mother beneath the surface of consciousness. First, an attempt is made to repossess the mother as a shy/naughty boy who filled her with maternal cares and complacence. But boyhood is past and the man is changed, distanced from the aging, toiling mother. The distance is acknowledged – the mother/centre is deflected from the self, and the self looks at its centre from beyond unsurpassable walls. Next, an attempt to regain through empathy with the suffering mother is made, and it fails because the son has deviated from the pattern. What remains is the apologia of the lost, rudderless soul – the ‘small man’ – the self without the centre. The tragedy is deeply personal, and also symptomatic of modern man.

**The Strange Affair of Robin S Ngangom’**

# Qs. Write a critical appreciation of the poem ‘The Strange Affair of Robin S Ngangom’

**Ans.**

[Robin S Ngangom](https://www.poetryinternational.org/pi/poet/11771/Robin-Ngangom/en/tile) is a bilingual poet from Manipur who writes both in English and Manipuri. Ngangom describes his poetry as “mostly autobiographical, written with the hope of enthusing readers with my communal or carnal life — the life of a politically-discriminated-against, historically-overlooked individual from the nook of a third world country”. “When You Do not Return”, “Curfew” and “The Strange Affair of Robin S Ngangom” etc. some are Robin S Ngangom’s vibrant portrayals of the turbulent political situation in Manipur.

          “The Strange Affair of Robin S Ngangom” is a politically charged and the most ambitious poem about his homeland among all Ngangom’s poems. “The Strange Affair of Robin S Ngangom” discusses primarily the political turmoil in Manipur caused by the conflict between the insurgents and the armed force. “The Strange Affair of Robin S Ngangom” is about the horrific change of pristine land into hell, filled with hunger, suspicion, turbulence, and destruction.

          Once Manipur was a prosperous princely kingdom but due to British colonialism, it changed forever. Manipur was freed and became a part of the Indian Union under dubious circumstances. There were distinct transformations in the political and social life of this former feudal state. Manipur became just another corrupt and disillusioned state under the new dispensation. Poets began responding to these changes from the very beginning. The new poetry of the 80s and 90s voices out to the social condition of Manipur.

          The poem “The Strange Affair of Robin Gnangom” starts with the assertion of the poet that he is not involved with the ‘wheel of fire’ which suggests the destruction, bloodshed in his state. As we have mentioned above that Manipur was once a happy princely state. However, due to the change in the political atmosphere, Manipur undergoes social, political, and cultural changes.

          The lines “misplacing/ a bronze bell” could be a suggestion of losing its cultural identity and the changes in Manipur experiences. This is emphasized by the line “I left behind many untended hearths.” The change in him uprooted his origin which makes him envious of each element associated with that land. The new changes cause Manipur to lose the traditional values of the culture.

          The people in Manipur believe that their past is unspoiled but due to the cultural, political dispossession, the present turbulence is intertwined with their lives. As a consequence, the starving people take “begging bowls in hand”. Upon seeing this horrific condition of his people Ngangom seeks to tear and burn the traces of present condition so that suspicion cannot write their bloody history.

          He talks about the youth who return home at Christmas with hate and fear, they take a long and indirect route to home so that they could outsmart their enemy who would be happy in the birth of a merciful son. Because they don’t want dissident sons who could be a threat to them. When these boys reach home, their dreams will come dressed in blood.

          He draws attention to the conflict between the Indian armed forces and insurgents in the land. Therefore Ngangom turns to his land with a heavy heart to describe the suffering that land is bearing. “When I turn with a heavy heart/ towards my burning land/ the hills, woman, scream your name.” The Armed Forces Special Powers Act permits the armed forces the authority to shoot anyone based on mere suspicion and it renders the loss of lives in Manipur.

          Soldiers with black sçarves are compared to mime artists who killed the people instantly without speaking a single word. The youth of Manipur died in turmoil and instead of peace in the hills the air is filled with the acrid smoke of explosives and pyres. He feels sorry for the ravages done to his motherland. He is appalled by the wound it received, that is why he demands “who branded the moon skin of my love?” and asked who used his motherland like a toy doll.

          Ngangom points out to the trucks carrying the instruments of death and devastation. Ngangom is also critical of the Indian armed forces for turning his “fabled land” into a hell and graves of youths who died in turmoil into only milestones of the land. Ngangom also points out to the rise of capitalism in his land. In a similar poem, “Curfew” by Ngangom describes people who were killed in a lawless firing. He seems to be sad for the forceful union of Manipur with the Indian Union and says, “at cockcrow one morning we found/ ourselves belonging to a nation/ What happens when our bodies leave us behind/ and even our songs must lie/ damp in a corner?”

          Things have become so usual that news items in the morning newspapers have become bland like adulteration of milk. The abuse of women, extortion, ambushes, campaigns, etc. has become a normal scenario in the land and it is emphasized by the use of the phrase “the usual”. In this regard, Sisir Kumar Das says that the “narratives of pain and suffering” are always a collective narration of a community’s suffering.

          The poet points out those words like patriotism and uprightness have lost their values. Worthiness is cherishing a new faith to set free ideological horror. Ngangom appeals to the young generation that patriotism is the need of the hour.  Ngangom also asks to be patriotic by mourning for the fact of the merging of Manipur with India. Patriotism is honoring those souls who died in midst of chaos, and patriotism is declaring that their native customs and traditions, their literature, and performing arts should be preserved.

          In reality, the meaning of patriotism has been distorted. Now patriotism is admiring the youth of Manipur who takes grenades in their hands, “patriotism is proclaiming all men are brothers” nevertheless, his brothers have been deprived. Patriotism is playing the chattering of guns to the child who is sleeping in the womb.

          The poem “The Strange Affair of Robin S Ngangom” presents the scenario in the land. Different tribes impose bandhs, road obstruction with an intention to fulfill their demands. The bandhs often last for many days, weeks which ultimately affect the economy of the state and the uncertainty of the lives of the people and shortage of essential items. “The Strange Affair of Robin S Ngangom” is a vivid depiction of horrific change experienced in Manipur. Moreover, he emphasizes that things like fire, water, and air have become commodities. Things have changed Manipur so drastically that the people are now exhausted. The poet says that during childhood there they celebrated the festival of lights. Now the widows cannot light lamps anymore. Their happiness, smile lost somewhere in the smoke of explosive devices. The land is tired of seeing blood. Men are tired and are tired of being men because they could not protect their motherland.

          Therefore Ngangom wants to flee from his homeland but he knows deeply “where can I flee from your love?” that means his love cannot let him separate from his motherland. Therefore the poem “The Strange Affairs of Robin S Ngangom” ends with a pessimistic tone that he has been bound to live in this prison-like homeland forever from where he can’t escape.

          The poem “The Strange Affair of Robin S Ngangom” is narrated in the first person, the “I” in the poem stands for the collective voices of people of Manipur who are suppressed, oppressed and suffered because of political conflict. Placing his own name in the title of the poem suggests his affinity for his motherland. The poet has experienced what he has narrated in the poem. His experiences are the experiences of the people, the whole Manipur. So his strange affair is the strange situation that Manipur faces due to political reasons.

          The poem “The Strange Affairs of Robin S Ngangom” is Ngangom’s attempts to present Manipur vividly and an outcry of a helpless person. The poet has become tired of the events which are taking place in the land. Therefore, [Robin S Ngangom](https://www.poemhunter.com/robin-s-ngangom/), through his poem “The Strange Affairs of Robin S Ngangom” is hopeful about the peace in his land.

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