

Indian Writing in English

Semester I

I BA English Literature

Name of the Staff: E. Jose Raja Edil

Assistant Professor, Department of English

Holy Cross Home Science College, Thoothukudi

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Unit 1

The Gospel of Non Violence

Introduction

Gandhiji will always be remembered as a leader who won freedom for an enslaved people by means of ahimsa or non violence. The ahimsa of his conception enjoys something more than the mere avoidance of violence. Truth and non-violence, the two basic teachings of Gandhiji, find full expression in every thought, word and deed of his. Truth and ahimsa are inseparable. They are like two sides of a coin or rather a smooth unstamped metallic disc. A seeker after Truth had necessarily to follow the path of non-violence. “Non violence and untruth, but Non-violence, Truth is the law of our being”. Therefore everyone should consciously recognize and adopt non-violence in order to realize the ultimate truth.

Gospel of Ahimsa or Non-violence

Non violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law – to the strength of the spirit. Non-violence is the first article of Gandhiji’s faith. It is also the last article of his creed. Non violence is an active force of the highest force of the highest order. It is soul- force or the power of godhead within us.

Ahimsa is not the goal. Truth is the goal. But we have no means of realizing Truth in human relationship except through the practice of ahimsa. Ahimsa is God, and Truth in God. Non- violence is the summit of bravery. It has no room for cowardice or even weakness. Gandhiji would prefer violence to cowardice for there is hope for a violent man to be some day non-violent, but there is none for a coward. The rishis, who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence, were greater geniuses than Newton.

Gospel of Satyagraha or Force of Truth

A satyagraha struggle is impossible without capital in the shape of character. The satyagrahi’s object is to convert, not to coerce the wrong-doer. A satyagrahi must never forget the distinction between evil and the evil-doer. A satyagrahi will always try to

overcome evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth himsa by ahimsa. There is no other way of purging the world of evil. A satyagrahi bids goodbye to fear. He is therefore never afraid to trust the opponent. With satya combined with ahimsa, we can bring the world to our feet. Satyagraha in its essence is nothing but the introduction of Truth and gentleness in the political i.e., the national life.

Since the only way for Gandhiji getting to Truth is by non-violence, it follows that satyagraha implies an unwavering search for Truth using non-violence. The three basic precepts which are essential to satyagraha are truth, non-violence and self-suffering. These are the pillars of satyagraha.

Faith in God and religions

The greatest source of strength for Gandhiji was his absolute faith in God. His faith in God turned brighter and firmer with every trial he faced. God for him is not an external entity, but an abiding presence in the human heart. Gandhiji's Hinduism was based on the ethics of the Bhagavad Gita. He moulded his life in accordance with these basic teachings. He held that good works lead to purity of mind and go to the version of God. Although Gandhiji remained essentially a Hindu, he studied with reverence the scriptures of other religions also. Ahimsa is in Hinduism, it is in Christianity, as well as in Islam.

A life of service must be one of humility. True humility means most strenuous and constant endeavour entirely directed towards the service of humanity. Time and again he proclaimed the truth of universality of all religions and actually practised and proved this in his own life.

2 . Tryst with Destiny

- Jawaharlal Nehru

Introduction:

It is rarely that a politician hectically engaged in the politics of the day turns out to be also a profound thinker and accomplished writer. To Jawaharlal belongs this credit of having found the time and the ability to delve deep into fundamental concepts and put them forward in chaste and forceful phrases – many of them memorable. For instance, when on the midnight of August 15,1947, India became an independent Nation for the first time, Nehru

heralded the new era in the Indian Parliament with the off-quoted words: “We had a tryst with Destiny”. That is a neat summing up of the man and his mission.

While the Word Slept

After the phone call from Lahore, Jawaharlal Nehru had neither the time nor the inclination to write a speech. His words were extemporaneous, heart-felt. ‘Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny’, he declared, ‘and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but verily substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, while the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom’. One after another, the eloquent phrases fell from his lips, yet for Jawaharlal Nehru, that sublime moment of achievement had been fatally flawed.

‘A moment comes’, Nehru continued, ‘which comes but rarely in history, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation long suppressed finds utterance’.

At the dawn of history India started on her unending quest and the trackless centuries are filled with her striving and the grandeur of her successes and her failures. Through good and ill fortunes alike, she has never lost sight of that quest or forgotten the ideal which gave her strength. We end today a period of ill-fortune and India discovers herself again.

Responsibility to the rising generation

Nehru believed in the dynamic life and wanted the rising generation to dedicate itself heart and soul to a mighty purpose. He wanted the young men and women to rise above the petty troubles of everyday and allow themselves to be used by the Life Force for a noble cause. He asked the Indians to accept the challenge and to serve the future generation of India. Nehru reminded Indians that Freedom and Power would bring responsibility. ‘This is no time for petty and destructive criticism’. He concluded, ‘no time for ill-will or blaming others. We have to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell’.

Conclusion

At the stroke of midnight, Nehru moved, they would all rise and pledge themselves to the service of India and her people. In the hall, the hands of the clock over the speaker’s stand crept up to the Roman numeral XII. Heads bowed, the representatives sat in meditative silence, waiting for the chimes of midnight. Outside the Assembly hall, a jubilant mood

swept over the crowd. As Nehru emerged, thousands of happy people rushed forward, threatening to engulf him and the ministers behind him in their embrace. An enormous smile animated Nehru's face.

