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2.0 Objectives:

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

a) understand major trends in Canadian Fiction
b) know the significance of Michael Ondaatje in Canadian fiction
c) appreciate *The English Patient* as a postmodern novel
d) assess the plot and its development
e) comprehend the features of novel with reference to *The English Patient*
f) understand major trends in Canadian fiction in the light of *The English Patient*

2.1 Section I: Major Trends in Canadian Fiction

2.1.1 Introduction:

The term Canadian fiction is applied to the works written and published by the Canadian writers. In an article entitled “Canadian Literature” published on Encyclopaedia Britannica, Kathy Mezei, David M. Hayne and Kathleen Kellett-Betsos define it as: “Canadian literature, the body of written works produced by Canadians” (Web). A historical survey of Canadian literature presents various stages of development since the beginning to the present day. Earlier it was merely an “imitation or emulation of metropolitan norms” but then the Canadian writers begin to assimilate “in a desire to forge a distinctive national culture – a reconfiguration or revaluation of that which had been considered marginal” they turned to create their own literary artefacts (Kroller 155). Initially Canada was expressed only through the records of various outside visitors like explorers and British officers which started the tradition of documentary in Canadian fiction with the emphasis on “geography, history, and arduous voyages of exploration and discovery [representing] the quest for a myth of origins and for a personal and national identity” (Mezei et al. Web). The immigrants’ experiences, nationality, identity and historical romances were some of the major issues in the next period.

The Canadian fiction in the period of transformation is juxtaposed with postmodernism, post colonialism, multiculturalism and feminism. The primary emphasis, in the process of decolonization, is laid on the dismantling of the dominant European codes. The Canadian writers investigate new styles and techniques which
helped them in putting forth the new subject in new and Canadian style. They depict
the Canadian national identities which lead them to rewrite the past and re-assess the
place of Canada in the history of literature. So far, various writers tried to depict the
different subjects including philosophy, feminism, psychological aspects of the life,
war, education, socio-cultural issues, etc which mark major shifts in the approaches
as well as phases in Canadian fiction.

2.1.2 Major Trends in Canadian Fiction:

Early Canadian literature is shaped in the form of travelogues and explorations
which has been recorded by the various visitors in a simple language depicting the
heroic journeys to the unknown places. Geography, history and expeditions in search
of new land dominate the literature since the beginning to 1900 which also reveal the
quest for traditional myths and the search for national identity. The Canadian
imagination moves around the assessment of psycho-sociological tendencies and the
environmental scenarios of the Canada. The earliest records of the travelogues can be
cited in the form of Samuel Hearne’s A Journey from Prince of Wales’s Fort in
Hudson’s Bay to the Northern Ocean (1795) and John Franklin’s Narrative of a
Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea (1823), and other writers such as Simon
Fraser and Sir Alexander Mackenzie who succeeded in presenting the regional
history.

The historical romances were also popularized during the period with an
emphasis on the native folklores, mythology and gothic tales of the regional people.
The works of Julia Catherine Beckwith Hart’s The Nun of Canada (1824), William
Kirby’s The Golden Dog (1877), Rosanna Leprohon’s Secret Marrying and Secret
Sorrowing (1864), John Richardson’s The Prophecy (1832), James De Mille’s A
Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder (1888) and Roberts’s The Kindred
of the Wild (1902) focus on the history, myth and regional tales with an emphasis on
original narrative accounts.

The modern Canadian literary period adores the traditional customs and culture
of Canada between 1900 and 1960. In the early phase of modern period the novels
dealing with local themes and social realism begins to replace the historical
romances. The socio-political life of the region coupled with psychic exploration of
farmers in sometimes satirical tone is often sketched in the works of the writers such
as Lucy Maud Montgomery (Anne of Green Gables), Sara Jeannette Duncan (The
Imperialist), Ralph Connor (The Man from Glengarry), Stephen Leacock (Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town), Martha Ostenso (Wild Geese), Frederick Philip Grove (Settlers of the Marsh and Fruits of the Earth). In the later phase of modernist novels, the focus shifted from the society to the individual who is trapped in the social, moral and religious anguishes. Set against the backdrop of the world war, the novels of the period project restless human being torn within because of love and family or because of social and religious expectations. Sinclair Ross’ As for Me and My House (1941), W.O. Mitchell’s Who Has Seen the Wind (1947) Ernest Buckler’s The Mountain and the Valley (1952) Hugh MacLennan’s The Watch That Ends the Night (1959), Ethel Wilson’s Swamp Angel (1954), etc. are some of the popular novels dealing with the struggle of individual to find a way to live a successful life.

The period after 1960s is often considered as the postmodern period in Canadian literature which puts forth socio-cultural upheavals of the contemporary period. The Canadian literary intellectuals began to reread and rewrite Canadian history which has created a new form of historical metafiction in Canadian literature. They started to re-examine the historical and political events of the country with a prime focus on the issues of territory, dispossession, appropriation, and interrogation. Timothy Findley’s Not Wanted on the Voyage (1984) presents history blending with contemporary issues; Joy Kogawa’s Obasan (1981) focuses on the devastating effects of emigration and imprisonment during and after the World War II. Morley Callaghan’s A Time for Judas (1983), Matt Cohen’s The Spanish Doctor (1984), Urquhart’s The Stone Carvers (2001), Sandra Birdsell’s The Russlander (2001), and Austin Clarke’s The Polished Hoe (2002) are other examples of historical metafiction.

The philosophical movements of Leninism, existentialism and decolonization during 1960s and 70s started cultural transformation in the form of Quite Revolution leading the literary writers to raise the questions of French immigrants. Under the influence of postmodernist philosophy, the French Canadian writers such as Jacques Godbout (Hail Galarneau! and The Night of Malcolm Hudd) who writes in joule dialect unfolding the territorial problems of the working class community, Ducharme (The Swallower Swallowed) and Aquin (Next Episode and Blackout) who throw light on the effects of nihilism and terrorism upon the contemporary society, Jacques Ferron (The Penniless Redeemer) who parodied traditional values in the society, Godbout (D’Amour P.Q.) who unfolds the existential powerlessness of the
contemporary society, present the regional issues in regional language of the local people.

Another major trend started in the Canadian fiction is psychological novel which helped the writers to explore the state of mind. The Canadian imagination begins to investigate in human thoughts, feelings and reasons in order to unravel the behavioural patterns of human psyche. The novelist like Carol Shield presents the oppressed lives of women in the novels such as *Swann* (1987), *The Stone Diaries* (1993), and *Unless* (2002) where women are trapped in psychological trauma created with the struggle of emotion and desire to find a meaning to life. The plight of immigrants have been presented by the writers such as Austin Clarke, Joy Kogawa and Rudy Wiebe who pointed out the problems faced by the migrated communities in Canadian societies. The immigration novels such as Kattan’s *Farewell, Babylone* (1975), Etienne’s *The Crucified Negro* (1974) and *By the Cliff’s Edge* (2004), Emile Ollivier’s *Mother Solitude* (1983), Sergio Kokis’s *Funhouse* (1994) and Ying Chen’s *Ingratitude* (1995) depict the feeling of alienation and sense of belongingness in other country.

One of the significant trend emerged in Canadian fiction is the awakening of women writers which gave rise to feminist novel. The feeling of oppression is coupled with the realization of isolation in the male dominated society where the patriarchal control marginalizes their position in family as well as society. This feeling is expressed in the articulations of the writers such as Robert Kroetsch, Margaret Atwood, and Carol Shields who questions the code of patriarchal society which assign the marginal roles to women. Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) presents the suppression of women, Richard Wright’s *Clara Callan* (2001) questions the gender roles, Leonard Cohen’s *Beautiful Losers* (1966) unfolds the predicament of women – are some of the examples of female consciousness. Magic realism has also been a recurrent trend in the Canadian fiction popularized by the writers like Timothy Findley, Jane Urquhart, Margaret Atwood and Leon Rooke. The novels like Atwood’s *The Edible Woman* and Rooke’s *The Magician in Love* (1981) explore magic realism.

The development of science fiction is another dominant trend emerged in Canadian fiction through the hands of the writers like William Gibson, Chester Brown and Bernice Eisenstein who present the influences of technology over the modern mind. William Gibson’s novels like *Neuromancer* (1984), *Count Zero*
(1986) and *Mona Lisa Overdrive* (1988) unfold the human life trapped in the technological world of computers. In addition to these trends, writing regional novels, depicting Canadian landscape, neo-Gothic articulations, near-future fiction and poet’s novel have also been popularized by the Canadian literary sensibility. Thus, Canadian fiction has been shaped in various phases revealing the socio-cultural, economical and political upheavals of the contemporary society.

**2.1.3 Check your progress:**

1. *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea* is written by ________
   a) Samuel Hearne  
   b) **John Franklin**  
   c) Rosanna Leprohon  
   d) John Richardson

2) _______________ historical romance is written by William Kirby.
   a) *The Golden Dog*  
   b) *The Nun of Canada*  
   c) *The Kindred of the Wild*  
   d) *The Prophecy*

3) Who of the following is the author of *The Mountain and the Valley*?
   a) Sinclair Ross  
   b) W.O. Mitchell  
   c) **Ernest Buckler**  
   d) Hugh MacLennan

4) Quite Revolution was started in _______________
   a) 1880s & 90s  
   b) 1910s & 20s  
   c) 1930s & 40s  
   d) **1960s & 70s**

5) *Unless* is _______________ novel
   a) historical  
   b) social realism  
   c) feminist  
   d) **psychological**

6) Who of the following is science fiction writer?
   a) **William Gibson**  
   b) Leon Rooke  
   c) Carol Shield  
   d) Austin Clarke
2.2 Section II: Michael Ondaatje: *The English Patient* – Summary and Analysis

2.2.1 Introduction:

Michael Ondaatje is the prominent Canadian writer in English who has marked the world with his innovative ways and liberating views in a spectacular descriptive prose style. He was born on 12th September, 1943 in Ceylon now Colombo in Sri Lanka. After separation of his parents, when he was an infant, he lived with the relatives and educated at S. Thomas’ College, Mount Lavinia in Colombo. In 1954, he moved to England to live with his mother where he attended Dulwich College and then, in 1962 attended Montreal at Quebec. However, at the age of eighteen, he migrated to Canada and joined Bishop’s University in Lennoxville, Quebec, for the next three years where he met poet D. G. Jones; and then completed his graduation in Arts from the University of Toronto in 1965. He completed his post-graduation in 1967 from Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario.


Ondaatje published his first novel *Coming Through Slaughter* in 1976, where he fictionalizes the history of Charles Buddy Bolden, a character from the folklores. Published in 1987, his next novel *In the Skin of a Lion* deals with lives of the immigrated people who have put their hands in the development of Toronto. In 1992, he published *The English Patient*, where unfolds the lives of the four characters through their memories in the abandoned villa which helped to rediscover the meaning to their lives. In *Anil’s Ghost* (2000), he projects the horrors and traumas of
the South Asian Civil War through the life of Anil Tissera, who investigates the series of political murders. Appeared in 2007, Divisadero is divided in two sections – the first projecting the lives of a man in farm who adopts the child; the second reveals Anna’s investigations in the life of European writer Lucien Segura. The novel The Cat’s Table (2011) deals with the life of eleven years old boy called Michael who undertakes the journey of three-weeks though a large ship. Ondaatje’s last novel Warlight is 2018 published recently and deals with the life of a fourteen years boy Nathaniel who adventures the series of events after his parents left him with his sister to Singapore.

Thus, Ondaatje is the significant writer in the Canadian literary world whose fiction inter-fuse prose and poetry together in order to express the traumas and tensions of life. The literary artefacts he has created lead him to won several awards and recognitions including the Governor General’s Award for The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, the Giller Prize and the Prix Médicis for Anil’s Ghost, the Booker Prize for The English Patient. He is honoured with the highest order The Order of Canada and Shri Lanaka Ratna.

The novel The English Patient is most critically acclaimed work which won Booker McConnell Prize in 1992 revealing Ondaatje as a skilled draughtsman presenting the historical records with accuracy and articulating them with fragmented narrative techniques taking back and forth of the events. Set at the backdrop of World War II, the novel presents the journey of four characters from the self-destruction to rediscovering the meaning to their lives. Initially, though they are alive, they just live through the memories only to find that the present is terrific and unworthy to live a meaningful life; but in the course of time, they learn from each other and identify the opportunities rooted in future.

2.2.2 List of Characters:

1. The English Patient:
   - one of the four major characters in the novel
   - burned in plane crash and survived by Bedouins
   - reveals his story through his memories
   - one of the desert explorers
- in love with Katharine, the wife of Geoffrey Clifton
- could not save Katharine from the plane crash
- arrested by the army but disappeared from their track
- finally appears as the Hungarian spy Count Ladislau de Almasy who worked for Germans

2. Hana
- a nurse in abandoned villa
- takes care of the English patient
- reading books is only pass-time for her
- does not responds to the feelings of Caravaggio
- falls in love with Kip
- feels happy in the company of Kip, who brings her back to life
- finally reveals the reason of her despair

3. Kip:
- his real name is Kirpal Singh
- an Indian Sikh working as a sapper in English army
- defuses the bombs near villa
- in love with Hana
- feels Hana as his responsibility
- befriends Caravaggio even he is the reason of love triangle
- comfortable with the English patient
- reveals the reason of his coldness
- finally abandons Hana and sets himself as a doctor

4. Caravaggio:
- professionally thief but plays significant role in the war
- works for English army
- admitted in the hospital but does not speak
- in love with Hana and rushes to villa when listens about her
- tries to convince Hana but fails
- finds Kip as a hurdle in his love story
- pushes the English patient to confess that he is Almasy

5. Hardy:
- a sapper and companion of Kip
- gives Kip the feeling of being human
- reaches to villa with kip but then leaves to other places
- dies in the explosion

6. Geoffrey Clifton:
- joins the English patient’s expedition to find the lost Oasis Zerzura
- takes his wife Katharine to the expedition
- a pilot, messenger and reconnaissance for the explorers
- aristocrat, protective and appreciates his wife
- discovers the affair of his wife with the English patient
- plans the suicide-murder plane crash
- later exposed as a part of British Intelligence

7. Katharine:
- wife of Geoffrey Clifton
- fond of reading and getting knowledge about new things
- falls in love with the English patient
- finds difficulties in love course
- could not dare to talk about her love with her husband
- breaks-up her affair with the English patient
- severely wounded in plane crash
- dies in desert

8. Lord Suffolk:
   - a gentleman, mentor of Kip
   - leader of bomb-defusing sappers in British Army
   - teaches Kip the English customs
   - dies while defusing a 250 kilogram bomb

9. Miss Morden:
   - a secretary of Lord Suffolk
   - brilliant and a splendid judge of character
   - Kip liked her
   - dies in the bomb explosion which Lord Suffolk tried to defuse

10. Mr. Fred Harts:
    - a sapper working under Lord Suffolk
    - killed in bomb explosion Lord Suffolk attempted to dismantle

11. Madox:
    - a member of group of explorers and friend of the English patient
    - warns the English patient to remain away from Katharine
    - commits suicide when finds the support of Church to war

12. Patrick
    - father of Hana and friend of Caravaggio
    - Hana loves him so much
    - joined war
    - wounded and burned in the war
    - the army left him in desert where he dies

13. Clara:
    - step-mother of Hana
- informs Hana about the death of her father
- in the end of novel, Hana writes letter to her exposing the guilt she felt after the death of her father

14. Bell:
- one of the explorers and the group member of Almasy

15. Ranuccio Tommasoni:
- officer in German Army
- in-charge of the operation when the thumbs of Caravaggio are cut

2.2.3 Summary:

The first chapter of the novel, called as ‘Villa,’ opens in a garden in front of a hospital, where a nurse called Hana realizes sudden changes in atmosphere and rushes back to the hospital. She goes in one of the rooms, where her burned patient is laid on the bed. She washes his burned body in every four days, nurses it with calamine and peels plum for him. She has been nursing his black-purple wounded body for the last few months and is aware about its burns so much that, now, she thinks him as if her despairing saint. She reads various books to him when she finds him restless at the night and also moves in his bed sometimes in order to warm his body whenever he feels cold. He tells her that he was burned in plane crash and was saved by the Bedouins – the nomadic who have seen numbers of plane crashes from the beginning of World War II in 1939; but, they have, perhaps, seen him burning yet only alive man in the deserts. They carried him across the deserts and saved his life; but he lost his memory and knows nothing except he was English. He remembers how he was saved by the Bedouins and especially a man who places mask of herbs and oiled clothes on burns every day after the careful examination of his body. He also remembers how the Bedouins tied his eyes in order to restore his senses of touch, hear and smell. He was healed with the silence he experienced day and night frequently listening to the foot-steps of the people and rarely opening his mouth to sallow soft dates the man used to chew for him. When he was admitted later in the hospital in Pisa, he felt the same man standing besides his bed chewing soft dates.