3.Tree Speaks by Rajagopalachari

C. Rajagopalachari was a renowned statesman as well as a man of letters. He was a devoted follower of Gandhi. He has interpreted the ancient Indian epics in very simple language.

The essay 'Tree Speaks' advocates the love of Nature. The author was the narrator and he narrated his experience with Ray Johnson. They both worked in Salem. Ray Johnson was a medical officer and he was a lawyer.

One day he went to Johnson's home to greet him for his promotion. But he was informed by his wife that he had gone out to visit his friends, the trees.

The doctor had a habit of talking to the trees on the roadside. He had a liking to kiss the trees and whisper to them kind words. It was very beautiful to see in this haughty world.

One day the doctor told him that his tall and beautiful girl was killed by the people. Unfortunately it was rooted near the District Board office building. So the engineers advised against the tree putting out its roots and destroying the foundation of the building. The colonel felt for the tree because it had been growing there forty years before the building came. The building was constructed there only the previous year. The author was impressed by the colonel's feelings.

Hindus believed that every tree had life and soul like human beings. Next day the author went to see the fallen tree. He sat down on the branches and thought deeply. He heard the soft tunes of a flute. It was a sad song. Suddenly he said to himself it was the spirit of the tree singing.

That night the author had a strange dream. The tree spoke to him and urged him to take up its cause. It told its old story. Once it was a young Aswatha sapling and was worshipped by Subbayyar and his family. Those were the good days for the tree.

The author woke up suddenly. He made up his mind to write a strong letter to the press about the folly of felling trees. The letter appeared in the Madras mail.

The members of the Bar were amused. One of them was angry with the author because he was not serious about the Home rule. The president of the Bar got angry and he left the place. The author took part in all the public agitations but he did not regret writing about the pipal tree.

Unit 2

1.The Tame bird in a cage

- Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore was the first non-European Nobel laureate. His poetry in translation was viewed as spiritual, and this together with his mesmerizing persona gave him a prophet-like aura. His "elegant prose and magical poetry" remain largely unknown outside Bengal. A Pirali-Brahmin from Kolkata, Tagore had been writing poetry since he was eight years old. At age 16, he published his first substantial poetry under the pseudonym Bhanushingho and wrote his first short stories and dramas in 1877. His efforts endure in his vast canon and in the institution he founded, Visva-Bharati. His novels, stories, songs, dance-dramas, and essays spoke to political and personal topics. Gitanjali (Song Offerings), Gora, and Ghare-Baire are his best-known works, and his free verse, short stories, and novels were acclaimed for their lyricism, naturalism, and contemplation. Tagore penned two national anthems: India's "Jana GanaMana..." and Bangladesh's "Amar Shonar Bangla...". Tagore considers nature and human life as integral part of the single unit or of the universe. So Tagore emphasizes symbiosis and symmetry between man and all other aspects of the world i.e. plants or other animate world, the earth, atmosphere and the rest of the universe. The whole universe has a specific beauty (aesthetic). To feel this beauty Tagore spends lots of time on the boat in River Padma (in recent Bangladesh). According to his demand a gorgeousness boat was constructed like a house and in which a room was built up. Tagore was trying to search the matter, what is aesthetic? When he was failure to search the answer, on that time fortunately he closed his book that was reading with the help of candle light. After that he saw an outstanding miracle that is; an aura is penetrating in his boat-room from the way of open window of the boat-room in new moon night. After that he came out from his room and saw that the full moon light was reflected from the Padma's water and that reflected aura is incoming into the boat room and he gain or realized the reality of the aesthetic. So aesthetic is the beauty and to feel it you have to open your own aspiration and have to free from the all types of ripus or addiction like: greed, jealousy, pride, lust on material world and this one was largely governed the human's desire, demand and aspiration.

The tame bird was in a cage; the free bird was in the forest. They met when the time came; it was a decree of fate. The free bird cries. "Oh my love let us fly to the woods." The caged bird whispers "Come here; let us both settle in a cage." Says the free bird, "Among the bars,

where is the room to spread one's wings?" "Alas," cries the caged bird, "I should not know where to sit perched in the skies." The free bird cries, "My darling, sing the songs of the woodlands." The caged bird says, "Sit by my side; I'll teach you the speech I learned." The forest bird cries, "No, ah no! Songs can never be taught." The caged bird says, "Alas for me, I know not the songs of the woodlands." Their love is intense with longing, but they never can fly wing to wing. Through the bars of the cage they look, and vain is their wish to know each other. They flutter their wings in yearning and sing, "Come close, my love!" The caged bird whispers, "Alas, my wings are powerless and dead."

2. Night of the Scorpion

- Nissim Ezekiel

In "Night of the Scorpion," the speaker tells a story from his childhood in which his mother was bitten by a scorpion. The poem begins with a simple declaration: "I remember the night my mother / was stung by a scorpion" (1-2). The scorpion had entered the speaker's home because it wanted to hide from the rain. When it bit the speaker's mother, it was hiding beneath a sack of rice.

The speaker describes the incident in which the scorpion stings his mother without mentioning his mother at all. Instead, he focuses on the scorpion and what he did immediately afterward: "Parting with his poison—flash / of diabolic tail in the dark room— / he risked the rain again" (5-7). Rather than stick around and look at the scene he had caused, the scorpion ran back outdoors.

After the speaker's mother was bitten, the speaker notes that poor people went to his mother's side "like swarms of flies," buzzing with Christianity and hoping to kill one of their visions of Satan (8). The peasants look for the scorpion on their hands and knees with lanterns. Their wish is to find the scorpion quickly because they believe that every movement the scorpion makes without getting killed affects the speaker's mother: "With every movement that the scorpion made his poison moved in Mother's / blood, they said" (16-18).

The peasants begin to share good wishes for the speaker's mother, hoping that the scorpion will die that night, or at least sit still, that the sins of her past life will be burned away, and that she may return to an even better life in her next life because of her suffering.

The peasants continue making wishes for the speaker's mother, wishing that the forces of evil might be diminished by the speaker's mother's pain. They sat on the floor around the speaker's mother, hoping that the scorpion's bite would "purify" her, with "the peace of understanding on each face" (29).

As more people come to visit the speaker's mother, the speaker takes in his surroundings: "More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours, / more insects, and the endless rain" (30-31). The speaker's mother, oblivious to it all, spent this time suffering and twisting on a mat.

The speaker turns his attention to his father, who he describes as a "sceptic" and "rationalist" (34). The speaker notes that even his father is making an effort to help his mother in any way that he knows how, which means turning towards that which he wouldn't otherwise believe: "trying every curse and blessing, / powder, mixture, herb and hybrid" (35-36). The speaker's father even lit the bite on fire in an attempt to remove the poison.

The speaker's mother suffered for 20 hours. Her only response at the end of it all was her gratitude that it didn't happen to anyone else in their family: "My mother only said / Thank God the scorpion picked on me / And spared my children" (43-5).

3. A.K.Ramanujan :Small Scale Reflection on a Great House

Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House by A. K. Ramanujan is a ninety-one line poem that is divided into sets of three and four lines, as well as single, solitary lines of verse. The poem is written in free verse. This means that there is no rhyme scheme or metrical pattern to the lines. In fact, if there was, the poem would make a lot less sense. The chaotic nature of the images and their associations are integral to the story. If they were to be structured and rhymed they would have a lot less of an impact.

'Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House' by A.K. Ramanujan speaks about history through an image-rich narrative about a family home.

The poem begins with the speaker telling the reader that everything that comes into his house always stays. Or, if it leaves, it eventually comes back again. As soon becomes clear, the speaker really does mean everything. Some of the many “small-scale” things on his list are cows, “prostitute songs,” wives and soldiers, books, photographs, and cloth.

Some of the most important things that come into the house, and stay there, are beliefs. In one example the speaker describes how the women are made to follow traditional gender roles and in another how a neighbor brought a dish of sweets for a god’s wedding anniversary.

Towards the end of the poem, the examples take a darker turn. The speaker starts to talk about war and the men in the family who have gone off to fight. One man went as far as the Sahara but came back “gnawed by desert foxes”. This seems like quite a depressing thing to have happen, but the second man the speaker mentions came back in body alone.

He died while fighting and had a complicated route back to the house. Despite the distance, he did come home, and this is the main theme of the poem. That nothing is meaningless in a family. All its quirks, bits of trivia, and important history belong to the home and can’t be separated from future generations.

4.The Old Playhouse by Kamala Das

The title of the poem, *The Old Playhouse*, constitutes its central image, and the speaker finally discovers that love-making has made her mind an Old Playhouse with all its lights put out’. It is like a deserted old playhouse having no life of its own. It has almost become non-functional and inert due to the disastrous physical-cum-mental strains. She has lost all her value as a woman in this life of confinement and suffocation.

Imagery used in *The Old Playhouse*

Kamala Das has used very suggestive imagery to show the disastrous effects of the mismatched marital relationships in *The Old Playhouse*. The word ‘sparrow’ stands for the poetess who is captured by her cruel and heartless captor (husband) who denies her any identity or freedom. The images of ‘summer’ and ‘autumn’ show the bright and dark phases of her life. The comparison between the poet’s mind and the ‘old playhouse with lights put off’ is equally very appropriate and suggestive.

Both are in a state of neglect and have lost their functional value. The poet’s mind is in a state of inertial and filled with impenetrable darkness like the darkness prevailing in the deserted old playhouse. The image of Narcissus shows that Kamala Das’s love for her husband is all shattered by her egotistical husband and she is haunted by her own face which is reflective of her loneliness and desolation.

The image of mirror is very relevant because it faithfully mirrors the loneliness and anxieties of her face. The images of the 'kind night' and 'to erase the water' suggest that only death can help her in overpowering her **mood** of depression and loneliness

Analysis

In the poem, *The Old Playhouse*, which can be read in full [here](#), [Kamala Das](#) shows her total disenchantment with her married life and its disastrous consequences on her life. It is an open protest against her egotistical husband who does not think beyond the gratification of his sensual desires. The female **persona** accuses her husband for domesticating her like a swallow after marriage in a well-planned manner.