The hospital is, in fact, a nunnery called Villa San Girolamo in the town, which was besieged by German Army at the end of World War II. When the German Army
left the town, the Allies seized the German bastion and turned Villa San Girolamo into a hospital where they can treat the wounded soldiers; and another villa called Villa Medici into a general cottage. After the victory of Allied, the town was abandoned by the army, which then moved to the south – a safer place to live. The other nurses and patients in the hospital moved with the army to the south, but Hana determined to live in the villa with her English patient. She has decided to leave the job of nursing other patients in war, and resolved to take care of only burned patient. She has only been remained behind with the burned English patient in that cold stone villa where fewer rooms are left to use and most of them are inaccessible and sealed for safety as they have been mined by the German Army. She chooses various rooms as per the light, wind and temperature she needs to sleep in.

Hana is twenty years young girl, but unaware about her own safety. Though the town is frequently visited by the burglars, she feels safe in the villa. The six feet crucifix, which she takes with her as a scarecrow, gives her the feeling of being safe. She used to work in the garden where she has planted orchard, which now provides sufficient vegetables for both of them. In addition to this, she occasionally sells soaps and sheets left behind by army in the hospital to a man in town in exchange of meat and beans from him. Other than this, reading books is the only means to pass the time for her. She goes in the library which is mined with bombs and is sealed for safety to pick up the books. She is aware about the dangers of entering in the library but takes it as a private game, where she walks forward and backward in her own foot-steps. This time she collects the book called The Last of the Mohicans and walks out of the library playing her private game and then closes the door and replaces the seal of warning. She finds that some of the sections of the book are missing and compares it with the villa as some of the rooms in it are prohibited to enter. She also realizes that some of the pages in book are joined together, which she feels as a discovery like Robinson Crusoe, who found a drowned book entitled Narrative of 1757 illustrated by N. C. Wyeth. She identifies herself with the characters mentioned in the book and moves with their lives.

Hana finds a copy of The Histories by Herodotus which lies on a small table besides English patient’s bed. He brought this book with him through the fire. He has added the new pages from other books with the information he finds useful or he has recorded his own observations about various deserts, the permanent or continuously changing winds, or even the secret winds of deserts which has an ability to wipe out
everything including humanity. Hana begins to read the book, but is soon distracted by the patients’ eye on her. He tells her about Bedouins, who saved him from the fire. They have been waiting for him to recover from his burns; and when they removed the mask of oasis reeds knitted together on his face, he feels that he bears a grass and remembers his favourite grass garden at Kew.

The Bedouins supposed that the English patient is useful for them as he knows about the places and has purposefully crashed his plane in desert. He has the information about seas, ability to identify the unknown places in maps and customs of different tribes scattered in various places; therefore he was aware about the traditions of Bedouins. He walked with them in the darkness for the next four or five days and finally reached to canyon, where he found the museum of weapons from different countries and from different periods. He then gives them his knowledge about the mechanics of the guns, showed how to fire a gun and drew some maps for them.

The second chapter, which is entitled as ‘In Near Ruins,’ begins with the introduction of a new man admitted in the military hospital in Rome. His hands has been bandaged for the last four months; and he has not uttered even a single word except his serial number to the doctors, which reveals his identity as a member of Allies and not a part of German Army. The marks on his body place him among the war heroes, who expect silence after the war. He hears the name of Hana while he was passing by a group of doctors talking about a nurse and patient, and breaks his silence to know more about her. The doctor report him that Hana is living with an English patient in the old nunnery at the hills to the north of Florence, which was converted into a hospital by the Allies. They also inform him that Hana is probably in partial shell shock and refused to leave the hospital for the sake of patient, who can be transferred to the south but, as she believes, cannot be saved while relocating to another place. The man immediately leaves to Florence, walks twenty miles to north and reaches to the villa.

His arrival trembles Hana as she knows the man as David Caravaggio, who then occupies one of the rooms and makes himself comfortable. Next day Caravaggio talks with Hana, who tells him to do not persuade her to leave the place; and if he intends to live there, they will need more food. She has enough vegetables and beans, but she will need chicken to satisfy them three. However, he says that he has lost his nerves and killing chicken reminds him the way Germans had chopped his hands. He
tells her that he used to work for Allies, who sent him to German function in order to steal the documents, where a German officer’s mistress called Anna took his photographs in the party. He stalked in Anna’s room at night while she was having a sex; she saw him there, but he mimed her to remain silent otherwise he will kill her and managed to take away the camera.

Caravaggio recalls the past days and his friendship with Hana’s father. He frequently visited her in Toronto before the war, but now she is in love with the dying English patient. He tries to make her aware that she is wasting her life for a ghost. She narrates how her father joined war and how she became a nurse. In her childhood, Caravaggio taught her number of things including how to perform somersaults. Then she was admitted to Women’s College Hospital in 1943 where she was trained as a nurse. During the Sicilian attack, she was sent abroad to take care of wounded soldiers, where she worked day and night. She has cut her hairs and not even seen herself in the mirror; all her feelings became cold and she begins to behave harshly with the patients. She has even broken the laws of hospital and taken the tennis shoes of one dead patient, which she still uses. When the war moved to north, she thought that her war is over and determined to do not move with rest of the people. She decided to stay behind with the burned patient whose burned bones have become fragile and who cannot be moved anywhere else. She has replaced her uniform with the brown frock to keep her away from the memories of war and even looked at her own reflection in order to find herself.

Caravaggio walks with Hana in the garden where, while changing the bandage of his hands, she finds that his both thumbs have been cut off. He tells her that he was caught by the Germans while jumping from Anna’s window, although it was not her fault. Ranuccio Tommasoni was the in charge who called the nurse to cut off his thumbs. The German’s tortured him until they listened bombing outside signalling Allies arrival. It reminds Hana that she thought Caravaggio as Scarlet Pimpernel. As they return in the villa, they hear the yelling of English patient, who is shouting as the dog entered in his room.

The English patient tells Hana that he guesses the room belonged to Polizano in about 1483, which takes her in another period. She is pleased with the descriptions of the period. He further reads the great maps for her from the book he has brought with him from the fire. At the back blank pages of the book The Last of the Mohicans, Hana writes how she always love Caravaggio and how he cared her; and then
concealed the book on the shelf. Afterwards, she walks to the library, where she begins to play piano. She is first time playing a song on piano since her stay alone in the last three months. While playing a song taught by her mother, she notices two men with wet guns in the lightening flash. She finds that they are soldiers and one of them is Sikh, but she continues to play until she finishes the song.

Third chapter named as ‘Sometimes a Fire’ opens with the description of last mediaeval war fought in Italy in 1943 and 1944, where German army destroyed everything with the orders of Field Marshal Kesselring. Mediaeval scholars on an average of sixty years old belonged to Oxford colleges were called to Umbria in order to talk about art in them. The English army wanders to these numbers of places along with the sappers. The young Sikh is one of those sappers, who have crossed the rivers as the bridges on them are destroyed during the war. Now, he has reached to the villa with another sapper called Hardy, where he sets up a tent in the far reaches of the garden. Initially, he does not enter in the villa; instead he walks past to dismantle the mines around. After finishing his job, he bathes in the garden and eventually is seen by Hana, who is attracted towards him.

When Hardy leaves for other places in the town, the Sikh remains near the villa. His presence makes Caravaggio irritating as he begins to follow Caravaggio, which is, in fact, his habit developed during the war. He has reached to villa on the stormy night because of Hana’s piano playing, which he thought may be a pencil mine within the musical instrument. The army usually left such mines attaching to the taps, spines of books and fruit trees so that the owners – when they return – may be destroyed. Hana watches him working in the garden defusing the wires which shows her love for his physicality and innate sensuality.

Now-a-days, Caravaggio spends most of his afternoons in the library as books have become mystical creatures for him. He finds there Hana asleep and wakes her for morphine, who then throws light on some more events of past in her life. She tells that she was pregnant last year but had an abortion when she heard about her father’s death. She was in hospital at Italy when she courted a man who died in war. The death of her lover, father and child, and her work in the hospital between the wounded soldiers made her to live for death. Then she met the burned English patient – the event that leads her to separate herself from the talks of other nurses and deaths.
After a week’s stay of the Sikh with Hana and Caravaggio, his name is for the first time revealed as Kirpal Singh. He has also been nicknamed as Kip since his first bomb disposal report in England when the officer said him kipper grease for he was covered with butter at that time. Hana feels that Kip may not like the English patient and tries to keep them separate. However, she is pleased to find kip one day taking with the English patient about bombs and the region of Tuscany. Sometimes she thinks about her father Patrick and the conversation between them when they skip some of the syllables out of shyness. She is aware about the fact that her step-mother Clara and Caravaggio gave her the exposure of real world.

The books such as Tacitus’ *Annals* which Hana reads for the English patient open with an author’s assurance of order whereas the novels such as Kipling’s *Kim* or Fabrizio’s *The Charterhouse of Parma* commence with hesitation or chaos. She feels as if Kip has been appeared out of *Kim* as she was reading the book before he came there. She also finds the section of King David from the Bible glued in the notebook of the patient, who is described as old and stricken in years. In the north of Villa, Kip discovers a large mine with much complexity where all the wires were in black colour. Hana helps him to cut the right wire and dismantle the bomb; however it has become an intense experience for him which is in a way nightmare for him. She tries to make him comfortable; but he is annoyed with her presence while defusing the bomb as he now begins to feel for her.

After the incident, Caravaggio finds a gramophone and tells Hana that he will teach a dance to her. He calls Hana as dear worm – the name which her father uses to call her – and begins the lesson; meanwhile Kip smells cordite and leaves immediately to the place of explosion only to find the dead body of his second-in-command Hardy. Here in the villa, Hana begins to think about Kim and the way he is comfortable with the English patient, who is like his mentor Lord Suffolk. She identifies herself with the young boy in *Kim* and Kip as the officer Creighton. After burying Hardy, Kip returns to the villa and finds that Hana is still awake while others two are asleep. He wishes to touch her, but initially could not dare. He just wanted to make her feel as he has been angry earlier in the afternoon on her for being involving in defusing bomb without caring for her life. Finally he cuts the hearing aid of the patient and then puts hand on the shoulder of Hana.

Caravaggio tries to find out whether Hana and Kip loves one another by separately talking to them. He asks Kip whether he will love Hana if he finds her
intellectually inferior than him; and he answers that Hana is in love with the English patient because he knows more and his words can seduce anyone. Then he talks with Hana and advises her to think about Kip rather than the English patient who is on his death bed. He intends to take her home and out of Dodge City. However, she is less affected by the words of Caravaggio. After Caravaggio and the English patient are asleep, she skips to the tent of Kip at two or three in the morning and sleeps with him.

The fourth chapter entitled as ‘South Cairo 1930-1938’ opens with the silence of the Western world about the deserts, especially after the writings of Herodotus in 425 B.C. till the twentieth century. In 1920, National Geographical Society conducted some lectures at Kensington Gore in London dealing with deserts after the postscript history on this pocket earth. However, in 1939, the expeditions again began making the Libyan Desert as the theatres of war. The English patient tells Hana that he was the part of expedition in 1930, which aimed to search the lost oasis Zerzura in Gilf Kebr, which is the part of Libyan Desert. In the expedition, his group faced a horrible sandstorm that swept everything including the food and animal they had taken for their survival in the desert. However, they kept moving until they came across a desert town El Taj, where the English patient found the chances of survival.

The group of English patient continued their expedition until he met Geoffrey Clifton in 1936, who joined them with his wife Katharine making their expedition much easier with his plane. The introduction of Katharine created tension among the group members – Bell, Almasy and Madox – but soon the English patient fell in love of her voice when she recited a poem. A few months later, he danced with her in Cairo taking him more closer and leading him to fall in love with her.

Chapter five entitled as ‘Katharine’ opens with Katharine’s dream in which she saw the English patient is angry on her for being close to him and woke up screaming. When he met her later, she talked him with lofty intellectualism revealing her sexual desires for him. She madly loves him and wanted more erotic pleasures leading to frequent quarrels and wounds given to him. She even expected that her husband should be revealed about their affair, but never dared to tell him. Her frustrations led her to physically assault the English patient, who found himself unable to live without her. Finally she decided to break up with the English patient before her husband discovers their affair.
In the sixth chapter, which is named as ‘A Buried Plane,’ Hana injects morphine to the English patient, who continues his memories of 1936 in Cairo, where he was dominated by the memories of Katharine. He asked Madox the name of the hollow at the base of woman’s neck who advised him to do not follow Katharine. The memories of the English patient creates doubts in the minds of Caravaggio, who tells Hana that he thinks the English patient as Count Ladislaus de Almasy – a Hungarian working for the Germans – the great explorer in 1930, who went on in search of lost oasis Zerzura. In the war, he guided to German spies and helped them to find Cairo. Hana does not agree with Caravaggio; therefore, he gives the instance of the three interesting names – Cicero, Zarzura and Delilah – out of eight the English patient has suggested to give the villa dog. According to him, Cicero was used as a code name for spy and Zerzura was more complicated. Almasy helped Eppler to travel from Tripoli to Cairo; he carried Du Maurier’s *Rebecca* as a code book with him. However, he was arrested with the help of Samson that relates him to Delilah. Caravaggio wants to give Brompton – the cocktail of morphine and alcohol – to the English patient so that he could speak truth, but Hana rejects his advice as the war is over now and it does not matter for her whether the patient is English or not.