She also blames him for depriving her of the thrills of romantic love and the desired woman's freedom. He has intentionally done it so that she cannot only forget the fury of the winter and autumn seasons but also snap all her ties with the life before marriage. He has spared no efforts to make her forget her colourful past in which she enjoyed perfect freedom and distinct identity. He wants to make her forget her true nature as well as the very desire to move about freely in the infinite spaces of the sky.

This first section of the poem points to the disastrous fate of the mismatched marriage. Marriage is not an institution limited to the gratification of the sensual desires only. It is not a unilateral but a bilateral relationship based on mutual-trust and mutual understanding. There is no place for the exploitation and dehumanization of any partner in love.

In this second section, the woman is critical of her feeling less husband for shattering her romantic dreams of the married life. She has realized that she is merely an object of physical entertainment meant for satisfying the lustful desires of her husband only. She has lost all her identity as a woman and is systematically alienated from her happy and contented past life.

The woman, in the poem, then explains the reason of marrying the man and the intention behind forming this relationship. She had come to him not to be enlightened about him but to learn about her true self. She thought that the marriage would give her an opportunity for self-growth and self-discovery. But all her hopes were belied because of the egotistical nature of her husband. She found highly selfish and self-centred who could not think beyond himself.

In this third section of the poem, the woman had a very horrifying experience of the marital life. It marked the sudden end of the life of romantic aspirations and dreams. She was almost

overpowered by the monstrous ego of her husband. She lost the very will to live in this hostile environment. She had also lost the [chance](#) of self-growth and self-discovery. She was treated like an object of sexual-gratification only.

Kamala Das always felt terrified by the dreadful ego of her husband. She was meant to please her self-conceited husband against her wishes to preserve this relationship. It is in this process of unnatural appeasement she had lost her individuality and self-respect. She was almost reduced to a dwarf and lost all her will to think and act in an independent manner. Being mentally disturbed, her responses and reactions were always illogical and inconsistent. She had lost all her identity as a dignified woman and felt totally dehumanized in this caged existence.

Kamala Das's marital life is all disturbed due to the overpowering and egotistical nature of her husband. She is all alienated and frustrated in life because of the indifferent [attitude](#) of her husband. She is denied all the needs of a woman for self-growth and self-discovery. She is neglected by her husband who treats her as an object for the satisfaction of his lust only.

In this fourth section, the female persona has suffered both physically and mentally at the hands of her self-centred and selfish husband. She has lost all her freedom, self-respect and identity as a woman and is reduced to the level of a dwarf. She has to work like a caretaker to satisfy his daily needs. She is almost crushed under his unchallenged monstrous ego.

It was a period of winter in her life. For Kamala Das, life has come to a stand-still. All her romantic dreams of the marital life are shattered and she faces a complete vacuum in her life. There is no space for singing or dancing in her colourless and meaningless life. Her life is like an old playhouse filled with impenetrable darkness. She is all fed up with the stereotyped and mechanical technique of love-making of her husband. He offers love in fatal doses which will ultimately kill his wife.

Unit 3

1.RK Narayan- Astrologer's Day

Brief Biography of R. K. Narayan

R.K. Narayan was born to a large, well-educated family in South India. His father was a school headmaster who constantly traveled, so Narayan spent much of his childhood in the care of his grandmother; she schooled him in mythology, arithmetic, classical music, and Indian languages (the family mostly conversed in English). Narayan earned his bachelor's degree and briefly worked as a school teacher, though he soon quit to pursue his dream of being a writer. With the support of his family, Narayan wrote several novels about a fictional Indian town, commenting on issues such as the abuse of students in schools and the imbalance of power between men and women in marriage. Though these works were rejected by many publishers, English novelist Graham Greene helped Narayan find publication in Europe. Narayan's novels were well-reviewed but did not sell. At 29, the author married and took a job as a journalist to support his new family; his wife died of typhoid five years later, however, sending him into a deep depression. Around this time Narayan produced the autobiographical fiction *The English Teacher*. The events of World War II meant that for several years, Narayan was unable to work with his English publishers. To solve this problem, he started his own publishing house, Indian Thought Publications, which still exists and is operated by his granddaughter. Narayan also began to adapt his writing to suit a more creative, less introspective style, but still made commentary on sociopolitical issues and the irony of Indian life. Narayan's prolific career spanned over six decades, producing novels, short story anthologies, and even the screenplay for the Indian feature film *Miss Malini* (1947). He received numerous awards, including India's highest literary honor and several Nobel Prize nominations, and his novel *The Guide* (1958) saw both film and Broadway adaptations. Narayan died in 2001.

An an unnamed village in India, an **astrologer** lays out his tools of the trade, a mix of **cowrie shells**, obscure charts, a notebook, and other such curios. They serve no purpose but to create the illusion of mysticism. The astrologer has also painted his forehead with sacred ash, wrapped his head in a turban, and seated himself and his gear beneath a large tree. All of

these things serve to give him an air of wisdom, transcendence, and prophetic power, though the narrator is quick to point out that none of these qualities actually belong to the man.

The astrologer has set up his little shop amidst a busy marketplace among people fencing stolen goods, presenting the same cheap food as a variety of gourmet delicacies, and auctioning off low-quality fabrics. The astrologer, quickly established as a fraud, is in the company of other fraudsters and spin doctors selling their wares and making their livings. The marketplace is lit by various shop lights and flares, the dancing shadows of which enhance the astrologer's mystical quality. He notably has no light of his own, but simply borrows that of the other vendors.

The astrologer had never had any intention of becoming one, but had been forced to leave his ancestral home and travel several hundred miles away with no plan and no money. Even so, he is a convincing holy man, using his own insights into human problems to offer vague but comforting advice to people in the market. He functions as a sort of therapist, offering self-affirming advice that he wraps in the guise of astrological wisdom. He is good at his trade; he tells people what they want to hear, and they leave comforted by it. Though it is not an honest living that the astrologer makes, it is still a well-earned one.

As the marketplace is emptying and the lights are being put out, a stranger named **Guru Nayak** appears. In the darkness, neither can see much of the other's face. Seeing the opportunity for one more client, the astrologer invites Guru Nayak to sit and chat. The stranger does so, but is instantly skeptical of the astrologer. He aggressively wagers that the astrologer cannot tell him anything true or worthwhile. They haggle over the price and the astrologer agrees. However, when Guru Nayak lights a cheroot, the astrologer catches a brief glimpse of the man's face and is filled with fear. He tries to get out of the wager, but Guru Nayak holds him to it and will not let him leave.

The astrologer tries his usual tack of vague, self-affirming advice, but Guru Nayak will have none of it. The astrologer sincerely prays for a moment, and then changes course. He reveals to Guru Nayak that he knows he was once stabbed through the chest and left for dead, and that now Guru Nayak is here searching for his assailant. He even reveals that he knows Guru Nayak's name, something he attributes to his cosmic wisdom. Guru Nayak is greatly excited by all of this, believing the astrologer to truly be all-knowing. He presses the astrologer for

the whereabouts of the man who stabbed him so that he can have his revenge. The astrologer tells him that he died several months ago, crushed by an oncoming **lorry**. Guru Nayak is frustrated by this, but satisfied that at least his attacker died terribly. He gives the astrologer his money and leaves.

The astrologer arrives home late at night and shows his wife the money he has made, becoming briefly bitter when he realizes that although Guru Nayak has paid him a great sum, it is not quite as much as promised. Even so, his wife is thrilled. As they lie down to sleep, the astrologer reveals to his wife that a great burden has been lifted off of his shoulders. Years ago, the astrologer was the one to stab Guru Nayak and leave him for dead, which forced him to flee his home and make a new life as a fraudulent astrologer. He had thought himself to be a murderer, but was now content that he had not in fact taken a life. Satisfied by this, he goes to sleep.

2. Ruskin Bond : Woman on Platform No 8

Summary

The narrator of the story, Arun, is a 12 year old boy studying in a boarding school. One day he was waiting all alone for his train on platform 8 of Ambala station. It was his second year at boarding school. He was going back to school after vacation. His parents thought that he was old enough to travel alone. His train was to come at midnight. He had come much earlier for his train. It was a long wait. So he passed his time in watching whatever went on at the platform. He spent his time pacing up and down the platform, reading books or throwing biscuits to stray dogs. When he was tired, he sat down on his suitcase.

Just then, he heard a woman's soft voice behind him. She was a woman of over 30 with pale face and dark kind eyes. She was dressed in a white sari. She wore no jewels but had a dignity about her. She asked him if he was alone. He told her that he was alone and his train would come around midnight. She was very gentle and soft in her questions about him. She invited him to go with her to the refreshment room and have something to eat. Arun felt like refusing her offer out of shyness and suspicion, but he could not do so as he was impressed

by her kind manner. Asking a coolie to keep a watch on his suitcase, she took Arun by the hand and led him to the dining room.

She ordered tea and samosas and jalebies. The narrator was happy and started taking interest in her. Then he became friendly with the kind woman. She listened to what he said about himself. She did not ask the narrator much. But she seemed to be happy in watching him eat and talk. While returning from the refreshment room, they saw a boy jumping across a rail track beside which an engine was coming. The woman was frightened and pained. She had dug her fingers into Arun's flesh. She calmed down only when the boy reached the other side. The narrator tried to comfort and reassure her. The woman smiled and pressed Arun's hand gratefully. Then both came to the place where Arun's suitcase was placed.

Arun saw Satish with his mother. Satish was Arun's class-fellow. Satish called the narrator by his name Arun and introduced him to his mother. She was a large and stern looking woman with spectacles. She took the other woman to be Arun's mother. Arun did not say so, but the woman herself said that she was Arun's mother.

Satish's mother did a lot of talking after that. She said that it was a nuisance to wait for a train in the middle of the night. She was full of complaints regarding a boy travelling alone. She was also suspicious of strangers hanging around. Arun felt happy when the woman said that Arun could travel alone. Satish's mother advised Arun to be careful about strangers while travelling alone. Arun disliked the tone of Satish's mother and her bossing over him. Arun looked at the stranger woman who had given him tea and snacks and said that he liked strangers. Satish's mother was shocked at being contradicted. As she repeated her warning Arun looked angrily at her and moved closer to the stranger woman.