Caravaggio manages to inject Brompton to the English patient who begins to speak about the events in his life before plane crash. The English patient says that in 1943, he was in Gilf Kebir, when his truck was blasted by the army, so he walked for Uweinat, where Madox buried a plane in the desert. He searched the place for the four nights and found the plane near Ain Dua, where three years earlier Geoffrey planed the plane crash to murder Katharine. Geoffrey died in crash, Katharine was seriously wounded but Almasy remained safe, who then took Katharine to the Cave of Swimmers. She was unable to walk therefore he left her there and went out for help, but could not return to the place again. Three years later he found the body where he has left her, approached her naked and made love to her body and then kept her in plane, which was set to fire because of oil leakage. He found the body falling down the plane and slipped into the parachute, where the body was kept, as it was impossible for him to live without her; however, the parachute was also set to the fire when he was coming down.

Hana enters in the English patient’s room and finds that he is talking with Kip. He tells Hana that they both are facing the same situation as they are born somewhere else and living at other places fighting to get back or away from the life.
He further tells that he knows Kip’s teacher Lord Suffolk and his secretary Miss Morden. Hana realizes that Kip is also emotionally torn like her.

Chapter seven ‘In Situ’ begins with the familial background of Kip, who is second child in Sikh family living in Westbury, England. As per the tradition in family, the elder son joins army, the second son becomes a doctor and the younger son starts his own business. However, as the war outbreaks, Kip joined engineer unit of Sikh regiment who was assigned to dismantle mines. He began to work under Lord Suffolk, who not only trained him in defusing bomb, but also taught him the customs and cultures of English people. However, he experienced a painful moment in Erith, when his mentor Lord Suffolk along with Miss Morden and some other group members were killed while he was defusing a 250 kilogram bomb. He suppressed his emotions and went alone to defuse second bomb mined half mile away from the place of incident – the event made him popular and he was offered the place of leader, which he eventually rejected and fled to Italy in order to be out of site of others.

Kip describes the mission assigned to his squad – of twelve men – under the leadership of Lord Suffolk in September 1940 at Blitz, where 2500 bombs were mined. He then details how his mentor has been killed with new invention in the bombs and how he has developed his knowledge about it.

Kip informs Hana about his family and especially about his elder brother, who had been put into a jail for refusing to join army. His brother always behaved aggressively and opposed everything he feels against him; and, on the other hand, Kip is more silent compared to his brother.

Chapter eight, which is named as ‘The Holy Forest,’ focuses on the development in the relationships between Kip, Hana and Caravaggio. Kip presents a ladybird to Hana which she touches to the feet of the English patient and then moves through his body. Here in the library, Caravaggio accidentally nudges the fuse box, which Kip grabs before it falls off the counter and prevents explosion. The incident terrifies Caravaggio leading him to feel that he owes his life to Kip and driving Kip to remember earlier event where he defused a leaked Esau bomb with the help of Hardy.

Kip spends most of the time with the English patient who reminds him of a fir tree in the garden of Lord Suffolk. After the dinner, Hana goes in the library where
she lays on a couch while Kip is waiting for her there. Caravaggio is also there, who pretends to be asleep and is aware of Hana lying on the couch. After a while, he walks towards her and extends his arm, but is grabbed by Kip leading him to leave the room. When Caravaggio leaves the room, Hana and Kip have a sex in library. It is also described that they also sleep together for a month without having a sex, which leads Kip to remember how he scratches his ayah after the death of his mother.

Entitled as ‘The Cave of Swimmers,’ chapter nine reveals the love story of the English patient before the plane crash. He saw her when she unexpectedly joined the group of explorers with her husband Geoffrey Clifton and he was attracted towards her bony knees in khaki shorts. When she returned from Cairo after a month, she began to read voraciously everything about the deserts. She was fifteen years younger than him, but to his surprise, she was inclined to acquire knowledge. He gave her the copy of Herodotus’ *The Histories*, which she reads in the party arranged by Geoffrey after the expedition. She is fascinated with the story of King Candaules married to a woman having exceptional beauty which he often describes to Gyges and even offers him to see her naked eventually caught by the queen while leaving the room. He reveals her the plot arranged by the Candaules. She gave him choice that either he should kill Candaules and usurp the kingdom or else sacrifice his life. So he killed Candaules and took over the kingdom and the queen. Katharine finished the story and looked at the English patient, who since then became very formal in his behaviour with her until she asked him one day to ravish her and they became lovers.

Geoffrey was unaware about the affair, but Madox warned the English patient to remain away from Katharine. The English patient also tells that he always used to carry the copy of Herodotus and Madox carried Anna Karenina. In 1939, Madox returned to England, where he heard a sermon in honour of war and killed himself. The English patient further tells how Katharine returned to her husband. He belonged to an aristocratic family and a huge circle of friends; and though they tried to hide their affair from Geoffrey, his family members would discover it, hence they decided to break away.

As Caravaggio injects more morphine to the English patient, he begins to talk about Almasy and Katharine, but does not confess that he is Almasy which confuses Caravaggio. He tries to ask for clarification, but the English patient continues with his story where he revels that he left the Cave of Swimmers for help and walked three days without having anything only to find that he is arrested in El Taj. He told
them that his wife is injured but they did not believe in him and put him behind bars. Caravaggio asks whether he has killed Katharine and he says that Geoffrey was the British Intelligence. Caravaggio tells him that the British Intelligence knew about the affair between Almasy and Katharine before Geoffrey discovered it and after the death of Geoffrey, the British Intelligence followed the English patient and captured him at El Taj. Caravaggio was also the part of British Intelligence who knew that Almasy was supposed as a dangerous spy, who was on their track until 1942, but then suddenly he disappeared from the hospital in Cairo. The English patient says that he was not aware about it.

In chapter ten, which is named as ‘August,’ Hana asks Caravaggio whether the English patient is Almasy and he replies that he is fine. Then Kip and Caravaggio celebrates the 21st birthday of Hana and Kip prepares a meal for her. He also tries to learn more about Hana, who just intends him to talk about present. She even sings a song called Marseillaise; and Caravaggio remembers that she has sung the same song when she was 16 years old, but now there is a considerable difference in her singing as her voice appears of a tired traveller.

Kip remembers the incident in Italy on October 1943, when the German army mined bombs in the Naples and he was sent in the squad of 12 sappers to defuse the bombs. The bombs were mined brilliantly with the links to the electrical wires which will turn the city into the flames when the power of the city is turned on at 2.00 am. They have finished the work at 1.00 am and then aborted from the place but they were not safe until they saw light in the city.

In the end of the novel and to the August day, Hana sees Kip in the garden with his earphone and radio when he suddenly hears something. He screams and sinks on his knees, then rushes to his tent, returns with his rifle and runs towards the villa. He appears in the room of the English patient and begins to weep; then informs him that the Allies has exploded Japan’s Hiroshima and Nagasaki which is the result of their Western wisdom. He points the gun to kill the English patient who is the representative of the Western world but is unable to do so. He leaves them and travels on his motorbike to the south, but is surprisingly skids and falls into the water.

In the final section of the novel, Kip has become a doctor having a wife and two children in India. His wife works in a garden which reminds him of Hana, who is
now thirty four years old and who always sent him letters but as he never replied, she stopped to write him.

2.2.4 Plot Analysis:

The initial exposition of the novel *The English Patient* places Michael Ondaatje among the finest novelists, who have unfolded the sensuous, mysterious and rhapsodic world with philosophical flavours. The surrealistic note and the impressionistic scenes overcome the beginning absence of identities of main characters provoking the readers to engage themselves in the fragments of the memories of English patient. The plot of the novel is divided into ten chapters, each having a separate title which ultimately relates to the places they describe and the memories related with it. The first chapter entitled ‘Villa’ opens with a twenty years old nurse called Hana who has determined to stay in the Italian villa called Villa San Girolamo, even after other nurses and patients moved to the south which is a safer location. Her self-destructive motives are clearly revealed through her behaviour as she does not think about her safety in the abandoned town, which has become the centre of burglars’ frequent invasions and as she prefers to live in villa, which is mined with bombs. Another thing which reveals her self-destructive intention is her decision to nurse the burned patient who is destined to die and there are no better opportunities of happy life forever with him.

The narratives of the English patient present the imagery of his life vividly. The incident of plane crash marks the rising action in the development of plot, which presents the image of a man on fire coming down with a collapsing plane. English patient’s journey with nomadic reveals Ondaatje’s poetic discerns which are further coupled with his philosophical perceptions depicted through the use of herbs for recovering a person almost died with the burns – showing his black body and purple bones. The English patient lives in his memories disclosed through the stories of his life which he exposes to the nurse. On the other hand, Hana tries to live in her own fantasy and through the people she reads in the books she finds in the library.

The Bedouins sketched in the novels appears to be non-human creatures as there is no woman in the tribe, which raise the question of their next generation and the way they live including celebrating a gun-fire. They have survived the burning man from the crash and tried to heal his burns with the herbs and oiled clothes. However, their motive behind saving a man remains unclear until they carry him in the canyon,
where they disclose the huge storage of weapons made in different nations in various periods and asks him to share his knowledge about the mechanics of guns and identification of places.

The setting of the first chapter also provides a significant ground as the villa is reminiscent of the World War II. The description of the sealed rooms, variations in temperature, light and wind in the rooms available, the dead ends or open spaces at the end of the corridors, the puzzle game Hana plays while going in and out of the library present the image of haunted house.

The second chapter entitled ‘In Near Ruins’ is set in Rome at the Allies military hospital, where a man is admitted from the last four months. His identity is not revealed except his serial number to the doctors and until the next couple of pages when he meets Hana in the villa. In fact, the name of Hana is also first time referred here in the conversation between her and Caravaggio. The records of her self-destructive motives continues through the observations of Caravaggio, who comments that she is chained to a dying man, which is, in reality, her own spiritual death. The passive approach towards life is the gift of her service as a nurse, where she learned not to mention the names of patients but calls them as buddy, negligence towards health, continuous hunger, coldness in feelings and passions; even she has neglected her own face and not seen in the mirror for the months as if she has learned that death is inevitable and will follow soon after the death of her father in war.

The opening pages of the second chapter expose the similar nature of David Caravaggio, who has not spoken even a single word except his serial number to the doctors or anyone else in the hospital and confined himself to the grey light of the hospital as if he is also waiting for a death. It is only when he listens the name of Hana, he finds the ray of hopes and speaks with the doctors so that he can know whereabouts of her. When he meets her, he realizes that she is inclined to die with the English patient; and tries to convince her emotionally so that she may come out of her madness finally meeting with despair.

The horrific situation after the war is exposed through the description of doctors soon followed by the journey of Caravaggio and the terrors of war are experienced through the story of Caravaggio who was captured by the Germans. The mentioning of chicken reminds him his misfortunes when a nurse was brought to chop his hands which still affects his nerves and makes him paralysed even though somewhat he has
been physically recovered. He is survived only because the German Army has to leave the place. The effects of war are seen with the references to shot dead and half eaten horses, rushes of people at railway stations, people hanged on the bridges, dead cattle, the odour of the dead, etc.

Thus, the second chapter ends with the arrival of two soldiers while it is raining outside with thunder and lightning and while Hana is playing a song taught by her mother for the first time in her last three months alone stay. She not only accepts the soldiers but also welcomes them in the villa as she prepares food with them in the kitchen, which is, in fact, an act of accepting a life in the ruins.

The third chapter which is entitled as ‘Sometimes a Fire’ really sets a fire in the plot with the introduction of a new character in a love triangle that was created in the second chapter. Kirpal Singh, who is also known as Kip, is an Indian working as a sapper in English army, in whom Hana finds the antithesis of her despairing saint. She is attracted towards him and becomes happy in his company. Her love for him is revealed when she tries to keep him away from the English patient. She has even disregarded her safety when she goes in his tent at night. She does not only want to make him comfortable by laying down beside him when he has defused the complicated bomb, but she intends to secure the object of her love. In fact, the incident works as a significant moment in the lives of both Hana and Kip. It is here, Kip’s love for her is revealed who is angry over her help in dismantling the bomb ignoring her own security. He stays near the villa only to make sure that the area is de-mined and Hana is safe there.

Caravaggio is disappointed with the arrival of Kip as he sees rival in him and tries to persuade Hana to live for some reason and to rediscover life in some form, which ultimately drives her in the arms of Kip as she does not want the philosophical love of Caravaggio, which she hated and inclined to death. His act of teaching dance and calling her as dear worm is perhaps the symbol of his deep and passionate love ignited since his visits to her father, which dragged him there. The English patient does not play major role in this chapter except a few references and scenes.

The fourth and fifth chapter entitled as ‘South Cairo 1930-1938’ and ‘Katharine’ takes back to the story of the English patient, who was the member of a group of explorers during the period of 1930 to 1938 – the experiences of expedition which shaped much of his character as well as his knowledge about the world that is
revealed through the book where he has recorded his observations. These chapters also add a significant development in the plot through the torturous love affair between the English patient and Katharine, the wife of Geoffrey Clifton. The tension created in the earlier chapter with the presentation of love triangle is somewhat alleviated with the projection of deserts and various expeditions; but again the problems in relations and the conflict in emotions is presented revealing certain psychological impulses in the life of human beings.

Katharine wants erotic pleasures from the English patient and is mad for the English patient. Probably she has suppressed her feelings by marrying Geoffrey, who is perhaps unable to satisfy her desires. She finds a perfect soul mate in the English patient, who is more intellectual and passionate than her husband. She intends to let the public know about her affair and therefore purposefully causes wounds and marks on his body. She badly wants him for the life-time, but she is also afraid to expose her affair to her husband; instead, she decides to break-up the relationships with the English patient, which shows that she values more to the customs than to the emotions. The sandstorm in the fourth chapter ends in the fifth chapter, which not only destroys the lives of explorers but it literally swallows the lives of the lovers – who are unable to define their love.

The sixth chapter – ‘Buried Plane’ – continues the story of romance between the English patient and Katharine finally leading to the tragic conclusion. The lovers have decided to break up because Katharine wanted to declare her affair publically but the English patient was not ready to accept her socially. Hence, she felt that she will not change him probably to open up his heart, which will not give any sense to their relations. Ironically, it is at this stage, Geoffrey came to know about their affair and decides to end their lives. It is interesting to note that only Geoffrey dies in the crash whereas other two survives – that highlights his intentions to kill himself and set free Katharine so that she may find her love.

The English patient refuses to accept his relations with Katharine and treats her harshly in the public life. In fact, it is this behaviour of the English patient that leads Geoffrey to suspect about them provoking to keep an eye on them. After the plane crash, the English patient identifies the intentions of Geoffrey; he saves Katharine from the wreckage of plane and carries her to the Cave of Swimmers where she can remain safe until he calls for a help. Sarcastically he returns after three years only to find dead corpse; but his lust for her body is still same and makes love to it.
Caravaggio is suspicious about the English patient and tries to find out his real name, which is, in reality, his attempt to persuade Hana to change her mind and leave with him to the safer location both emotionally and physically. However, Hana rejects every attempt that Caravaggio made in order to prove the patient is not English as for her it is sufficient that he is human being. In the end of the chapter, a significant change is seen in the development of Hana who is more concerned for Kip than with the English patient. In the English patient, she looks for the death and coldness she expects, but in Kip she tries to search her own self, her own emotional chaos and the trauma of living dead life.

Chapter seven ‘In Situ' exposes the familial background of Kip, who volunteered to bomb dismantling squad without following the profession of doctor which is destined to him as he is second child in a Sikh family in Punjab now living in England. He seems to enjoy the work under the tutorship of Lord Suffolk, whose death makes him cold and emotionless. At the age of twenty one, he learned to cope up with the situations as he experienced the death of his mother, the rejection of his father – who is still alive as he thinks – and the death of his mentor, who is his second father. His talks about his elder brother throw more light on his nature and the way he becomes frigid. Though he is clever and can replace his mentor in his abilities, he is unable to handle pressure and therefore flees to Italy without shouldering the responsibility of leadership.

The eighth chapter which is entitled as ‘The Holy Forest’ throws light on the further developments in the relations between Hana and Kip and between Kip and Caravaggio. Kip’s present in the form of ladybird, which she touches to the body of the English patient highlights the understanding and deep emotions they feel for one another. The erotic feelings between them are overcome with spiritual one as Kip remembers his mother when he is asleep with Hana. On the other hand, Caravaggio feels that he owes his life for Kim as he has saved him from the explosion. The English patient seems to disappear here from the narrative and most of the part is dominated by Kip, who begins to realize the rays of hopes in the form of Hana.

The ninth chapter which is called as ‘The Cave of Swimmers,' shed light on the tragedy of the English patient who could not save his would be wife and is arrested as a second rate spy. His deeper love for Katharine is revealed once more as he has forgotten his own identity and even mentioned Katharine as his wife. Caravaggio tries to lead him to the point of confession where he may agree that he is Almasy,
but he failed in his attempts. It is also interesting to note that Geoffrey himself pushed his wife in the arms of the English patient with his constant praising words at one side; and at other, he was unable to fulfil her intellectual needs which she finds in the English patient. Therefore the anecdote which she reads in the party perfectly suits to their lives where Geoffrey stands for Kind Candaules, the English patient represents Gyges and Katharine is representative of the queen. Though Katharine and the English patient madly love one another, the social status of the English patient leads to break the affair. However, Geoffrey once again gave an opportunity of reunion to them which he fails to grab in any way.

The last chapter called ‘August’ echoes the tragic conclusion of love in the ninth chapter, where Kip and Hana, after a deep emotional attachment, like the English patient and Katharine failed to define their love. It is here the reasons of Hana’s confinements in the villa are revealed – her father is died with burns and she was unable to save him as she was far away from him. She finds the same situation in the English patient and therefore she is chained to him. She is also ready for a new start with Kip and therefore when he tries to get information about her past through Caravaggio, she asks him to talk about only her present.

On the other hand, Kip became a mature character who begins to identify his own journey which ultimately leads him towards a new life and not to the death. He leaves the villa after he hears the bombing in Japan and starts a new life as a doctor which was destined to him as the family ritual. But, he is more like the English patient, who is unable to forget Hana even after his marriage. Thus, each character is provided with is own space and time to develop, realize and in the process they all recognize their roles in life and experience transformation. Hana, who expects death, is transformed as she comes out of her coldness, Caravaggio, who is thief and never trusted anyone, follows his love for Hana, Kip, who has suppressed his emotions, finds the essence of life, and finally the English patient, who is in fact Almasy, has forgotten everything for the sake of his love for Katharine.

2.2.5 Check Your Progress:

1. Hana takes care of ________________ in the abandoned villa.
   a) Caravaggio
   b) Kim
   c) the English Patient
   d) Patrick
2. ____________ saved the English patient when he fell burning in plane crash.
   a) Hana  
   b) Bedouins  
   c) Katharine  
   d) Libyans

3. The name of the villa which turned into a hospital is ____________
   a) San Girolamo  
   b) San Bonifacio  
   c) Tehzeeb  
   d) Medici

4. ____________ turned the villa into a hospital.
   a) British Army  
   b) German Army  
   c) Italian Army  
   d) Allies Army

5. Hana is a ____________
   a) Nurse  
   b) General  
   c) Officer-in-Charge  
   d) Second-in-Command

6. Hana sells ____________ in exchange of meat and beans to a man.
   a) Soaps and sheets  
   b) Oil  
   c) Bombs  
   d) Clothes

7. Hana compares herself with __________ when she discovers the joined pages of The Last of the Mohicans.
   a) Anna Karenina  
   b) Robinson Crusoe  
   c) Kim  
   d) Lorna Doone

8. ____________ illustrated Narrative of 1757.
   a) Daniel Defoe  
   b) Rudyard Kipling  
   c) N. C. Wyeth  
   d) Herodotus

9. When the mask of oasis reeds is removed from the face, the English patient remembers his favourite garden at ____________.
   a) Naples  
   b) El Taj  
   c) Libyan  
   d) Kew
10. ________ hears the name of Hana while passing by the group of doctors.
   a) Kip    b) Patrick
   c) Lord Suffolk    d) Caravaggio

11. The Villa San Girolamo is situated _____ miles to the north of Florence.
   a) Ten miles    b) Fifteen miles
   c) Twenty miles    d) Twenty five miles

12. ________ has lost his nerves.
   a) The English patient    b) Caravaggio
   c) Kip    d) Hardy

13. ________ takes the photographs of Caravaggio in the German party.
   a) Anna    b) Tommasoni
   c) Hana    d) Morden

14. During the ____________ attack, Hana was sent abroad to take care of wounded soldiers.
   a) Sicilian    b) Italian
   c) Japan    d) El Taj

15. ______________ called the nurse to cut off Caravaggio’s thumbs.
   a) Lord Suffolk    b) Madox
   c) Ranuccio Tommasoni    d) Hardy

16. Hana writes at the back blank pages of ____________ about her love for Caravaggio.
   a) The Histories    b) The Last of the Mohicans
   c) Annals    d) Kim

17. Kip is ____________
   a) Italian    b) German
   c) Hungarian    d) Indian
18. Clara is ______________ of Hana.
   a) Mother  b) Sister
   c) Step-mother  d) Mother-in-law

19. A 1930s expedition of the English patient was aimed at the search of ___.
   a) Zerzura oasis  b) El Taj
   c) Cave of Swimmers  d) Sahara

20. Katharine is the wife of ________________.
   a) Almasy  b) Geoffrey
   c) Lord Suffolk  d) Madox

21. According to Caravaggio ____________ is used as a code name for spy.
   a) Delilah  b) Zerzura
   c) Cicero  d) Cairo

22. __________ is the secretary of Lord Suffolk.
   a) Hana  b) Morden
   c) Anna  d) Katharine

23. Katharine reads the story of ___________ from The Histories.
   a) King Candaules  b) Rebecca
   c) Libyan Desert  d) King David

24. Kip and Caravaggio celebrates the ______________ birthday of Hana.
   a) 18th  b) 19th
   c) 20th  d) 21st

25. ___________ hears on radio the news of bombing on Japan.
   a) Kip  b) Hana
   c) Caravaggio  d) the English patient
2.3 Section III: Themes, Symbols and Characters’ Analysis

2.3.1 Themes in the Novel:

1) Journey to rediscover identity:

All the four major characters in the novel undertake the journey to rediscover their own identity with reference to one another. Hana, who is working as a nurse, purposefully lives in the abandoned villa – despite being dangers to live there – only in order to hide her identity from the world where she works or live. She wants to avoid being discussed in the hospital, therefore she stays behind; but the real reason, which is revealed in the end of the novel, is that being a nurse, working to care for the wounded soldiers, she failed to save her father wounded and burned in the war, which is a cause of her grief. Her depression is also revealed when she refused to acknowledge the letter sent by her step-mother Clara about the death of her father. She sees the burned English patient in the place of her father and chained herself to die with him. However, her journey to rediscover her identity begins with the arrival of Kip in whose company she has forgotten the English patient.

The identity of the English patient is a mysterious question in the novel as he cannot be identified with his burned body and he has forgotten himself including his name in the plane crash. In the course of time, it is revealed that he has distanced himself from his own identity, which he wishes before the plane crash and when he was having an affair with Katharine. He also may have hidden his identity in order to forget the past – the loss of his beloved Katharine, and the death of his friend Madox, who shot himself when he discovered that the church is supporting to the war. His love for Katharine is so deep that he has forgotten himself when he was arrested by the British Intelligence and mentions her as his wife. However, it is Caravaggio, who interrogates him to reveal his real identity finally knowing that he is Almasy, a famous Hungarian spy working for German Army. Ironically, the English patient is unaware about his fame in the world, which Caravaggio tells him.

The journey of Kip’s rediscovery begins in the villa when he meets Hana and falls in love with her. The death of his mother and then of his mentor Lord Suffolk made him colder to respond to the physical world, but with Hana he begins to identify his future. His attempts of dismantling the bombs around villa were not only his efforts to ensure the safety of Hana, but he was ensuring his own future. However, the news of bombing on Japan surprisingly takes turn leading him to adopt
the profession of doctors according to the tradition of his family, which is also an act of his rediscovering identity. Similarly, Caravaggio, a professional thief then working for British Intelligence, learns from his experiences that war is futile and in the end does not expose the real identity of the English patient to Hana. After the war, he has stopped speaking to anyone else in the hospital except his serial number, but the news of Hana leads him to Hana, which is the beginning moment in the process of rediscovering his own identity.

2) Transformation:

*The English Patient* projects a transformation of its characters from the death drive to the life, from the frigidity to the emotions, from the meaninglessness to the meaningful life, and from loneliness to establishing a connection with life. The English patient seems to be living in death only because he is unable to free himself from the memories of his beloved Katharine. It is through the story he tells to Hana, Caravaggio and Kip in the fragments he finds the way of liberation. Hana is inclined to death as she could not save her father, who was far away from her, the guilt of which she tries to compensate caring burned patient and probably seems to die with him. She is driven to the life with the arrival of Kip, who makes her happy and forget about her guilt ultimately leading her to find essence in living life. Similarly Kip has also no hopes in life because of the death of his mother; hence, he volunteered himself to the war, where he once again finds the way to life in the form of his mentor Lord Suffolk. However, he meets once again to despair with the death of Lord Suffolk and inclined himself to death until he reaches to the villa, where Hana drives him once again to life.

The transformation of the characters from the frigidity of the emotions to the passions is also a significant process in their development. The English patient tells that he was very rational and cerebral when he met Katharine and even refused to express his love publically with the harsh treatment to her. On the other hand, Katharine is passionate as she is described as firebrand and the same she expects from her lover. When she finds that she is unable to transform the English patient, she decides to separate herself. Paradoxically, the English patient's passions overcome his frigidity after the plane crash who calls Katharine as his wife. It is this passion and love that kept him alive when he was burned beyond recognition. Similarly Hana and Kip, who are turned to the frigidity and coldness in life after the deaths of their loved ones, are moved to the passionate life. In the end of the novel,
Hana reconnects to life sending a letter to her step-mother Clara, where she expresses that she wants to live and asks her to take away from the desert where she is trapped.

The journey from loneliness to establishing meaningful connections is also dominant in the novel as all the four major characters are living an isolated life without any attachment either with the world or with the persons with whom they are living. Hana has alienated herself from the world and decided to live in the unsafe villa with the English patient, Kip has lost his mentor and then loses his mate, Caravaggio has isolated himself to the grey light of the hospital, and the English patient has cut off himself from the rest of the world. They preferred to live in isolation because they find comfort in their loneliness which separates them from the harshness of the world. However, soon they begin to identify and understand one another and connect themselves with each other.

3) **Aftermaths of War:**

The novel is set at the backdrop of World War II where Ondaatje unfolds different lyres of destructions of war in the form of devastated places, shattered cities, bridges, structures, and affected people. Many cities are mined and set like a trap so that they can be uninhabited or destroy the humanity. The buildings and places are damaged physically, which can be witnessed in the form of villa where Hana lives with the English patient. Some sections of roofs and walls in the villa are missing so that some rooms are littered with leaves and debris. Many of the rooms are mined and are sealed for the safety including the library where Hana plays a game to get the books. Kip appears at the villa only because he hears the sound of piano and supposes that it may be a pencil bomb set by the German Army.

Kip reveals that he most of the times he worked to restructure the damaged bridges destroyed by the German Army in their retreat. When he hears the news of bombing on Japan, he imagines that the atomic explosions may have filled fire in the streets of Asia; the bodies may have been melting in the extreme heat, and the shadow of humans disappearing in the air. The soldiers who have been admitted to the hospital, where Hana works, are severely wounded, some have lost their body parts, some have been burned in explosions, and the wounds of some have been eaten by worms. Caravaggio is the live example of the results of war, who has lost his both thumbs. The journey of Caravaggio reveals how the cemeteries have been filled with the people and the smell of burning or dead bodies; at some places the
scattered, half-eaten bodies of horses, the dead bodies of people hung on the bridges show the devastating effects of war.

The psychological effects of the war are also revealed in the novel. Hana lost her father Patrick, Kip lost his mentor Lord Suffolk, the English patient lost his beloved Katharine, which leads all these characters to cut themselves off from the world and drives to death. The emotional trauma is so deep that they begin to feel guilty for the death of their dear ones. The English patient could not survive his severely injured beloved Katharine and begins live in her memories; Hana could not reach to her burned father Patrick and begins to see him in the English patient.

4) Intertextuality:

The novel *The English Patient* has number of references from the other books and novels. Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim*, James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans*, R. D. Blackmore’s *Lorna Doone*, Leo Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* are some of the novels referred in the narratives of the characters along with the books such as Herodotus’ *The Histories*, which gives the descriptions of the geographical locations such as deserts mentioned in the novel. Kip occasionally refers to the textbooks dealing with the components of bombs. Hana finds books as the only escape from the trauma of her life and many times she is seen assimilating with the characters in the novels she reads. For instance, she reads Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* and re-imagines the story casting herself in the role of Kim and connects Kip’s arrival from the novel. The books also provide her a different attitude with which she looks at the world. It can be witnessed in her analysis of the books such as Tacitus’ *Annals* which opens with an author’s assurance of order whereas the novels such as Fabrizio’s *The Charterhouse of Parma* commence with hesitation or chaos.

The books serve as the identity codes for spies in the war which is revealed through the comments of the English patient who carries Herodotus’ *The Histories* as his code. He also gives the same copy to Katharine when she wants to do something different rather than singing a song or reciting a poem in the party offered by her husband Geoffrey for the success of the English patient. The story of King Candaules she reads in the party is, in fact, the beginning point of affair between the English patient and Katharine; in which she identifies herself with the queen and offers the role of Gyges to the English patient against her husband who plays the role of King with his continuous praises for his wife in front of others.
It is also interesting to note that the characters not only refer to the books, but they use it to record their impressions or observations. The English patient has pasted the number of pages from journals and other books which he finds informative to the copy of *The Histories* he carries. Similarly Hana marks her impressions in the books she took from the library and puts them back on the shelf. She writes whatever she feels about her life on the blank pages of the book; she also mentions the information about Kip, which she finds useful.