When the train came, Satish and Arun got into a compartment. Satish's mother gave him some fruits, a chocolate, and a cricket bat. She was again full of advice and asked them to be careful about strangers. She asked them not to lean their heads out of the windows and avoid eating rubbish on the way. Arun began to hate her for her hard and stern ways.

Arun bids good bye to the stranger. The other woman was standing there quietly. She did not say any word, but she felt sad. Arun held her hands and she smiled. Arun at last kissed her cheeks. When the train moved slowly out of the station, Satish bade good bye to his mother.

Arun also did the same. He addressed the woman as 'mother'. He continued gazing at her until she was lost in the milling crowd.

3.Prem Chand : Idgah

Summary

Idgah tells the story of a four-year-old orphan named Hamid who lives with his grandmother Amina. Hamid, the protagonist of the story, has recently lost his parents; however his grandmother tells him that his father has left to earn money, and that his mother has gone to Allah to fetch lovely gifts for him. This fills Hamid with hope, and despite Amina's worry surrounding their poverty and her grandson's well-being, Hamid is a happy and positive child.

The story begins on Eid morning, as Hamid sets out for the Eidgah with other boys from the village. Hamid is notably impoverished next to his friends, poorly dressed and famished-looking, and has only three paise as Idi for the festival. The other boys spend their pocket money on rides, candies and beautiful clay toys, and tease Hamid when he dismisses this as a waste of money for momentary pleasure. While his friends are enjoying themselves, he overcomes his temptation and goes to a hardware shop to buy a pair of tongs, remembering how his grandmother burns her fingers while cooking rotis.

As they return to the village Hamid's friends tease him for his purchase, extolling the virtues of their toys over his tongs. Hamid retorts with several clever arguments and before long his friends become more enamoured with the tongs than their own playthings, even offering to trade their items for his, which Hamid refuses. The story ends on a touching note when Hamid gifts the tongs to his grandmother. At first she scolds him for making the purchase, rather than buying something to eat or drink at the fair, until Hamid reminds her of how she burns her fingers daily. She bursts into tears at this and blesses him for his kindness.

Unit 4

Vijay Tendulkar : Silence! The court is in Session

Summary

The Sonar Moti Tenement (Bombay) Progressive Association is gathering to put American President Lyndon B. Johnson on mock trial for his role in the proliferation of atomic weaponry. The SMTPA is comprised of socially committed activists who try to raise awareness of issues of significance affecting members of their Indian community that might be overlooked in favor of more pressing concerns. As various members of the association arrive, important information about their backgrounds, present circumstances and interrelationship are conveyed. It is also learned that two members of the group Professor Damle and Mr. Rawte were not able to make it to the performance.

Performance time is still a few hours away, so those who have made it decide to pass the time through improvisation. Though the roles that most of them are slated to play remain essentially unchanged, there will be one very great change: a new defendant will be put on trial. Since recently fired schoolteacher Leela Benare happens to have left the room at this time, the others decide she will be placed on trial. When she returns and discovers what is taking place, she suggests a thievery as a replacement for the crime they have chosen for her: infanticide. The crime was not chosen randomly: the vivacious, early-30's woman is routinely criticized behind her back by the others for her "unconventional" lifestyle. Soon enough, it becomes pointedly apparent that there may be little about this trial of Benare that is purely random.

The very purpose of the SMTPA is indicative of the collective opinion the members hold of themselves. They have ordained themselves as an entity charged with educating the more ignorant members of the community; more than just educating them, guiding them to a more elevated understanding of social causes. This elevated opinion of themselves darkly reveals itself as leaning more toward enjoying being judgmental of others than in bringing others up to equal standing. When Balu Rokde offers the enticing new information that in reality he did once see Benare inside the home of Professor Damle (who is there to take part in the performance, remember), the mock part of the trial begins to blend with real life as the predatory nature of the others toward even each other takes over as a local villager

named Samant fills in for the missing Mr. Rawte. Samant fabricates a theory to explain what Rokde actually witnessed that day: Benare was having an affair with Damle and wound up pregnant, a scenario which, of course, would naturally end committing the infanticide of which she is charged. The only problem is that Benare's response to Samant's entirely constructed fiction is too emotionally overwrought to be acting and that, in fact, Samant has entirely by accident hit upon a real-life truth.

At that point where it seems that an unexpected and ugly truth has inserted itself too deeply into the proceedings to turn back, the mock trial takes on an increasingly dramatic tone. When Benare attempts to flee the room, she finds it has been locked from the outside, trapping her in the role of criminal defendant until the mercy of the others allows their compassion to overcome their emotional greed. The trial continues with testimony from two of the men that Benare pleaded with them to marry her and help protect the child from being raised illegitimately, but that both men rejected her.

Sukhatme takes on the role of the prosecutor in the mock trial, but unknowingly to the audience, he has already made his case against the defendant. It was Sukhatme who originated the suggestion that Benare be the member of the troupe put on trial in the first place. Thus equipped, it should by the time he begins his argument come as little surprise that Sukhatme goes a little overboard in painting Benare as the very embodiment of the corruption of the institution of motherhood. Presiding over the trial is the status-conscious Mr. Kashikar whose maternal-but-childless wife is also a member of the group. In addition to being judge, however, Kashikar breaks with precedent, tradition and convention by temporarily putting aside his judicial robes and taking the stand as witness whereupon he identifies he feels freed of duty and impartiality to the extent that he collective castigates all adult unmarried girls as a "sinful canker on the body of society" before providing yet more damning evidence Benare.