5) Nationality and Race:

The geographical and national boundaries are clearly visible in the novel through the experiences of the characters, who hide their identities and live away from the native community. The English patient hides his national identity and lives with the alternate name which can help him to survive in the desert, where people, torn with the geographical boundaries, fight for their nations and ready to kill one another. It is revealed that the concept of nation is the prime force in the war, which has even converted the professional thieves like Caravaggio to work for the nation and then, when he is trapped in the clutches of Germans, undergoes an inhuman physical pain including cutting of his thumb. Since his arrival in the villa, he continuously suspects about the identity of the English patient. He interrogates the patient in order to know the real name because he is sure that the patient is Almasy, the most wanted and appreciated spy. When he reveals his suspicion to Hana, she is not interested in knowing who exactly the patient is and from which nation he belongs to. However, he finally succeeds in revealing the identity of the English patient as the Hungarian spy Almasy working for the German Army, but at this stage his nation becomes unimportant for him; so he hides the truth from Hana and Kip for whom, also, nation does not matter.

The English patient, who seems to have forgotten who he is, may have chosen purposefully the present identity. Though he has not exposed himself as English, he has taken the advantage of physical burns beyond recognition only to live in the memories of his love. When he was in love with Katharine, he intended to erase his history, which is, in fact, his attempt to erase his national identity so that his familial and subsequently the geographical boundaries may not constrain his love for the British girl. His final journey takes him to the perfect place – in the villa – where nation is not important; rather the human being is more important as it is noted by
Hana. When Caravaggio expresses his doubts about the patient’s nation, she tells him that the war is now over clearly highlighting that the nation is unimportant now.

The racial discrimination plays a significant role in the development Kip, who recognizes that racism has limited him only to the profession of the sapper and he is not acceptable in the society or community where he lives only because of the colour of his skin and nation where he is born. He is only Indian in the British Army, who has volunteered to the war against his brother’s warnings. He experiences racial discrimination as he is not spoken outside his work; the women has limited their conversation with him and the fellow solders never interact him outside the work area. He feels human in the foreign land only in the company of Hardy, who accepts Kip and calls him readily as ‘sir’ where others give belated responses. The power of race and nation is once again visible in the end of the novel, where, with the news of bombing on Japan, Kip abandons the villa, his job as a sapper and Hana with whom he is deeply in love, and returns to India – to his own people and nation.

2.3.2 Symbols in the Novel:

1) Books:

Books have become a significant symbol in the novel which metaphorically represents numbers of things including a way of escape from the traumas of the life. Hana finds a sanctuary in books after she experiences a shell-shock in her profession where the wounded and paralysed soldiers numb the mind. Reading books is not only pass time for her in the abandoned villa, but it is the means of living which takes her to the different world. Books have become the soul mate to her, where she records most of the feelings about Kip. In fact, reading books is the only safe zone for her both physically and psychologically. She feels safe in the company of books even when the library is mined; and she finds solace only in the books which lead her to forget about her guilt.

2) Desert:

The desert dominates much of the sections in the novel and symbolizes as a monument of the historical development since the civilization was in the cradles. It takes back to ancient period when it was firstly explored and recorded in Herodotus’ *The Histories* which reveal the passion of the Western world for the desert. The desert is described thoroughly with all the details of the climate changes: the extreme
heat experienced during the day in opposition to the cold felt at night, the sudden changes in the mood of the wind from the quiet and peaceful atmosphere to the unexpected storms, and the silence broken with the screams of the war. The memories of the English patient discloses his experiences in the desert where he got the essence of his life – the fame as an explorer, the deep love for Katharine, survival from the plane crash – which is narrated in the fragments missing the chronological order.

3) Bridges:

The bridges are presented symbolically in the novel. The acts of destroying bridges by the German Army is their attempt to cut the world in pieces and disconnect the people, further alienating them to be confined within the geographical boundaries. On the other hand, Kip – representative of the Western world – works in the sapper unit that many times construct the Bailey bridges in order to replace the damaged bridges and help the Allies Army. He metaphorically represents a means which bridge the gap between nations and the people. He volunteered himself to the bomb defusing unit which is, in fact, his attempt to establish peace in the scenario of the war. However, the bridge in him is destroyed in the end of the novel who finds all his attempts fruitless when he hears the news of bombing over Japan and abandons the Western world and subsequently the customs taught to him by Lord Suffolk.

c) Characters’ Analysis:

1) The English Patient:

The English patient is one of the major characters in the novel and dominates much of the sections expressing his memories in the fragments. When he is introduced, he is admitted in the abandoned hospital where a nurse called Hana takes care of him. He reveals his memories dealing with his life before and after the plane crash in which his entire body is burned beyond recognition. He falls down burning in the desert and is saved by the Bedouins who applied various herbs in order to recover him from his burns. In the course of time he learns that they are keeping alive only for their secret purpose. When they find him recovered from the injury, he is carried to the interior sections of the desert where he came across a large section of weapons and felt it as if a weapon museum in desert. The Bedouins had collected number of weapons from different countries, but unfortunately they did not have
knowledge to operate it; therefore, they wanted him to share his information and teach them the mechanics of operation.

The English patient’s story also reveals that his real name is Count Ladislaus de Almasy, a Hungarian wandering in the deserts as an explorer and involved in the war as a spy working for the German Army. In one of the expeditions, his group is joined by Geoffrey Clifton, who surprises the group with the introduction of his wife Katharine. From the beginning, Almasy is attracted towards her, but he has tried to avoid her in the public events. He is surprised with her hunger for knowledge which creates passions in him. In the party offered by Geoffrey in order to celebrate his success, she reads the story from the book called *The Histories* which sets as a starting point of their affair; however, he refused the domination of Katharine either or her acceptance in the public events, which leads them to break up the relations.

After the end of the affair between Almasy and Katharine, Geoffrey came to know about their relations who planned a murder suicide – leading to injure severely his wife and his instant death. Almasy took her out of the plane crash to the Cave of Swimmers, but as she was unable to move anywhere, he left her there in order to search for the help. However, he is arrested by the British Intelligence and, in spite of his admission that his wife is injured and needs help, he is put behind bars, where he spent three years of his life. When he returned, he began the search of Katharine only to find the dead corpse, where he made a love with her and then took her in a plane, which was set to the fire because of the oil leakage and he fell burning in the desert.

In the hospital at the abandoned village, Hana takes care of the English patient, who refused the shifting of the patient as she believes that he will not be saved during the move. He listens to the stories which she reads for him and sleeps rarely. He remembers his journey from his burning, but he has forgotten his name and the past history. When Caravaggio appears and interrogates him, he reveals the name of Almasy but denies that he is Almasy, a famous spy.

2) **Hana:**

Hana, another major character, is twenty years young nurse living in the abandoned hospital with the burned English patient. She washes his burned body in every four days, nurses it with calamine and peels plum for him. She has been nursing his black-purple wounded body for the last few months and is aware about its burns so much that, now, she thinks him as if her despairing saint. She reads
various books to him when she finds him restless at the night and also moves in his bed sometimes in order to warm his body whenever he feels cold. She determined to live in the villa with her English patient even when the other nurses and patients in the hospital moved with the army to the south. In fact, she decided to leave the job of nursing and resolved to take care of only her burned patient in that cold stone villa, where fewer rooms are left to use and most of them are inaccessible and sealed for safety. She chooses various rooms as per the light, wind and temperature she needs to sleep in.

Hana is unaware about her own safety; rather she feels safe in the villa. The six feet crucifix, which she takes with her as a scarecrow, gives her the feeling of being safe. She used to work in the garden where she has planted orchard, which now provides sufficient vegetables for both of them. In addition to this, she occasionally sells soaps and sheets left behind by army in the hospital to a man in town in exchange of meat and beans from him. Other than this, reading books is the only means to pass the time for her. She identifies herself with the characters mentioned in the book and moves with their lives. She goes in the library to pick up the books, where the danger of entering in the library becomes private game.

Hana trembles with the arrival of David Caravaggio and tells him to do not persuade her to leave the place; and if he intends to live there, they will need more food. She has enough vegetables and beans, but she will need chicken to satisfy them three. Caravaggio recalls the past days and his friendship with Hana’s father. He frequently visited her in Toronto before the war, but now she is in love with the dying English patient. He tries to make her aware that she is wasting her life for a ghost. She narrates how her father joined war and how she became a nurse. In her childhood, Caravaggio taught her number of things including how to perform somersaults. Then she was admitted to Women’s College Hospital in 1943 where she was trained as a nurse. During the Sicilian attack, she was sent abroad to take care of wounded soldiers, where she worked day and night. She has cut her hairs and not even seen herself in the mirror; all her feelings became cold and she begins to behave harshly with the patients. When the war moved to north, she thought that her war is over and determined to do not move with rest of the people. She decided to stay behind with the burned patient. She has replaced her uniform with the brown frock to keep her away from the memories of war.
Hana remembers how she always love Caravaggio and how he cared her; and then walks to the library, where she begins to play song taught by her mother on piano. She tells him that she was pregnant last year but had an abortion when she heard about her father’s death. She was in hospital at Italy when she courted a man who died in war. The death of her lover, father and child, and her work in the hospital between the wounded soldiers made her to live for death. Then she met the burned English patient – the event that leads her to separate herself from the talks of other nurses and deaths.

She falls in love with Kip, a sapper, and begins to find a meaningful existence to her life. She also helps him to defuse a bomb mined near the villa – the moment which brought them closer to one another. She even skips to his tent at the morning, where they made love. However, in the last section of the novel, she is left alone in the deserts from where she urges her mother to free her.

3) Kip:

Kip is a nickname of an Indian Sikh Kirpal Singh, who is working as a sapper in British Army during the Second World War. As per the tradition of the family, he has to be a doctor, but he volunteered himself to the war. He works under the leadership of Lord Suffolk in the engineering unit which aims to dismantle the bombs mined by the German Army. He hears the sound of piano and approaches the villa with his mate Hardy to discover the pencil bomb probably mined in the piano. When Hardy leaves to other places in town, he remains near villa in order to defuse the surrounding. He sets up his tent outside the villa, where, while taking a bath, Hana is attracted towards him. Initially, he is not accepted in the villa for his habit of washing the hands frequently, but slowly Caravaggio and Hana become familiar with him and he becomes comfortable in their company.

Kip is involved in defusing a complicated bomb, when Hana rushes to help him – the event leads him to be very harsh with Hana as he begins to feel for her and considers her as his own responsibility. In the evening, he hears the sound of explosion and goes there only to find the dead body of his mate Hardy. He buries Hardy’s body in the desert and returns to the villa where the English patient and Caravaggio were sleeping while Hana was waiting for him. He intends to touch her so that he can make her feel as he has been angry earlier in the afternoon on her for
being involving in defusing bomb without caring for her life. Finally he cuts the hearing aid of the patient and then puts hand on the shoulder of Hana.

Kip reveals his family history, which presents the internal conflict in his mind. After the death of his mother, he was looked after by the ayah in whom he tried to find the love of his mother. After joining the British Army, Lord Suffolk helped him to be comfortable in the foreign nation. Lord Suffolk became his mentor and taught him the customs of British people. However, the death of his mentor leads him to be cold towards his emotions. Since then for the first time in villa, he began to feel for Hana. He becomes befriend with the English patient with whom he shares lots of things. In one instance, he saves the life of Caravaggio, who also begins to feel that he owes his life for Kim. In the end of the novel, when he hears the bombing on Japan, he withdraws himself from the villa and settles down in India as a doctor and having wife and children.

2.4 Answers to Check Your Progress

Section I:
1. b) John Franklin
2. a) The Golden Dog
3. c) Ernest Buckler
4. d) 1960s & 70s
5. d) psychological
6. a) William Gibson

Section II:
1. c) the English Patient
2. b) Bedouins
3. a) San Girolamo
4. d) Allies Army
5. a) Nurse
6. a) Soaps and sheets
7. b) Robinson Crusoe
8. c) N. C. Wyeth
9. d) Kew
10. d) Caravaggio  
11. c) Twenty miles  
12. b) Caravaggio  
13. a) Anna  
14. a) Sicilian  
15. c) Ranuccio Tommasoni  
16. b) The Last of the Mohicans  
17. d) Indian  
18. d) Mother-in-law  
19. a) Zerzura oasis  
20. b) Geoffrey  
21. c) Cicero  
22. b) Morden  
23. a) King Candaules  
24. d) 21st  
25. a) Kip  

2.5 Exercise:  

a) Answer the following questions in about 400-500 words.  
1) Discuss in detail the major themes in the novel.  
2) Elucidate the journey of major characters to rediscover their identity.  
3) Comment on the theme of transformation reflected in the novel.  
4) Write a detailed note on the aftermaths of the war demonstrated in the novel.  
5) Write in brief the features of postmodernism with reference to intertextuality observed in the novel.  
6) Melting boundaries of nation and race: Elucidate with reference to the novel.  
7) Comment on the various symbols used in the novel.
b) **Write short notes in about 100 to 150 words.**

1) Sketch the character of the English patient
2) Comment on desert as a symbol used in the novel
3) The character of Hana
4) The symbolic use of bridges
5) Sketch the character of Kip
6) Metaphorical use of books
7) Caravaggio

**2.6 References and Further Reading:**


http://www.novelguide.com/node/4384 retrieved on 2nd August, 2019


Major Trends in Australian and Canadian Poetry

4.0 Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

• understand the trends in Australian Poetry
• know major concerns in the poetry of Women Poets
• understand themes in Australian poetry
• understand the trends in Canadian poetry
• know major concerns in the poetry of Women poets in Canadian Poetry
• understand themes in Canadian poetry

➢ Following poems from Penguin Book of Australian Verse by Harry.. are prescribed for the study

  - Kenneth Slessor: 'Sensuality', 'Five Bells'
  - Mary Gilmore: Eve Song, Never Admit Pain

➢ Following poems from 15 Canadian Poets by Gary Geddes

  - Leonard Cohen: 'You Have the Lovers', 'The Genius'
  - Raymond Souster: 'Young Girls', 'Night Raider'

A) Australian Literature:

  As rightly pointed out by Nicholas Birns, "Australian literature, because of its traditional pluralisms is well equipped to handle this new contingency. I attribute part of this to the fact that Australia has had no single dominant metropolitan area. Whereas London and New York have defined British and American literature far more than any other city in those countries, Sydney and Melbourne have kept up with each other, while Perth and Brisbane have held their own in a smaller compass."
Canberra plays a key role in this book, not just as site of much of its composition, but as a potential ground of re-emergent Australian idealism — reflecting the fact that there is no single metropolitan space for the artificially built national capital to rival. The plurality of Australian literature is its great joy, and one of the qualities that enable it to be resilient against the threats to the imagination...

The general statement bears truth for both Indigenous Australians and those descended from later European arrivals, though the perception of what represents the community is quite radically different in these two cases. The white Australian community is integrated partly by its sense of having derived from foreign cultures, primarily that of England, being a commonwealth country and partly by its awareness of itself as a settler society with a continuing celebrating pioneer values and a deep attachment to the Australian land. For Aboriginal people, their traditional cultures, story, song and legend served to define devotion and relationships both to others and to the land that nurtured them. For modern Aboriginal people, written literature has been a way of both claiming a voice and expressing a sense of cohesion as people faced with real threats to the preservation of their culture. "Still, it shows its originality in exploring the themes of Aboriginality, mateship, egalitarianism, democracy, independent national identity, migration, the unique geographical beauty, the complex city life, 'the beauty and the terror' (concept by Dorothea Mackellar) as a character of Australia." according to Adrian C.W. Mitchell.