The prosecution having rested, the trial is turned over to the defense to call witnesses. There is just one problem: all three witnesses that could possibly be called to refute any of the allegations being made against Benare just so happen to not be present. The prosecuting attorney goes on to give his closing argument and then, at the judge's request, goes on to present closing arguments for the defense. Judge Kashikar inquires if the Benare has anything at all to say in her defense.

Benare proceeds to give a long speech, now realizing that every single aspect of her life she thought could remain a secret has been exposed, in which she confesses all. Speaking from the heart, she is accusatory as well as contrite, explanatory as well as metaphoric. At the conclusion of his emotionally intense monologue, the judge delivers the guilty verdict as well as the punishment: the illegitimate fetus growing inside Benare is to be aborted. She collapses to the floor.

Suddenly, drama is broken by the sound of the locked door being opened by the villagers who have come to the mock trial of President Johnson. As if coming out of dream state, the actors on stage slowly remove the trappings of their “characters” and become their real selves again. As Benare remains unmoving on the floor, they try to persuade her that it was all nothing but a game and not to be taken seriously, but she remains lifeless. The others leave her there as they wander off to prepare for the scheduled performance until finally the only thing left on stage is her body still crumpled on the floor.

Unit 5

Mulk Raj Anand : *Untouchable*

Published in 1935, *Untouchable* is Mulk Raj Anand's first major novel. The novel's format is very simple—it follows the day in the life of an “untouchable,” a member of India's lowest social caste. Despite its simplicity, *Untouchable* is a powerful work that exposed the “dehumanizing contradictions” and systematic oppressions inherent in India's stratified society. Though intelligent and handsome, the book's main character, Bakha, is an outcast and forbidden from improving his life situation because his touch and presence are considered impure and corrupting. Using Bakha's story as a vehicle, Anand challenges the barriers and rules that inhibit the lives of untouchables and argues for the education of untouchables.

Considered revolutionary because of how it champions the cause of the untouchables and exposes India's social evils, *Untouchable* was well received and highly regarded both domestically and abroad. Within India, it caused a generation of educated Indians to think about how India's internal colonialism was preventing the country's progression to a modern civil society. Outside India, prominent novelists of the age such as E.M. Forster hoisted up Anand's novel as having both historical and literary significance. Though India's caste system is still in place today, books like *Untouchable* raised awareness about the crushing inequalities and injustices the system fosters. This has resulted in the passage of numerous anti-discrimination laws and affirmative action initiatives along caste lines in contemporary India. Furthermore, the appearance of one Mahatma Gandhi in the novel explicitly places the book in a distinctive historical context. Finally, from a literary standpoint, *Untouchable* stands out because of its inclusion of Punjabi and Hindu idioms in English.

Summary

Set in the fictional Indian town of Bulashah, *Untouchable* is a day in the life of a young Indian sweeper named Bakha. The son of Lakha, head of all of Bulashah's sweepers, Bakha is intelligent but naïve, humble yet vain. Over the course of Bakha's day various major and minor tragedies occur, causing him to mature and turn his gaze inward. By the end of the

novel Mulk Raj Anand, the author, has made a compelling case for the end of untouchability on the grounds that it is an inhumane, unjust system of oppression. He uses Bakha and the people populating the young man's world to craft his argument.

Bakha's day starts with his father yelling at him to get out of bed and clean the latrines. The relationship between the father and son is strained, in part due to Bakha's obsession with the British, in part because of Lakha's laziness. Bakha ignores his father but eventually gets up to answer the demands of a high-caste man that wants to use the bathroom. This man is Charat Singh, a famous hockey player. At first Singh also yells at Bakha for neglecting his cleaning duties. The man has a changeable personality however. It isn't long before he instructs Bakha to come see him later in the day so he can gift the young sweeper with a prized hockey stick. An overjoyed Bakha agrees.

High on his good fortune he quickly finishes his morning shift and hurries home, dying of thirst. Unfortunately there is no water in the house. His sister Sohini offers to go fill the water bucket. At the well Sohini must wait behind several other outcastes also queued up. Also waiting for water is Gulabo, mother of one of Bakha's friends and a jealous woman. She hates Sohini and is just barely stopped from striking the young woman. A priest from the town temple named Pundit Kali Nath comes along and helps Sohini get water. He instructs her to come clean the temple later in the day. Sohini agrees and hurries home with the water. Back at home Lakha fakes an illness and instructs Bakha to clean the town square and the temple courtyard in his stead. Bakha is wise to the wily ways of his father but cannot protest. He takes up his cleaning supplies and goes into town. His sweeping duties usually keep him too busy to go into town, and so he takes advantage of the situation by buying cigarettes and candies.

As Bakha eats his candies, a high-caste man brushes up against him. The touched man did not see Bakha because the sweeper forgot to give the untouchable's call. The man is furious. His yelling attracts a large crowd that joins in on Bakha's public shaming. A traveling Muslim vendor in a horse and buggy comes along and disperses the crowd. Before the touched man leaves he slaps Bakha across the face for his impudence, and scurries away. A shocked Bakha cries in the streets before gathering his things and hurrying off to the temple. This time, he does not forget the untouchable's call.