> Aboriginal narrative : Oral Tradition:

When first confronted by Europeans, Australian Aboriginal people did not have written languages. They found that individual words were collected from first contact, but languages as systems were not written down until well into the 20th century. In fact, their songs, chants, legends, and stories, however, comprised rich oral literature, and, since the Aboriginal peoples had no common language, these creations were enormously heterogeneous. As it was unavailable for a long time or misunderstood by non-Aboriginal people, their oral traditions appear to have considerable subtlety and complexity.

The oral literature of Aboriginal people is about the ceremonies essentially. The fundamental Aboriginal beliefs are reflected in them that 'what is given cannot be changed' and that 'the past exists in an eternal present', and 'it serves to relate the individual and the landscape to the continuing spiritual influence of the Dreaming (or
Dreamtime) -widely known as the Alcheringa (or Altjeringa). This term is used by the Aboriginal peoples of central Australia—a mythological past in which the existing natural environment was shaped and humanized by ancestral beings. Aboriginal oral tradition may be public or sacred. Narratives of 'the public' sort range from stories told by women to young children which are mostly elementary versions of creation stories— also appropriate for tourists and amateur anthropologists to the recitation of song cycles in large gatherings that are known as corroborees. Even the most uncomplicated narratives of the Dreaming introduce 'basic concepts about the land and about what it is that distinguishes right behaviour from wrong. When children are old enough to prepare for their initiation ceremonies, the stories become more elaborate and complex. Among the sacred songs and stories are those that are men's business and those that are women's business; each is forbidden to the eyes and ears of the other sex and to the uninitiated. The main concern of Aboriginal narratives is the land. As Aboriginal people travel from place to place, they name each place either informally or ceremonially and tell the tale of its creation and of its relation to the journeys of the Ancestors. This serves at least three significant objectives: it strengthens their knowledge of local geography—that is, the food routes, location of water holes, places of safety, places of danger, the region's terrain, and so on—and it also serves a social function and a religious or ritual function.

In the later period, the traditional literature in the form of songs and stories of Aboriginal people is translated by their permission. However, the young generation shows little interest in the old ways of custom. The non-Aboriginal person's knowledge of this traditional literature depends almost entirely on printed translation. Non-Aboriginal people are allowed to read is, therefore, at least twice removed from its proper context—one by its transformation from oral to written and again by its translation. Even with the most sympathetic mind and the complete set of footnotes, the non-Aboriginal person has little means of assessing the relation of custom to individual performance. In addition, there remains the residual perception of the nature of traditional Aboriginal literature formed on a number of early, well-intentioned collections of myths and legends, such as Catherine Langloh Parker's *Australian Legendary Tales* (1896) or Alan Marshall's *People of the Dreamtime* (1952), in which the stories are reshaped in order to meet European notions of narrative design and structure.
The first publishers of the traditional narratives and songs were Anthropologists Catherine H. and Ronald M. Berndt in the original language then with a translation and a commentary. The example of their work is *Three Faces of Love: Traditional Aboriginal Song-Poetry* (1976). This approach has enabled at least an initial appreciation of the subtlety and the artistry of the oral tradition.

In the 1970s and '80s, as Aboriginal people started writing in formal English, some started expressing themselves in what might be called Aboriginal English, the language that is different from Standard English. It is formed in short, simple sentences, and it makes considerable use of repetition with variation. It conveys a certain dignity and a rich sense of humour as well. Some versions can be found in the different narratives included in Sally Morgan's *My Place* (1987) and, more sensitive still as a transcription, in Paddy Roe's *Gularabulu: Stories from the West Kimberley* (1983). In the last decades of the 20th century, the poet and storyteller Maureen Watson contributed to sustain the oral tradition by reading on radio and television and by performing at schools.

**Feminist Voices:**

Australians performed much of the theorizing of the postcolonial in the Anglophone academy, even if Australia remained behind. The women writers of the day were "late bloomers" who entered the field of serious fiction writing in their forties or fifties. Writers such as Astley, Jolley, Jessica Anderson, Barbara Hanrahan, Olga Masters and Amy Witting were not in the favor of the culture industry. They contravened the market's preference for youth and trendiness. The place for feminism in mainstream Australian literature was hardly uncontested - the 1980s saw many gender-based battles for voice and position. Australian literature seemed to constitute an ideal world. It seemed more a land of possibility, where people of all backgrounds could affirm a sense of belonging in the world. This was, an illusion, one of many illusions brought to the Australian continent from people outside of it, starting perhaps from settlement.

**The Global Australia**

In the late 1980s and the 1990s, Australian publishing houses such as McPhee Gribble and Angus & Robertson, and Australian branches of world houses that had maintained a resolute Australian presence, such as Penguin, were taken over or combined with global concoction and were as a result no longer as interested in
promoting a distinctive Australian voice. These initiatives were all gone from the scene by 2000, reflecting what many saw as a more general decrease of a distinctively Australian publishing space. During the 1980s, cultural and critical theory had had a growing impact in Australian academia, the critics commented on the peak of an Australian interest in Continental critical theory and its potential Australian application that had been evident since the early 1980s. They promised a more philosophical turn for Australian literary studies, had been shaped by generations of British and Anglophile professors with an empirical, canonical outlook. This phase of theorizing, however, was veiling by the conservative turn in Australian culture and by the counter action against theory worldwide.

The internet revolution did wonderful things for Australia, connecting it to the rest of the world. And it made possible an intellectual union of the English-speaking peoples. With the arrival of the internet, there could be a much more efficient exchange of literary culture. The fall of Soviet Communism had much to do with this, dispelling as it did the last imprints of that curiously Australian natural confidence in Soviet compassion. Birns points out that "Although Nevil Shute's vision of an Australia isolated, if only temporarily, from a worldwide nuclear conflagration was a conceit, for Australian writers of the left in the mid-twentieth century the Soviet Union was so distant that it could be imagined as a fantasy land." This was true about the writers such as Judah Waten, Jean Devanny, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Mary Gilmore and Manning Clark.

The fall of the Berlin Wall was the final blow to this long-withered dream. Further, the biggest obstacle for Australian literature on the world scene had been irrelevance. The fact was that Australia seemed protected behind the curtain of global conflict. Although, Australia was in the American camp politically, it seemed to be much minor to hold importance in a Cold War divide between good and evil. Their Australian identity need no longer define or hold back at least selected individual Australians who sought to bestride the world stage. The 1990s saw the lapse of much of the postcolonial rhetoric of the 1980s, when Australian literature had frequently and fruitfully been compared with the literatures of other former British colonies in South Asia, Africa and the Caribbean.
Kenneth Slessor:

Kenneth Adolphe Slessor OBE (27 March 1901 - 30 June 1971) was a major Australian poet, journalist and official war correspondent in World War II. He was one of Australia's leading poets, remarkable for the absorption of modernist influences into Australian poetry. The Kenneth Slessor Prize for Poetry is named after him. The major poetry of Slessor was produced before the end of World War II. His poem "Five Bells"-relating to Sydney Harbour, time, the past, memory, and the death of the artist, friend and colleague of Slessor at Smith's Weekly, Joe Lynch—remains probably his best known poem. It was followed by "Beach Burial", a tribute to Australian troops who fought in World War II.

According to Australian writer Hal Porter, in 1965, who wrote after having met and staying with Slessor in the 1930s, Slessor was:

"...a city lover, fastidious and excessively courteous, in those qualities resembles Baudelaire, as he does in being incapable of sentimentalizing over vegetation, in finding in nature something cruel, something bordering on effrontery. He prefers chiseled stone to the disorganization of grass."

Ronald McCuaig was the first to review his literature in-depth in The Bulletin in August 1939 and republished in "Tales out of bed" (1944)). The review ranked Slessor above C.J. Brennan and W.B. Yeats, though it was written a year before "Five Bells". This famous poem marked Slessor's move to modernism, a move inspired. The review therefore covers the pre-modernist parts of Slessor's poetry. According to poet Douglas Stewart, Kenneth Slessor's poem "Five Visions of Captain Cook" is equally important as "Five Bells" and was the 'most dramatic break-through' in Australian poetry of the twentieth century.

In 1944, he published his distinctive volume of poetry, "One Hundred Poems", and thereafter, he published only three short poems. Instead of writing poetry, after 1944, Slessor chose to concentrate on journalism and supporting literary projects whose aim was to help flourish Australian poetry.

Analysis of the Poems: 1) 'Sensuality': Summary

The theme of this poem is very difficult for one to analyze because of its lines mere arrangement of series non-finite clauses, as much of the content's meaning is left up to the imagination due to the vagueness of the poem. This, though, might be
exactly what Slessor intended in creating such a free flowing poem. His message is that each one of these sensations are experienced, interpreted, differently by its customers. Each sensation has years of emotion, memory, and personal bias attached to it, and so he is providing a million different experiences in his poem, by giving it to the world, and allowing it to remember these feelings. The poem needs to be read for proper understanding:

FEELING hunger and cold, feeling
Food, feeling fire, feeling
Pity and pain, tasting
Time in a kiss, tasting
Anger and tears, touching
Eyelids with lips, touching
Plague, touching flesh, knowing
Blood in the mouth, knowing
Laughter like flame, holding
Pickaxe and pen, holding
Death in the hand, hearing
Boilers and bells, hearing
Birds, hearing hail, smelling
Cedar and sweat, smelling
Petrol and sea, feeling
Hunger and cold, feeling
Food, feeling fire. . . .

Feeling.

This poem was meant to express all the emotions one would experience as a soldier. Slessor traveled around with troops during World War II and experienced these feelings, despite the fact he himself wasn't a soldier but a war correspondent.

The tone of this poem is somber and even emotionless in this poem because it leaves the meaning up for uninfluenced interpretation. The only diction or anything that stands out, or makes a difference, is the first word "feeling" which is written in
all capital letters There is also an appositive comma in the second line. This is a short lived scene, as there is no sense of style after this. This 18 line poem has no particular stanza structure. This fits into the modernist period of literature perfectly. It is written in the innovative technique that also relates the WWII.

2) Five Bells: Summary

The poem has a sense of failure and loss associated with it. It mourns the death of his colleague, Joe Lynch who lost his life in an accident of drowning.

The ‘Five bells’ are signifiers of the life which is imagined to be present in the space of ring of a ship's bell. There are two times that are being talked about- one is the time measured using the clock, and other is the psychological time that measures the loss and the despair felt in the memories of the lost Lynch. There is a deep sense of failure and despondency associated with the poem which questions the very meaning of our existence.

The poet is sitting in a room over the Sydney Harbour and he starts narrating this poem and can hear the five bells of the clock ringing. Looking at the churning water which returns and revolves itself, the poet draws its comparison with the time and memory which follow a cycle and return back. It illustrates the confrontation of death, and the disillusioned experience of those who grieve in the remembrance of the dead soul. The sense of horror is prevalent through the poem to give it associated and the supremacy of the death which cannot be defied by anyone.

Through whole poem there are various incidents that move through the poet's mind about his interaction with Joe Lynch. He feels them scattered in the tolling of the five bells. The poet's cries to search his lost friend turn foul at various times through the poem. The dialogues where the poet addresses his dead friend fall on deaf ears. He has illustrated death and the resulting separation from his lost friend in a profound manner.

The poet has created a sense of fear accompanied by pain of loss amongst the audience so much so that no reader can be unmoved by each line of the poem. The idea that after a person is dead, all their belongings and achievements are left behind for others to remember them is conveyed through the lines "500 books all shapes...And different curioes that I obtained".
The poet's desperate search for his dead friend sustains till the end of the poem. He calls, "where have you gone?" He tries to think about his friend who drowned in the river in the ferry. The relationship between time and memory has been drawn with the image of river tides. His memory takes him to the bottom of the river where the dead man lies. The image of window creates boundary between the past and the present which can never meet. Memories can return but not the life of the man.

To conclude, the poem comments on the mortality of human life; power of Time over the world. Death is unsurpassable and the meaning of our existence is still a mystery.

Mary Gilmore

Dame Mary Jean Gilmore DBE was an Australian writer and journalist known for her prolific contributions to Australian literature and the broader national discourse. She wrote both prose and poetry. On the basis of her connections in Sydney during the time, Gilmore found work with The Australian Worker as the editor of its women's section, a position she held from 1908 to 1931. She also contributed to a variety of other publications, including The Bulletin and The Sydney Morning Herald. Gilmore's first volume of poetry was brought out in 1910; she published prolifically for the rest of her life, mainly poetry along with memoirs and collections of essays. She wrote on a variety of themes, although the public imagination was particularly captured by her evocative views of country life. Her best known work is "No Foe Shall Gather Our Harvest", which served as a morale booster during World War II.

Analysis of the Poems:

1) Eve-Song: Summary:

In the poem 'Eve-Song', Mary Gilmore has pointed out the status of a woman in man's life after marriage. She is supposed to be subservient to Man's whims. She thinks that she has bound him with the thread of marriage but she finds his heart is a wandering thing, not loyal to her. In the period, when it was usual for men to be disloyal, Gilmore has commented on it. His loitering and staying outside the house is beyond the bonds of woman. She thinks that more she tries to bind, he will be there. But she finds that more she tries to bind, she is herself trapped in the trap. She gave birth to children and she is lost her ease in their nourishment. The line, 'that more than man was love and prize' expresses that woman can find more trust and safety in
their spouses. It raises another question that marriage take place, not for women to live or enjoy but to fulfill social expectations. Still, at the heart, she has root of loss and the dismay she cannot express.

In third stanza, she expresses how man says to be strong and never proves it properly. His love is not a true flame that burns forever, but it is momentary, transient. The 'Truth' of a man is a door that wind can open and shut. Although, knowing the reality of man's frail nature again and again, woman forgives him, accepts him. Perhaps, that is the fate of woman.

Mary Gilmore refrains the lines,
'I span and eve span
A thread to bind the heart of man.'

The reference to 'Eve' in the bible is a strong allusion. Woman is used as a puppet, an entertainer by man. It creates a deep impact on the reader's mind. The image of thread used by her stands for the gentleness, softness which ties smoothly emphasizes how it forms a chain of relations.

Through this poem, Gilmore makes it a document about women's status in Australian society.

2) Never Admit the Pain: Summary:

Through the rich diversity of poems, too, we start to get a different understanding of Gilmore's world; of her capacity to look at truth from a number of angles; of her ability to speak of different solutions and strategies; and of the power of her intuition, her spiritual insight and understandings of different dimensions.

This poem is a motivational poem applicable not only to women but the general masses, too. The first stanza of short four lines depicts the strong mental state. She suggests burying the pain deep for expressions. Pain is inevitable in life, but those who complain are weak. The wound of the heart be covered under the curtains so that none can easily reach it. The last two lines, 'Silence is still a crown, Courage a grace' may be read as a critique of the suffocating emotional effects of femininity rather than advocating repression; we may want to understand 'grace' in the spiritual sense.

The poem is an advice to women who suffer throughout their lives. They are motivated by these powerful words to attain 'grace' through crowing silence.
Glossary:

**Joe Lynch**: Slessor's colleague, Joe Lynch who lost his life in an accident of drowning at Sydney Harbour.

**Check Your Progress:**

A) **Choose the correct alternatives:**

1. Aboriginal people name each place either informally or ceremonially and tell of its creation and of its relation to the journeys of the ______
   i) Children  ii) Ancestors  iii) Gods  iv) Rivers

2. In Australia, languages as systems were not written down until well into the ______
   i) 20th Century  ii) 19th Century  iii) contemporary period  iv) 17th Century

3. The Dreaming or Dreamtime in Aboriginal Australian Literature is known as ______
   i) Visions  ii) Nightmares  iii) Alcheringa (or Altjeringa)  iv) Illusion

4. In the 1970s and '80s, as Aboriginal people started writing in ______
   i) Standard English  ii) Modern Language  iii) British English  iv) formal English

5. ______ revolution did wonderful things for Australia, connecting it to the rest of the world.
   i) Literature  ii) Voyages  iii) The internet  iv) Airplanes

6. The major poetry of Slessor was produced before the end of_______
   i) World War II  ii) World War I  iii) Aboriginal period  iv) 18th Century

7. "Five Bells" relates to the death of the artist, friend of Slessor at *Smith's Weekly*, ______
B) Answer in one word/phrase/sentence.
1. Who were the first publishers of traditional narratives and songs?
2. Which writers were not in the favor of the culture industry?
3. Which publishing houses maintained a resolute Australian presence?
4. What was the effect of fall of Soviet Communism on Australian society?
5. Which poem was written by Slessor after *Five Bells*?
6. Which prize is named after Slessor in Australia?
7. How many lines are in the poem *Sensuality*?

C) Write answers of the following questions.
1. Discuss development of Australian Literature from Aboriginal literature to Modern literature.
2. Illustrate traits of Aboriginal Literature.
3. Discuss Kenneth Slessor's contribution in the development of Australian Literature.
4. Elaborate Contribution of feminist voices with the help of Mary Gilmore's poems.

D) Write short notes on the following:
1. Global Australia
2. Feminist Sensibility in Gilmore's 'Eve-Song'
3. Themes in 'Never Admit the Pain'
4. Themes in 'Sensuality'

B) The Trends in Canadian Literature:

Canadian literature is the body of written works produced by Canadians. It reflects the country's dual origin and its official bilingualism, the literature of Canada can be split into two major divisions: English and French. The literature in the beginning was contributed by writers of English in Canada who were visitors—explorers, travelers, and especially British officers and their wives - who recorded
their impressions of British North America in charts, diaries, journals, and letters. These foundational documents of journeys and settlements announce the documentary tradition in Canadian literature in which geography, history, and voyages of exploration and discovery represent the quest for a myth of origins and for a personal and national identity. Northrop Frye observed that Canadian literature is haunted by the overriding question "Where is here?" So, metaphoric mappings of peoples and places became central to the evolution of the Canadian literary imagination.

Canadian poetry over the last two centuries divides roughly in four main periods: the pre-Confederation period, the Confederation period, the modernist period and the postmodernist period. Each period has the same integrity, the same skilful moderation that is aware of the continuity of its heritage and a rebellion of personality. This division of Canadian poetry has a continuous growth contributing to the collective identity that is Canadian. Canadian poetic culture is a growth having its first stirrings of poetics culture, emergence of a national poetic culture, transitional poetic culture, modernist poetic culture and post modernist or contemporary poetic culture.

**Pre-Confederation Period:**

The earliest documents were unadorned narratives of travel and exploration. Written in plain language, these accounts document heroic journeys to the vast, unknown west and north and encounters with Inuit and other native people, often on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company, the great fur-trading companies. The explorer Samuel Hearne wrote *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean* (1795), and Sir Alexander Mackenzie, an explorer and fur trader, described his travels in *Voyages from Montreal...Through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans* (1801). Simon Fraser recorded details of his 1808 trip west to Fraser Canyon (*The Letters and Journals of Simon Fraser, 1806-1808*, 1960). *The Diary of Mrs. John Graves Simcoe* (1911) records the everyday life in 1792-96 of the wife of the first lieutenant governor of Upper Canada (now Ontario). In 1838 Anna Jameson published *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*, an account of her travels in the New World.
Most of the earliest poems in Canadian Poetry were patriotic songs and hymns. *The Loyal Verses of Joseph Stansbury and Doctor Jonathan Odell* published in 1860 or topographical narratives which reflect the first visitors' concern with discovering and naming the new land and its inhabitants. In the poem by Oliver Goldsmith, *The Rising Village* (1825) used heroic couplets to celebrate pioneer life and the growth of Nova Scotia, which, in his words, promised optimistically to be "the wonder of the Western Skies." Immigrants found the realities of unpredictable native peoples, a fierce climate, unfamiliar wildlife, and physical and cultural deprivation when they dreamt of a new Eden. These topics were the subject of prose sketches by the Strickland sisters, Susanna Strickland Moodie and Catherine Parr Strickland Traill. Moodie's harsh, yet at times comical, *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852) was written to discourage prospective emigrants, but Traill's *Backwoods of Canada* (1836) presents a more favorable picture of the New World. The pre-Confederation poets expressed the expressions ranging from the sense of loss and displacement of an immigrant and the excitement of discovery of an explorer. They depicted the hardships and difficulties of the early settlers and created a graph of rise and progress of a new country.

**Confederation Period**

The second phase of Canadian literature marked the Confederation period which brought the emergence of a national literature. Near the Confederation, Canada gained poets who were national. Charles G. D. Roberts, his cousin Bliss Carman, Archibald Lampman and D. C. Scott are often called the poets of the Confederation. Their prominence between 1867 and the Great War, their concern with nationalism and their inter-related lives make them truly members of a school of poetry. They, born near the Confederation of 1867, came to their maturity in the 1890s. They drew on the Romantic and Victorian heritage of Britain and America and that was why their work became of imitative nature.

**Emergence of a National Literature**

Though they were influenced by both British and American models, they evolved styles and attitudes of their own, which gave rise to literature with more nationality. They carried the themes of the previous literature and tried to investigate the experience the early settlers had that of exile and isolation, a sense of incipient identity and ambivalent feelings about nature that seemed hostile and indifferent.
The order begins with Roberts, as the oldest and as the author of *Orion and Other Poems* (1880) which is a landmark in this country's literary history. But later, Lampman created his landmark by his *Orion*. Bliss Carman and Duncan Campbell Scott are also major poets of the period.

**Modernist Period:**

**i) First Phase**

Beginning in the last quarter of 19th century, a movement to write about Canadian nature had been developing successfully. Obviously, there was mixed response to this movement of poetry of nature, as the Canadian poetry was partly appreciated and partly ignored. Readers agreed that Canadian poetry was charming and graceful; at the same time, most readers felt that it was something that could rightly be ignored because of other writing, English or American that was of greater interest, intensity and significance.

The critics were of the opinion that Canadian poetry was not a self-contained development. Canadian poetry bears strong marks of romanticism and transcendentalism, milder aspects of symbolism before 1900 and later a superficial contract with imagism was traced. The main forces that were stirring in English and American poetry after 1900 had, however, but little effect in Canada. E. J. Pratt, Earle Birney, F.R. Scott and A. J. M. Smith were the leading poets with a sense of national consciousness. The Canadian painters and poets got inspiration from the environment of their country. This kind of approach became a movement in the history of Canadian literature and the leaders of this movement - F. R. Scott and A. J. M. Smith who not only advocated but demonstrated in his poetry. Eater a flock of poets and writers joined this literary venture and treated Canada as a landscape of their poetry.

**ii) Second Phase**

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, a new sense of national consciousness was reinforced after the confirmation of Canada's status as a separate nation. This spirit was a kind of desire for a truly Canadian art and literature to confirm the Canadian identity. *The Canadian Bookman* in 1919, *The Canadian Forum* in 1920 and The Canadian Authors Association in 1921 aimed "to trace and value these developments of art and letters which are distinctively Canadian." The artists and poets made conscious efforts that the poetry in Canada should be an
independent identity not the echo of poetry in England and America. In order to achieve the objective, the artists like Franklin Carmichael, Eawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, Frank Arthur Eismer, J. E. H. MacDonald and Varley, who made the Group of Seven and the poets like E. J. Pratt, F. R. Scott, A. J. M. Smith and W. W. E. Ross, to prove that art is international, accommodated the developing modern movements in England and the United States. They focused on their desire to find subjects and technique that were genuinely Canadian. They found answer in the fusion of a distinctively Canadian landscape and imported modernist technique.

Two important factors that shaped the artists' response to the landscape were: the post-Darwinian evolutionary sense of the land as the source of life and the "northern fact" of Canadian geography. The former, the evolutionary concern, so much a part of the poetry of the Confederation Group was still an important intellectual issue in Canada in the 1920s to judge from the debates in The Canadian Forum. The latter, as Carl Berger has indicated, was a reflection of the dominant political myth of the 1880s that attributed Canada's distinctive political identity to her northern geography.

Group of Seven

For many Canadians returning from the Great War, including W. A. Irwin who was to become editor of Maclean's Magazine and for some of the returning artists, Lawren Harris, Frederick Varley, and A. Y. Jackson, the hope for the future centered in the Canadian land which distinguished Canada from Europe. Besides the above mentioned artists, there were four more artists, Franklin Charmichael, Frank Johnston, Arthur Lismer and J.E.H. MacDonald. All these seven artists formed a group which was known as the 'Group of Seven'. They contemplated over the question of subject of poetry which could be distinctively Canadian. For them, there was a sense of leaving behind the wasted lands of the battlefields of Europe for the fresh, clear northland of Canada. In their opinion, it was the northern environment which shaped the vision of Canadians as the artist. The Group was a romantic and nationalist movement. In 1919, MacDonald believed that "the Canadian spirit in art is just entering on possession of its heritage." But as Harris was to point out, in Canada as distinct from Europe, the inspiration for art was to be found in the wilderness. The new vision of the Canadian landscape generated by the Group of Seven was vast, strong, lonely, northern. It was centered in the Pre-Cambrian Shield. Primarily a response to the wilderness of northern Ontario and Quebec, it also
reflected the rugged coastlines of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and later, by 1930, the arctic shores of Baffin Island. This vision gave an outgrowth of an older social Darwinism now. In Canada, this strain was particularly associated with the north by the popular verse of Robert Service. "This is the Law of the Yukon, that only the Strong shall thrive: / That surely the Weak shall perish, and only the Fit survive."

Perhaps this Darwinian inheritance accelerated the emergent nationalist sense of a youthful "new" Canada. Although immeasurably old in geologic time, because the land was unpeopled it was seen as "young" and "virile". Canada was a country whose face was yet to be painted, whose voice was yet to be found, whose history was yet to be written. The typical Group of Seven landscape of the rock, trees, and rivers of the pre-Cambrian Shield displays the characteristics of this essentially northern land. MacDonald had described some of these characteristics in 1919 when he wrote that the Canadian spirit in art was opening a new world, "not often so softly beautiful as ruggedly strong, large, homely, free, and frankly simple in colour."

iii) Third Phase

The poets associated with *Preview* and *First Statement* offered Klein an opportunity to engage more closely than he might have otherwise done with contemporary poetry. However, Klein's response to this opportunity in the mid-forties was very different from what it had been in the late twenties and early thirties. Klein's poetry passed through two stages. The first stage comprises poems published between 1929 and 1944 - most of which were collected in *Hath Not a Jew* (1940) and *Poems* (1944). These point out his Jewish background and are written in a style that owes something to Biblical rhetorical on the one hand and to such varied English influences as the Renaissance poets and T. S. Eliot on the other. In 1944 he also published, the *Hitleriad*, a satire on Nazism written in form and style derived from Alexander Pope. The second stage of Klein's poetry coincided with a new and vigorous poetry in Montreal, centering on the Journals *Preview* and *First Statement.* The influence of the poets of these groups - which included F. R. Scott, P. K. Page, Patrick Anderson, Layton and Louis Dudek -Klein experimented, then, with a more broadly based poetry and a somewhat simpler style. A collection of this new poetry, *The Rocking Chair* and *Other Poems* was published in 1948 which won a Governor General's Award in 1974. Two years after his death, *The Collected Poems of A. M. Klein* was published. Klein's work, as a whole is characterized with the voice of an
It is also to note here that in his poetry he is the voice of three separate cultural traditions: Jewish, English and French Canadian.

**Postmodernist /Contemporary Period**

Canadian poetry of the eighties has been given considerable space by Margaret Atwood in the anthology *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse in English* (1982). She describes Canadian poetry as "spiky, though, flexible, various and vital" in the Introduction to the anthology which is very appropriately applicable to the recent verses by the young contemporary poets of Canada. The poets who are born after 1940, continuously experiment with the form of poetry to achieve an original medium of expression, and thus offer a verbal rendering of the Canadian expression which, by the virtue of its contexts is unique and engrossing. Atwood indicates that it is only in recent times that Canadian poetry has come of age, and has become abundantly productive. She accords the Canadian poetry of today a place among the great: "Canadian poetry like Canadian statesmanship or something of the sort, was finally becoming 'International' and taking its rightful place among the great." The first recurring feature of much of the contemporary Canadian poetry is its attempt to be simple, lyrical and at the same time, magical both in its music and imagery. However, the Canadian poets of today do not aim at the prismatic images of colorful romanticism. They aim at clarity of expression and a vividness of vocalization that produces, through its consistent refusal to wallow in any verbal mess, a magic of silent evocation.

The constant effort of the poet to achieve sparseness in diction and lucidity of lyric exposition of the idea does not, however, debar him / her from exploring the underworld of the subconscious stream of thoughts. The Canadian poets arrange images and metaphors in a harmonious structure that create the depth of the poet's dreams and subconscious desires. Much of the Canadian poetry of today is transfused with the light reflected from the subconscious, the credit goes to the Canadian poet for his success in exposing the subconscious through a fanciful ornamentation of translucent images and verbal felicities that stir the imagination and intellect of the reader with an immediacy that speaks of the level of achievement of the contemporary Canadian poets.

Contemporary Canadian poets aim at achieving a language of lyricism and a language of the subconscious. In the process they favor the language with
metaphorical suggestiveness that satisfies the imagination of the reader as it widens its range through a paradoxical use of consciousness and terseness in the graphic evocation of the suggestive image. Thus the language of the contemporary Canadian poetry acquires fertility in style and expression. While, on the one hand, the language in contemporary Canadian poetry is found obtaining a lyric fluidity, a suffusion of the strange light reflected from the underworld of the subconscious and metaphoric suggestiveness of wide ranging effects on the other hand, it gains in vitality and in sense of sensuous physicality through the frequent use of sexual imagery chosen with fresh, feeling and uninhibited and emancipated perception of the relationship between man and man and man and woman. Canadian poetry acquires vitality, freshness, immediacy and an all-pervading touch of the intimate and the everyday by drawing freely upon the liberated attitude towards sex in life. Sexual motifs and imagery are placed very naturally in the body of contemporary Canadian poetry about human family; thus the poets remove the categories of a social taboo from their references to sex the roughness and crudity. Canadian poets can be credited for their sensitive and imaginative initiative of language for expression of emotional and imaginative attachment to the essential things of life without any social inhibition.