At the temple, a service is in full swing. It intrigues Bakha, who eventually musters up the courage to climb up the stairs to the temple door and peer inside. He's only standing there for a few moments before a loud commotion comes from behind him. It's Sohini and Pundit Kali Nath, who is accusing Sohini of polluting him. As a crowd gathers around, Bakha pulls his sister away. Crying, she tells him that the priest sexually assaulted her. A furious Bakha tries to go back to confront the priest, but an embarrassed and ashamed Sohini forces him to leave. Bakha sends his sister home, saying he will take over her duties in town for the rest of the day.

Distraught over the day's events, Bakha wanders listlessly before going to a set of homes to beg for his family's daily bread. No one is home, so he curls up in front of a house and falls asleep. A sadhu also begging for food comes and wakes him. The owner of the house Bakha slept in front of comes out with food for the sadhu. Seeing Bakha, she screams at him and at first refuses to give him food. She finally agrees to give him some bread in exchange for him sweeping the area in front of her house. As Bakha sweeps, the woman tells her young son to relieve himself in the gutter where Bakha is cleaning so he can sweep that up too. A disgusted Bakha throws down the broom and leaves for his house in the outcastes' colony.

Back at home, it's only Lakha and Sohini. Rakha, Bakha's younger brother, is still out collecting food. Bakha tells his father that a high-caste man slapped him in the streets. Sensing his son's anger, Lakha tells him a story about the kindness of a high-caste doctor that once saved Bakha's life. Bakha is deeply moved by the story but remains upset. Soon after story time, Rakha comes back with food. A ravenous Bakha starts to eat, but then is disgusted by the idea of eating the leavings of the high-caste people. He jumps up and says he's going to the wedding of his friend Ram Charan's sister.

At Ram Charan's house, Bakha sees his other friend, Chota. The two boys wait for Ram Charan to see them through the thicket of wedding revelers. Ram Charan eventually sees his friends and runs off with them despite his mother's protestations. Alone, Chota and Ram Charan sense something is wrong with their friend. They coax Bakha to tell them what's wrong. Bakha breaks down and tells them about the slap and Sohini's assault. Ram Charan is quiet and embarrassed by Bakha's tale, but Chota is indignant. He asks Bakha if he wants to get revenge. Bakha does but realizes revenge would be a dangerous and futile endeavor. A melancholic atmosphere falls over the group. Chota attempts to cheer Bakha up by reminding

him of the hockey game they will play later in the day. This reminds Bakha that he must go and get his gift from Charat Singh.

Bakha goes to Charat Singh's house in the barracks, but cannot tell if the man is home. Reluctant to disturb him or the other inhabitants, Bakha settles under a tree to wait. Before long, Singh comes outside. He invites Bakha to drink tea with him and allows the untouchable to handle his personal items. Singh's disregard for Bakha's supposed polluting presence thrills Bakha's heart. Thus he is overjoyed when Singh gives him a brand-new hockey stick.

Ecstatic about this upswing to his terrible day, Bakha goes into the hockey game on fire. He scores the first goal. The goalie of the opposite team is angry over Bakha's success and hits him. This starts an all-out brawl between the two teams that ends when a player's younger brother gets hurt. Bakha picks up the young boy and rushes him home, only to have the boy's mother accuse him of killing her son. Good mood completely destroyed, Bakha trudges home, where his father screams at him for being gone all afternoon. He banishes Bakha from home, saying his son must never return.

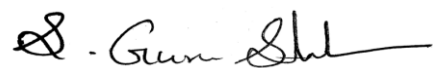
Bakha runs away and takes shelter under a tree far from home. The chief of the local Salvation Army, a British man named Colonel Hutchinson, comes up to him. He sees Bakha's distress and convinces the sweeper to follow him to the church. Flattered by the white man's attention, Bakha agrees, but the Colonel's constant hymn singing quickly bores him. Before the two can enter the church the Colonel's wife comes to find him. Disgusted at the sight of her husband with another "blackie," she begins to scream and shout. Bakha feels her anger acutely and runs off again.

This time Bakha runs towards town and ends up at the train station. He overhears some people discussing the appearance of Mahatma Gandhi in Bulashah. He joins the tide of people rushing to hear the Mahatma speak. Just as Bakha settles in to listen, Gandhi arrives and begins his speech. He talks about the plight of the untouchable and how it is his life's mission to see them emancipated. He ends his speech by beseeching those present to spread his message of ending untouchability. After the Mahatma departs a pair of educated Indian men have a lively discussion about the content of the speech. One man, a lawyer named Bashir, soundly critiques most of Gandhi's opinions and ideas. The other, a poet named Sarshar, defends the Mahatma passionately and convincingly. Much of what they say goes above Bakha's head, so elevated are their vocabulary and ideas. However, he does understand

when Sarshar mentions the imminent arrival of the flushing toilet in India, a machine that eradicates the need for humans to handle refuse. This machine could mean the end of untouchability. With this piece of hope Bakha hurries home to share news of the Mahatma's speech with his father.



Signature of HOD



Signature of Staff Assistant