However, many poems by the Canadian contemporary poets sound bewitching and even, rhythmically and photographically, enticing, but torment the reader's head as to what may be the meaning of its content. The contemporary Canadian poets are performing their functions dutifully by creating new sets of words and images for poetic effects. The experiment in language also provides room for witty exposure of the modern situation. In an interesting poem entitled, "Wayman in Love" Tom Wayman very interestingly portrays a dramatic situation where two lovers cannot go into bed and make love peacefully as Freud and Marx haunt their conscience and will not let them caress each other like spontaneous lovers.

Ultimately, of course, the impression left by contemporary Canadian poetry is that of intense passionate humanism. The intense humanity of the young Canadian poets permeates the poetry created by them: and that is the final hallmark of great poetry. And in that respect, the contemporary poetry of Canada transcends the barrier of the local, and attains a universality of appeal. Canadian poetry has come a long way from its early stage of imitation and directionless search for new paths; it has achieved a unique style, which the young Canadian poets can call their own, that marks it out from the English poetry written in the other countries of the world.
the ultimate hallmark of humanity gives contemporary Canadian poetry universality in appeal that removes from it the stigma of the local. It can be and will be enjoyed and appreciated by any poetry lover anywhere in the world.

➤ **Analysis of the Poems:**

**Leonard Cohen: 'You Have the Lovers',**

The poem "You have the Lovers" by Leonard Cohen is from his 1961 anthology *The Spice Box of the Earth*. As a young man, Cohen spent some time in Hydra, Greece, where he fell in love with Marianne Ihlen. In an interview with Kari Hesthamar, Cohen discusses the intimacy they shared and connects it to the landscape of Hydra and the objects there. The relationship between love and the landscape reflects the imagery of "You have the Lovers," illuminating the themes and implications of the poem. Cohen says:

"It's just a sense that I was privileged; the sunlight, the woman, the child, the table, the work, the gardenia, the order, the mutual respect and honour that we gave to each other—that's really what matters.... I don't remember how we split up, somehow we just moved and we just separated. The periods of separations became longer and longer, and then somehow it collapsed. Kind of weightlessly, like ashes falling. There was no confrontation, there was no discussion, in fact I don't remember how it happened. She was in Oslo, I was in New York struggling to make a living, and she was, I suppose, struggling to find some sort of situation, to take care of the child, and the distances grew and grew until we were leading different lives...."

Similar to the opening stanza of "You have the Lovers," Cohen emphasizes specific objects associated with the beloved. Analogous to his poem, he orders them in a hierarchy of intimacy. He writes, "You have the lovers, / they are nameless, their histories only for each other. / and you have the room, the bed and the windows". Comparable to "the sunlight, the woman, the child," Cohen positions the least intimate first. Sunlight, although familiar, can only be indirectly felt through the heat it emits, and it can be observed, its absence of texture or sound gives it an ethereal quality, removing it from humanity. The sunlight is the furthest from him; however, "the women," the closest and most intimate, is placed at the centre. Moreover, "child" has a connotation to pains; limited life experience does not allow them to comprehend romantic love. This objective onlooker is detached from their closeness.
Similarly, in "You have the Lovers," the room signifies an ambiguous space, like the sun it displaces, and locates intimacy. The "bed," a shared intimate space, is placed at the centre, and the "window," like "child," invites an outside gaze last. Cohen uses darkness to symbolize intimacy. The lovers are being shut in the darkened room, "buried" in the bed. The windows are "blackened" and the door is closed. This is an experience that is insular and specific to them. This reflects the tension between intimacy and objectivity Cohen addresses. In an earlier description of his time spent in Hydra, Cohen says,

"when you picked up a cup you knew by the way that it fitted into your hand that it was the cup that you always had been looking for. And the table that you sat at, that was the table that you wanted to lean on, and the wine, that was ten cents a gallon, was the wine that you wanted to drink, the price you wanted to pay". He describes Hydra as a space where everything is meant for him and specific to him. However, he refers to familiar objects making a widely understood concept and feeling, very subjective similar to the insular love and intimacy developed in this poem.

Cohen evokes nature to symbolize how love will inevitably be lost. The room becomes a dense garden,

full of colours, smells, sounds you have never known.

The bed is smooth as a wafer of sunlight,

in the midst of the garden it stands alone.

In the bed the lovers, slowly and deliberately and silently

perform the act of love.

A garden signifies abundant life but also inevitable decay. Earlier lines illustrate this unavoidable loss and potential for growth. Cohen writes, "Your children grow up, they leave you, /they become soldiers and riders/ Your mate dies after a life of service/ Who knows you? Who remembers you". Analogous to the garden children represent generational continuity. The disconnection from the parents to pursue careers suggests this bond must be severed to facilitate growth. The lovers confront the prospect of their story becoming lost. This breaking of familial bonds symbolizes a loss of memory. The image of the garden represents how love is lost organically. The bed is isolated in this space and it is thin and fragile as sunlight. Sex is depicted
as an act that is temporary; the conditional connection of children to their parents reflects the fleeting aspect of performance. Anonymity arises when these bonds are broken suggesting relationships temporarily establish a person's identity. Furthermore, Cohen's evocation of the human body emblemizes an indifference towards the inevitable loss he confronts. He writes:

Their eyes are closed,
as tightly as if heavy coins of flesh lay on them,
Their lips are bruised with new and old bruises.
Her hair and his beard are hopelessly tangled.

"Coins" were used to be placed on the eyes of the dead in ancient times. The conflation of coins with flesh suggests an exchange is being made. This mutual sacrifice is associated with death and supports the reading that the end of their relationship is unavoidable. Moreover, the bruises signify overlapped time frames; the layering of new pain onto old pain suggests there has been no time for healing. Lips are used to speak and to express love; they wear the reminder of a wound, illustrating how love and the sacrifice of love will result in pain and loss. The "hopeless" entanglement of their hair reinforces this reading. Hair, in its texture, colour, and length, is a feature unique to every person. This mingling of such distinct features illustrates a false sense of unity. The naturalness of death and pain suggests the speaker is indifferent to this loss of love.

In the subsequent lines, love is depicted as consumable. The ambiguity of who instigates physical contact reflects this interpretation they are indifferent about the unavoidable end to their love. The comparison of "her" flesh to a "mouth" suggests love is consumptive. Eating embodies a tension between temporary and long term sustenance. Food upholds the body for a short period of time, but people consume regularly. The temporary act embedded in a long-term cycle reflects the fleeting quality of love. Through evoking this in a natural and quotidian process, the end of love is normalized. This familiarization coincides with the reading that the speaker is indifferent to love's fleeting qualities.

Leonard Cohen, "The Genius"

"The Genius" by Leonard Cohen was first published in 1961 in The Spice Box of Earth, Cohen's second published collection of poetry. A casual reading of the poem
suggests that it is about love. The repeated use of anaphora at the beginning of each of the stanzas serves to propagate this effect, "For you" being interpreted as a loving sentiment. It shows a man so overcome with love that he is willing to alter himself in any way necessary to pacify his beloved, and to detach himself easily from his Jewish heritage.

However, a closer reading of the poem makes it clear that his repetition is not meant as a separation at all, but rather an illustration of his constant connection and devotion to Judaism. He uses each stanza as an opportunity to embody a different Jewish stereotype and can easily shift in and out of them because, to him, they are nothing more than meaningless caricatures created by jealous outsiders as a means to persecute the Jewish people. Ultimately, though, no matter how he may shift, the underlying message of each stanza is that, no matter what stereotype is placed upon him, whether it be him as "a banker jew" or "a doctor jew," he will always remain a Jew, and no amount of persecution will alter that identity.

It is through this reading of the poem that one's understanding of it shifts, which results in a change in the presence of the continually mentioned "you" from a figure of the beloved to one of the perpetrator of this suffering. This figure could be viewed as the general outside world, but I believe it holds more specific connotations alluding to the Nazi regime, particularly Hitler. Although the poem works to create a general discussion about the persecution of Jewish people by using all manner of stereotypes, the direct referencing to the Holocaust, the greatest source of Jewish persecution, helps to narrow the focus. It is possible to conclude that Cohen names the poem, 'The Genius' to represent Hitler. This idea is only strengthened through the examination of the meaning of the word "genius," of which one of the definitions reads "a person regarded as exerting a powerful influence over another for good or evil," which can most certainly be applied to Hitler's influence over the German population during his time of power.

The opening and closing stanzas work to establish this strong connection to the Holocaust theme. The striking similarity between these two stanzas is that they are the only two stanzas that use diction directly relating to the Holocaust. The final stanza contains the reference to "Dachau," one of the German concentration camps where the Jews were sent to be killed, but the first stanza also employs subtler Holocaust imagery through its use of the term "ghetto," which refers to the areas of Germany that were reserved for Jewish occupancy before the creation of the camps.
Much like the ghettos can be viewed as a precursor for the later horrors that would result, the first stanza is a prelude to how the poem will conclude in death. The stanza begins with the speaker proclaiming that he will "dance" for this mysterious "you" figure, an innocent enough sentiment. He then says that he will "put white stocking / on [his] twisted limbs," presenting the unsuspecting reader with the first image of distorted synecdoche that will develop further throughout the work, and finally ending with the promise of death by adding "poison" to the "wells / across the town"(6-7). This reference to poison demonstrates a clear foreshadowing to the poison that will be used in the concentration camps that will end not only the poem, but also the lives of the Jewish people. In much the way that this stanza begins with innocence and culminates in death, so too does the whole poem, but it is not met without resistance.

The first stanza ends with this violent image of death committed by poison, and establishes the violent tone that will continue to be reflected throughout the entirety of the poem. In the second stanza, the speaker refers to himself as "an apostate jew," a Jewish individual who has renounced his claim to the faith, but whether this is because of his own choices or the forced choice of a greater authority is unclear until he speaks to "the Spanish priest." This event is possibly being referenced as the beginning of the Jewish persecution the speaker works to uncover and dispel throughout the poem. However, he does not choose to be silent about this injustice but rather fight against it, using both words and violent action. He even heightens this claim by adding that he knows "where the bones / of the child are hid," to prove to the priest that not only is he willing to perform a sacrifice, but he has done it before. The speaker is threatening the priest with his own demise should he try to separate the speaker from his faith.

The violence continues in the third stanza with the "banker jew," who says he will "bring to ruin / a proud old hunting king / and end his line." Initially, one could believe that perhaps the speaker will bring ruin to his reputation or finances, but the violence deepens in the final line, which promises an end to his lineage. The "proud old hunting king" can be viewed as an authoritative figure much like the "priest" and the "you" figure, and as with the other two the speaker shows that he is unafraid and quite prepared to use violence to against those who would try to harm him. It is through these references that the speaker truly cements his undying and often radical devotion to his faith.
Raymond Souster: 'Young Girls',

In the poem 'Young Girls' Raymond Souster uses different devices to portray a predominant image of sexual promise by the young girls. The poem depicts the beginning of sexual desire in women, the confusion they experience and tentativeness to act upon these desires. Faithfully following the schematic of a traditional English sonnet, Raymond Sousters' Young Girls depicts the coming of age in women, with conflicting emotions in regard to the male speaker. Analyzing the young girls from "this dark doorway" put the speaker in a curious light. The fact that the young girls are passing by in groups "two, three together, hand in hand" shows the reluctance to pass the speaker alone. This gives the projection that the speaker would be male. The active description of the experience believed to take place in young girls, also leads the reader into a sense that the girls are wary of the speaker. Where does his knowledge come from? The laughter gives a view of dislike for women in the speaker as he objectifies the young women seeing them blossom ready for him to try to attract. Analyzing the speaker leads to belief that Sousters' 'Young Girls' depicts the coming of age in women.

The last four stanzas have respectively five, four, three and two lines. The falling prey of a man is suggested by have lack of words or being totally trapped by,

"Drifting the summer
labyrinths of love."

Raymond Souster: Night Raider: Summary:

Raymond Souster has opinionated about his writing as-

"Whoever I write to, I want to make the substance of the poems so immediate, so real, so clear, that the reader feels the same exhilaration— be it fear or joy—that I derived from the experience, object, or mood that triggered the poem in the first place .... I like to think I am "talking out" my poems rather than consciously dressing them up in the trappings of the academic school."

So, his poems are his dialogues with the readers. The poem, 'Night Raider', presents a picture of an animal, (maybe it is human kind) as he calls it, 'I get a picture of my animal'. Poet, as an onlooker, can see the animal in the narrow alley eating the 'choicest refuse' from the newspaper wrapping. It gorges so frantically that it's not
able to be aware of the sound it makes. It is raining which has kept the poet still sleepy and can see that its skin is itself working as its shelter as if breathing coat. Poet portrays the hungry animal like the night raider.

**Glossary and Notes:**

**Nova Scotia:** Canadian province located on the eastern seaboard of North America, one of the four original provinces along with New Brunswick, Ontario, and Quebec that constituted the Dominion of Canada in 1867.

**Check Your Progress:**

**A) Choose the correct alternatives:**

1. The earliest documents in the Canadian literature were unadorned narratives of———.
   - i) romance
   - ii) alienation
   - iii) religion
   - iv) travel and exploration

2. The Confederation Group was important in the 1920s to judge from the debates in ———.
   - i) The Canadian Forum
   - ii) The New World
   - iii) The Confederation Forum
   - iv) None of these

3. The Group of Seven poets concentrated on the landscape or ——— Canada,
   - i) Eastern
   - ii) Western
   - iii) Northern
   - iv) Southern

4. ——— was a major poet in during the Third Phase of the Modernist Period,
   - i) Atwood
   - ii) A.M.Klein
   - iii) Lawren Harris
   - iv) A.Y. Jackson

   - i) Rome
   - ii) Japan
   - iii) America
   - iv) Greece

6. The Animal in the poem, Night Raider, is eating———.
   - i) Grass
   - ii) Stale bread
   - iii) choicest refuse
   - iv) meat

**B) Answer in one word/phrase/sentence.**

1. In which two major divisions the literature of Canada can be divided?
2. Who contributed to Canadian Literature in the beginning?
3. How many phases of Modernist Period are formed in Canadian Literature?
4. Which marks Canadian Poetry bears before 1900?
5. Which two important factors shaped the artists' response to the landscape?
6. Which poem by A. M. Klein satirizes Nazism?

C) **Answer the following questions in detail:**
1. What did the poetry of the pre-confederation period deal with? Explain with examples.
2. What were the characteristics of Canadian literature?
3. How does Cohen contribute to the Canadian Literature?
4. With reference to Canadian poets, comment on their attitude towards nature.
5. "The intense humanity of the young Canadian poets permeates the poetry created by them." Justify.
6. Give an estimate of the Canadian poets of modernist period.

D) **Write short notes:**
   i) Group of Seven Poets
   ii) Confederation poets
   iii) Nature in Canadian Poetry
   iv) Contemporary Canadian poets
   v) Confederation period and the famous poets of the time
1.9 References to Further Study:
