SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY, KOLHAPUR

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION

M. A. Part-I : English

Semester-II : CC5

Fiction in English : Modern and Postmodern

(In accordance with National Education Policy 2020)
(Academic Year 2023-24 onwards)

Prescribed for **M. A. Part-I**

Copies : 1,000

Published by:
Dr. V. N. Shinde
Registrar,
Shivaji University,
Kolhapur-416 004

Printed by :

Shri. B. P. Patil
Superintendent,
Shivaji University Press,
Kolhapur-416 004

ISBN- 978-93-89345-81-0

★ Further information about the Centre for Distance and Online Education & Shivaji University may be obtained from the University Office at Vidyanagar, Kolhapur-416 004, India.

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Preface

Dear students,

This book contains Self-instructional Materials on the Fiction in English : Modern and Postmodern for Semester II. You are advised to read the syllabus prescribed for this paper carefully. The syllabus includes General Topics as well as different texts. As it is not possible to print entire texts in this book, each unit contains a very detailed summary of the text prescribed for your study.

Each unit is interspersed with 'Check Your Progress' exercises, which are simple questions requiring answers in a word, a phrase or a sentence each. The purpose of these Self-check exercises is to make you go back to the main unit and get your answers for these questions on your own. The model answers are, of course, given at the end of each unit. But you should not look them up before you have tried to write your own answers.

Each unit gives you a list of reference books. You should find time to visit a library of your centre/college to have a look at the original books as well as books on appreciation of Fiction.

There are exercises given at the end of each unit, which contain broad-answer type questions which you have to face in the final examination. Try to write answers to these questions with the help of the material in the units. Write answers in your own English, and try to refer to the books.

We wish you best luck in your final examination.

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INDEX

Each Unit begins with the section objectives -

Objectives are directive and indicative of :

1. what has been presented in the unit and
2. what is expected from you
3. what you are expected to know pertaining to the specific unit, once you have completed working on the unit.

The self-check exercises with possible answers will help you understand the unit in the right perspective. Go through the possible answers only after you write your answers. These exercises are not to be submitted to us for evaluation. They have been provided to you as study tools to keep you on the right track as you study the unit.

Dear Students,

The SLM is simply a supporting material for the study of this paper. It is also advised to see the new syllabus 2023-24 and study the reference books & other related material for the detailed study of the paper.

Unit-1
Modernism in Fiction
Hermann Hesse (1877-1962) - *Siddhartha* (1922)

Contents

1.0 Objectives:

After completing the study of this unit, you will

- know about 'modernism'
- know about the life (and works) of Hermann Hesse
- know the plot summery of the novel *Siddhartha*
- learn about the characters in *Siddhartha*
- learn the themes and other aspects in *Siddhartha*
- be able to answer the questions on the novel *Siddhartha*

1.1 Introduction:

This unit begins with the discussion about the term 'postmodernism', and continues to take into account a few biographical details of a renowned German writer, Hermann Hesse (1877-1962). It also presents the detailed summary of his famous novel *Siddhartha*, the analysis of the characters in the novel and the critical commentary on the themes, motifs and symbols used in the novel.

1.2 Modernism

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms (Chris Baldick) defines 'modernism' as follows:

"Modernism is a general term applied retrospectively to the wide range of experimental and *Avant-Garde* trends in the literature (and other arts) of the early 20th century, including 'Symbolism', 'Futurism', 'Expressionism', 'Imagism', 'Vorticism', 'Dada', and 'Surrealism', along with the innovations of unaffiliated writers. Modernist literature is characterized chiefly by a rejection of 19th century traditions and of their consensus between author and reader: the conventions of 'Realism', for instance, were abandoned by Franz Kafka and other novelists, and by expressionist drama, while several poets rejected traditional 'meters' in favour of 'free verse'. Modernist writers tended to see themselves as an *avant-garde* disengaged from bourgeois values, and disturbed their readers by adopting complex and difficult new forms and styles. In fiction, the accepted continuity of chronological development was upset by Joseph Conrad, Marcel Proust, and William Faulkner, while James Joyce and Virginia Woolf attempted new ways of tracing the flow of characters' thoughts in their 'Stream-of-Consciousness' styles. In poetry,

Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot replaced the logical exposition of thoughts with 'collages' of fragmentary images and complex 'Allusions'. Luigi Pirandello and Bertolt Brecht opened up the theatre to new forms of abstraction in place of realist and Naturalist representation. Modernist writing is predominantly cosmopolitan, and often expresses a sense of urban cultural dislocation, along with an awareness of new anthropological and psychological theories. Its favoured techniques of juxtaposition and multiple 'Point-of-view' challenge the reader to re-establish a coherence of meaning from fragmentary forms".

"On or about December 1910 human nature changed." The great modernist writer Virginia Woolf wrote this in her essay "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" in 1924. "All human relations shifted," Woolf continued, "and when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature." This intentionally provocative statement was hyperbolic in its pinpointing of a date, but almost anyone who looks at the evolution of Western culture must note a distinct change in thought, behavior, and cultural production beginning sometime in the late nineteenth century and coming to fruition sometime around the Second World War. This change, whether in art, technology, philosophy or human behavior, is generally called Modernism.

Modernism like Romanticism, designates the broad literary and cultural movement that spanned all of the arts and even spilled into politics and philosophy. Like Romanticism, Modernism was highly varied in its manifestations between the arts and even within each art. The dates when Modernism flourished are in dispute, but few scholars identify its genesis as being before 1860 and World War II is generally considered to mark an end of the movement's height. Modernist art initially began in Europe's capitals, primarily London, Milan, Berlin, St. Petersburg, and especially Paris; it spread to the cities of the United States and South America after World War I; by the 1940s, Modernism had thoroughly taken over the American and European academy, where it was challenged by nascent Postmodernism in the 1960s.

The roots of Modernism are in the rapidly changing technology of the late nineteenth century and in the theories of such late nineteenth-century thinkers as **Charles Darwin** (1809-1882), **Karl Marx** (1818-1883), **Friedrisch Nietzsche** (1844-1900) and **Sigmund Freud** (1856-1939). Modernism influenced painting first (Impressionism and Cubism are forms of Modernism), but in the decade before World War I such writers as Ezra Pound, Filippo Marinetti, James Joyce, and

Guillaume Apollinaire translated the advances of the visual arts into literature. Such characteristically modernist techniques as stream-of-consciousness narration and allusiveness, by the late 1930s, spilled into popular writing and became standard.

The movement's concerns were with the accelerating pace of society toward destruction and meaninglessness. In the late 1800s many of society's certainties were undermined. Marx demonstrated that social class was created, not inherent; Freud reduced human individuality to an instinctive sex drive; Darwin provided fossil evidence that the Earth was much older than the estimate based on scripture; and Nietzsche argued that even the most deeply held ethical principles were simply constructions. Modernist writers attempted to come to terms with where humanity stood after its cornerstones had been pulverized. The modernists sifted through the shards of the past looking for what was valuable and what could inspire construction of a new society.

The students are advised to refer to *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (by M. H. Abrams) as well to understand the term 'modernism'.

1.2.1 Check Your Progress

1. What is the title of Virginia Woolf's essay in which she discussed the beginning of 'modern' era?
2. What are names of late 19th century thinkers who paved the way for 'modernism'?
3. Write a few names of the modern novelists who used 'Stream-of-Consciousness' technique in their works.

1.2.1 Terms to Remember

1. **Allusion** – An allusion is a direct or indirect reference to some well-known historical person or event, saying, proverb, line or sentence from a work of literature.

2. ***Avant-Garde*** – "Advance guard," a military term for the shock troops who open the way for an invasion. The term was apparently first used in reference to art and literature by Gabriel-Désiré Laverdant. Ezra Pound stated that "the artist has at last been aroused to the fact that the war between him and the world is a war without truce." On literary and artistic battlefields, the avant-garde aims to shock the middle classes, jar their conventional taste. More broadly, avant-garde art aims at innovation, and at a revolutionary reassessment of the techniques and role of art.

3. **Dadaism** – It is a modernist, *avant-garde* movement founded by Romanian writer Tristan Tzara in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1916 to rebel against the "civilization" that produced World War I, a war members of the movement saw as insane. Dadaism rapidly spread to the United States and to other European countries, where its adherents sought to destabilize the art and philosophy of the time, offering in their place seemingly insane, nihilistic works designed to protest the madness of war. Dadaists attacked materialistic, nationalistic, bourgeois attitudes and values; self-consciously insisted on absolute artistic freedom; ignored standard logic and restraint; and made a point of doing and saying shocking things. Major centers of the movement aside from Zurich included Berlin, Cologne, Hanover, New York, and Paris.

4. **Expressionism** – Expressionism in modern literature can be referred to as any deliberate distortion of reality. In drama it applies to a style of play-writing emphasising emotional and symbolic or abstract representations of reality. In novels or short stories, it involves the presentation of an objective outer world through intensified impressions and moods of characters. Examples: Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, Arthur Miller's *The Death of a Salesman*.

5. **Free verse** – Form of a poem whose structure is not established by *rhyme* and a regular *metre*, but, for example, by *repetition*, *rhythm* and sound elements such as alliteration (and *assonance*).

6. **Futurism** – The Italian writer Filippo Tommaso Marinetti was the leader of the Futurist movement, a radical wing of early-twentieth-century modernism. The Futurist Manifesto of 1909 invoked the brutal power of the machine age to abolish the past, and advocated setting fire to the libraries and flooding the museums. Futurism made war on the classics, proclaiming that "a roaring car that seems to be driving under shrapnel is more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace." The Futurists complained that "immobility, ecstasy, and sleep" had been prized in literature up until their own day, and trumpeted their intention to instead "exalt the aggressive gesture, the feverish insomnia, the athletic step."

7. **Imagism** – Imagism was an *avant-garde* movement in poetry during the early 20th century, especially between the years 1913 and 1917. The original stimulus for the movement was a series of essays by the critic T. E. Hulme, who protested against the "messy" and sentimental manner of Georgian poetry, and called for the production of colder, harder verse. Imagist poems were usually written in free verse.

Among the movement's followers were, in addition to Ezra Pound, H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) and William Carlos Williams. The best-known Imagist poem is probably Pound's "In a Station of the Metro" (1916).

8. **Stream-of-Consciousness** – We may define stream-of-consciousness fiction as a type of fiction in which the basic emphasis is placed on the exploration of a character's consciousness for the purpose of revealing his mental nature. The important characteristics of the movement of consciousness is its ability to move freely in time and space, imitating the psychological principle of free association, controlled by memory, senses, imagination. Examples, James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.

9. **Surrealism** – An artistic movement extending from the late 1920s through the late 1940s, mostly centered in the visual arts but with repercussions in literature. Influenced by Futurism, Dadaism, and Freud's notion of the unconscious, the Surrealists explored bizarre, fantastic, hallucinatory juxtapositions of objects, intended to disconcert and enthrall the spectator (or reader). The movement's founder, André Breton, wrote in his *Surrealist Manifesto* (1924) that Surrealism is "based in the belief in the superior reality of certain previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dreams, in the disinterested play of thought.". In Surrealism the image is unmediated, as in dreams; we are directly exposed to associations and meanings, deprived of the distance required for measured or reflective interpretation. Yet along with the vulnerability that attends such exposure, there is often a wild, anarchic freedom implied by Surrealist practice.

1.3 Hermann Hesse: Life and Works:

Born in Calw, Germany, in 1877, Hermann Hesse was influenced by his family's mix of background and beliefs. His father, a Pietist-Lutheran, believed that man is basically evil and requires austere discipline. His parents and grandparents had been missionaries in India and the far East, and their homes yielded the flavors of Indian, Buddhist, and Mohammedan cultures. Hesse said, "From the time I was a child I breathed in and absorbed the spiritual side of India just as deeply as Christianity."

Hypersensitive, imaginative, and headstrong, Hermann behaved rebelliously while yearning to be a poet and magician. School authorities doubted his sanity, and he even fared poorly at schools for mentally challenged and emotionally disturbed children. Instead, he stayed at home, gardening, assisting in his father's publishing

house, and reading books on Eastern philosophy and religion in his grandfather's library.

In 1899, Hesse, who had become something of a misfit, moved to Basel, Switzerland, determined to learn the art of living with other people. In 1904, he married and moved to remote Gaienhofen. Seven years later, he left for a trip to the East, expecting to find wisdom in India, which he considered to be a center place innocence; he also hoped to discover answers to his personal problems. Finding only poverty and commercialized Buddhism, he returned, suffering from heat exhaustion, dysentery, and disillusionment.

World War I left an already unsettled Hesse badly shaken. Nationalistic enough to hope for a German victory, he also abhorred war and argued for internationalism. That he volunteered his services to the German embassy in Bern and coedited two weeklies for German prisoners of war did little to dissuade his detractors among both the militarists and the pacifists. His father's death in 1916 further compounded his growing despair. At this time Hesse underwent Jungian psychoanalysis, a process that put him in touch with the irrational forces that lurk beneath both individuals and society at large as well as with the idea of a self-quest through synthesis of these forces.

In 1919, he settled alone in Montagnola, where *Siddhartha* was written. Persuaded that a postwar Germany was susceptible to change, Hesse helped to found and edit a periodical devoted to social reform, pacifism, and internationalism. Resurgent nationalism and spreading communism caused him to terminate his association with the monthly in 1921. Indignities and waning faith in Germany's political future persuaded Hesse to become a citizen of Switzerland in 1924. During this period, Hesse divorced his first wife, and, after a brief second marriage, married Ninon Dolbin, with whom he lived until his death.

During World War II, Hesse was again vilified by the German right-wing press. The bitterness and shock caused by the extermination of his wife's family by the Nazis stayed with Hesse for the rest of his life. Until his death from leukemia in 1962, he remained in Montagnola, rarely leaving it and never going outside of Switzerland, not even when he was awarded the Goethe Prize of Frankfurt am Main and the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1946.

1.3.1 Check Your Progress:

Answer in one word/phrase/sentence.

1. When did Hermann Hesse receive the Nobel Prize for literature?
2. When did Hermann Hesse visit India?
3. When did Hermann Hesse become a citizen of Switzerland?
4. In which region *Siddhartha* was written?

1.4 Plot Summary of the novel *Siddhartha*:

Hermann Hesse's novel *Siddhartha* tells the story of a young Brahman who explores the deepest meanings of life and the self. Siddhartha's quest for knowledge passes through several phases. During the first phase, he seeks wisdom in various religious philosophies such as Hinduism, asceticism, and Buddhism. He eventually abandons these paths, however, when he realizes that they all disrupt the unity of life by denying the physical body. After coming to this realization, Siddhartha pursues a life of physical pleasures and worldly success. He becomes a great lover and a successful businessman, but he eventually abandons these pleasures after they prove to be too superficial to satisfy his deeper spiritual side. In the third phase of his quest, he tries to reconcile the spiritual and physical sides of himself by becoming a simple ferryman. While performing his daily task of ferrying people across the river, he listens closely to the natural beauty of the river, and the river gradually teaches him how to recognize the essential unity of all life.

Part I – Siddhartha's Religious Quest for Knowledge

The first section of the novel describes Siddhartha's attempts to follow various religions. At first, he follows his father's example by performing the daily rituals of the Hindu religion. Everyone loves the handsome, happy, young Siddhartha, and they are convinced that he will soon become a successful Brahman like his father. Beneath Siddhartha's external devotion and contentment, however, he harbors an insatiable longing to explore the deeper meanings of life, which cannot be learned through codified religious rituals. When a group of wandering ascetics called Samanas pass through his village, he decides to leave his father's home and Brahman religion to follow after the Samanas' ascetic way of life. In addition, he persuades his closest friend, Govinda, to come with him and embrace this new path to knowledge. At first, Siddhartha's father is extremely angry and forbids Siddhartha to join the

Samanas, but Siddhartha eventually wins his father's reluctant approval by demonstrating his firm determination to follow the Samanas' ascetic way of life.

Having already learned discipline and determination as a Brahman, Siddhartha immediately adapts to the Samanas' way of life, and he quickly masters the ascetic arts of fasting, suffering, meditation, and self-denial. He renounces all worldly pleasures and conquers the self's desires. Ultimately, however, he questions the Samanas' ascetic philosophies when he realizes that the path of self-denial can only bring temporary relief from suffering. When Siddhartha hears about another holy man, Gotama the illustrious Buddha, he convinces Govinda to go with him to learn about his new religious philosophy.

Together, Siddhartha and Govinda learn about the Fourfold Way, the Eightfold Path, and other Buddhist beliefs. Govinda is convinced by Gotama's teachings and decides to convert to the Buddhist religion, but Siddhartha remains unconvinced. In particular, he is troubled by a fundamental contradiction in the Buddha's philosophy. On one hand, the Buddha embraces the unity of all things, but on the other hand he denies this unity by seeking to overcome the physical world. Disillusioned with religions, Siddhartha forsakes all religious paths to knowledge. He sadly departs from Govinda and sets out on his own to find the meaning of life.

Part II – Siddhartha's Material Quest for Physical Pleasure

In the second section of the novel, Siddhartha turns away from religion and begins trying to learn from the physical pleasures of the material world. He wanders through the forest until he comes to a river, which he is ferried across by a kind old ferryman. He then wanders into the town where he eventually meets a beautiful young courtesan named Kamala. Kamala quickly convinces him to abandon the simple clothing of the ascetics and take up the fashionable dress of the wealthy. In addition, Kamala also helps Siddhartha get a job with Kamaswami, a rich merchant who lives in the town.

Siddhartha quickly learns the arts of business and becomes a successful trader, and as his success grows he also becomes Kamala's favorite lover. He learns the passionate arts of love from Kamala and the worldly pleasures that money can buy, but he always remains somewhat detached from this new life of pleasure. Unlike the ordinary people who take their business as a serious matter, Siddhartha always sees it as somewhat of a game that he enjoys playing but never takes seriously. Siddhartha does not care whether he wins or loses because he does not see this life as connected

to the deepest core of his self. Consequently, even though he obtains all the worldly pleasures of love and money, Siddhartha begins to grow weary of this lifestyle as well, and he seeks to drown this weariness in gambling, drinking, and sexual pleasure. At the height of his disillusionment, he dreams that he finds Kamala's songbird dead in its cage. Interpreting this dream as a symbol of the death of his own self, Siddhartha leaves the town and forsakes his lifestyle of physical pleasure and worldly success.

Part III – Siddhartha's Vision of the Unity of All Life

In the third section of the novel, Siddhartha leaves Kamala's house and wanders through the forest until he returns to the ferryman's river, where he falls asleep under a tree. By pure coincidence, Govinda happens to pass by while he is sleeping, and Govinda stops to watch over him without knowing it is Siddhartha. When Siddhartha wakes up, he recognizes Govinda, and they are happy to meet again. After Govinda departs, Siddhartha reflects back upon the various paths that he has followed and recognizes that they are all transitory. Consequently, Siddhartha lets these previous experiences die as he contemplates the mystical word "Om" and the essential unity of all life. Having recognized that the river represents this oneness of life, Siddhartha decides to stay at the river with the ferryman, Vasudeva.

While Siddhartha is working for the ferryman, another group of pilgrims pass by on their way to Gotama's funeral, and Kamala is one of them. However, she dies after being bitten by a snake, leaving her eleven-year-old son, who turns out also to be Siddhartha's child; Kamala had become pregnant during her last night with Siddhartha and has named the boy after his father. Young Siddhartha, however, has been spoiled by a life of wealth, so he gets frustrated with Siddhartha's simple life and eventually runs away. At first, Siddhartha tries to control his son and get him to return, but eventually Vasudeva instructs Siddhartha to seek wisdom from the river. While contemplating the river, Siddhartha experiences a vision of the essential unity of all life. Just as the river flows into the sea only to return as rain, all of the various forms and aspects of life flow into each other to form a single whole. In a conversation with Govinda, Siddhartha describes the understanding that he gained from this visionary experience.

"Listen, my friend! I am a sinner and you are a sinner, but someday the sinner will be Brahma again, will someday attain Nirvana, will someday become a Buddha. Now this 'someday' is illusion; it is only a comparison. The sinner is not on the way

to a Buddha-like state; he is not evolving, although our thinking cannot conceive things otherwise. No, the potential Buddha already exists in the sinner; his future is already there. The potential hidden Buddha must be recognized in him, in you, in everybody. The world, Govinda, is not imperfect or slowly evolving along a long path to perfection. No, it is perfect at every moment; every sin already carries grace within it, all small children are potential old men, all sucklings have death within them, all dying people – eternal life. It is not possible for one person to see how far another is on the way; the Buddha exists in the robber and dice player, the robber exists in the Brahmin. During deep meditation it is possible to dispel time, to see simultaneously all the past, present and future, and then everything is good, everything is perfect, everything is Brahman."

In this passage, Siddhartha explains how the endless cycles of birth and death are all part of a single grand unity in Brahman. Once time is overcome and the essential unity of all beings is recognized, everything can be seen in its true light as a manifestation of Brahman. Consequently, both life and death, both joy and sorrow, must be recognized as good. Nothing can be dismissed as inconsequential or unnecessary to the perfection of the whole.

The novel ends with Govinda returning to the river to seek wisdom from Siddhartha, who has now become a wise old sage. Siddhartha explains to Govinda, however, that wisdom cannot be taught and that verbal explanations are traps that keep people from true wisdom. Consequently, instead of discussing philosophies, Siddhartha instructs Govinda to kiss him on the forehead, and this kiss reveals to Govinda the unity of all things. Looking into Siddhartha's face, Govinda also receives a vision of all things becoming one. Thus, the two old friends achieve the wisdom that they had begun seeking together many years before as young men.

1.4.1 Check Your Progress:

Answer in one word/phrase/sentence.

1. At the beginning of *Siddhartha*, everyone was convinced of what?
2. Beneath Siddhartha's external devotion and contentment, what does he yearn?
3. To whom does Siddhartha persuade to come with him and embrace this new path to knowledge?
4. Who convinces Siddhartha to abandon the simple clothing of the ascetics and take up the fashionable dress of the wealthy?

5. Who helps Siddhartha get a job with Kamaswami, a rich merchant who lives in the town?
6. What does Siddhartha dream?
7. Who dies after being bitten by a snake?

1.5 Major and Minor Characters:

Buddha Gotama Buddha/ Illustrious One/ Perfect One/ Sakyamuni

Gotama Buddha is said to have brought to a standstill the cycle of rebirth. Before his enlightenment, he first had been an ascetic and then had turned to high living and the pleasures of the world. Siddhartha recognizes his radiance, but, despite his attraction to Gotama, Siddhartha is disinterested in his teaching and will not become a disciple. Siddhartha reminds the Buddha of his own quest for enlightenment, stating, "You have done so by your own seeking, in your own way, through thought, through meditation, through knowledge, through enlightenment. You have learned nothing through teachings, and so I think, O Illustrious One, that nobody finds salvation through teaching. To nobody, O Illustrious One, can you communicate in words and teachings what happened to you in the hour of your enlightenment." This is the central idea of the novel, that one can find the secret of self-realization only by going one's own way.

Gotama Buddha is a fictionalized version of the historical Gotama Buddha (approximately 563 b.c.-483 b.c.), born Prince Siddhartha Gotama. Gotama is the clan name, and Buddha, which means "to know," is the title which his followers gave to him.

Govinda

Govinda is Siddhartha's childhood friend and confidant. He loves everything about Siddhartha – his eyes, his voice, the way he walked, his grace. Govinda becomes Siddhartha's shadow. Like Siddhartha, Govinda must also go his own way. Siddhartha supports his friend's decision when Govinda leaves him to follow Gotama Buddha, stating, "Often I have thought: will Govinda ever take a step without me, from his own conviction? Now, you are a man and have chosen your own path." The friends meet at strategic points in their lives. After Siddhartha has attained eternal bliss, Govinda kisses his forehead, compelled by love and presentiment. It is through this kiss and not through Siddhartha's teaching that Govinda finally attains union with the universal, eternal essence.

Kamala

Kamala, a well-known courtesan, is beseeched by Siddhartha to teach him her art. She understands him more than even Govinda has; they are mirror images of each other. As Siddhartha tells her, "You are like me; you are different from other people. You are Kamala and no one else, and within you there is a stillness and sanctuary to which you can retreat any time and be yourself, just as I can. Few people have that capacity and yet everyone could have it." When she accuses Siddhartha of remaining a Samana in that he really loves no one, he acquiesces with the observation that "I am like you. You cannot love either, otherwise how could you practice love as an art? Perhaps people like us cannot love." But a time comes when she cannot hear enough about Gotama. Prophetically, she sighs, "One day, perhaps soon, I will also become a follower of this Buddha. I will give him my pleasure garden and take refuge in his teachings." When Siddhartha leaves, she is not surprised. She frees her caged bird and retires from her previous way of life. Having given birth to Siddhartha's son, she takes refuge in the teachings of Gotama. Years later, on hearing of the Buddha's impending death, she travels to see him. To appease her complaining son, she rests along the way near a river, the river where Siddhartha has become a ferryman. Kamala is bitten fatally by a snake; reunited with Siddhartha, she finds peace as she dies by looking into Siddhartha's eyes.

Kamaswami

Kamaswami's name, which means "master of the material world," is an appropriate one for the rich merchant who employs Siddhartha. He is beginning to grow old, and Kamala implies, Siddhartha could become his successor. For twenty years, Siddhartha masters this life only to despair. Thinking of his father, Govinda, and Gotama, he wonders if he had left all of them in order to become a "kamaswami." Unlike Kamala, Kamaswami cannot understand that Siddhartha leaves his life of luxury willfully.

Samanas

The Samanas are wandering ascetics who practice self-denial and meditation. Fasting for days and sleeping naked in forests, they shun beauty, sensuality, and happiness as illusions and lies. They have only one goal, to become empty of thirst, desire, dreams, pleasure, and sorrow, and, thus, to let the Self die. Only this, they feel, will provide the experience of peace and pure thought, an awakening of the

innermost Being that is no longer Self. Siddhartha is attracted to their ways, and, along with Govinda, travels with the Samanas for three years.

Siddhartha

Siddhartha is the precocious son of a Brahman, a member of the highest caste in Hinduism. Beloved by all but unable to find inner peace, he begins his personal search. Abandoning his devout father, he joins the Samanas. Although he learns some skills of spiritual survival from the Samanas, including thinking, waiting, and fasting, he concludes that asceticism is merely an escape from experience.

Siddhartha meets with Gotama the Buddha, who has reached that perfect state of being in which the transmigratory life cycle and agony of time are transcended. However, Siddhartha realizes that no spiritual teaching or doctrine can impart what he wants. He believes teachers and scripture have yielded only second-hand learning, not the firsthand experience from which real knowledge emanates. Thus, Siddhartha embarks on a life of pleasure with Kamala, who shows him the ways of carnal pleasures, and Kamaswami, who introduces him to the ways of material pursuits.

Decades later, Siddhartha feels worthless and alone. Realizing that he has traded his pursuit of Nirvana for its polar opposite, "Sansara," or the world of illusion, spiritual death, and ultimate despair, Siddhartha understands that the cause of his soul sickness is his inability to love.

Sidhartha turns to Vasudeva, the quiet ferryman, and learns from the river. Years of bliss are interrupted by a final encounter with Kamala and the son whom she bore Siddhartha, unbeknownst to him. Siddhartha loves his son, clings to him, and is desolate when he runs away. Again, Siddhartha listens to the river and hears the unity of voices and the word "Om," or perfection. From then on, Siddhartha is in harmony with the stream of life, full of sympathy and compassion, belonging to the unity of all things.

Hesse gives his protagonist the Buddha's personal Sanskrit name, Siddhartha, meaning "he who is on the right road" or "he who has achieved his goal." Hesse does not intend to portray the life of the Buddha but instead attempts to prefigure the pattern of his own hero's transformations. Both Siddharthas, Hesse's character and the religious figure, were unusual children. Buddha left his wife and son to become an ascetic, as Siddhartha leaves his beloved Kamala and his unborn son to take up the contemplative life. Both spent time among mendicant ascetics studying yoga. Buddha spent several years meditating by a river, and Siddhartha's last years are

spent in ferryman's service on a river. Buddha's revelations came to him under a fig tree, whereas Siddhartha arrives at his final decision under a mango tree. Buddha had a visionary experience of all his previous existences and the interconnection of all things, and Siddhartha's final vision also embraces simultaneity and oneness.

Siddhartha's Father

Siddhartha's father, a handsome, teaching Brahman who practices meditation and ablutions in the river, is filled with pride because of his son, who is intelligent and thirsting for knowledge. The author's father, a clergyman, performed ritual ablutions similar to those practiced by Hesse's fictional creation of Sidhartha's father. Siddhartha's father sees his son growing up to be a great learned man – a priest, a prince among Brahmans. As a Brahman, he does not try to control his son through forceful and angry words, but when Siddhartha requests permission to follow the ways of the Samana, he is displeased.

Vasudeva

Vasudeva is another name for Krishna, who is the teacher of Arjuna, the principal hero of the *Bhagavad Gita* and a human incarnation of Vishnu, a Hindu deity. Vasudeva's name means "he in who all thinks abide and who abides in all." Siddhartha's first encounter with Vasudeva, the ferryman, occurs just after he departs from Gotama and Govinda. When Siddhartha remarks on the river's beauty, Vasudeva responds, "I love it above everything. I have often listened to it, gazed at it, and I have always learned something from it. One can learn much from a river." He predicts Siddhartha's return.

More than twenty years pass before Siddhartha does return to the river and contemplates suicide. When the river revives his spirit, Siddhartha determines to remain near it. Remembering the ferryman who so loved the river, he asks to become Vasudeva's apprentice. Vasudeva tells him, "You will learn, but not from me. The river has taught me to listen; you will learn it too." As time goes on, Siddhartha's smile begins to resemble Vasudeva's – radiant, childlike, filled with happiness. Travellers mistake them for brothers; sometimes, when they sit listening together to the river, they have the same thought.

When Siddhartha becomes distressed by his son's rebellion, Vasudeva encourages him to listen to the river and reminds him that he, too, left his own father to begin his path through life. After the young boy runs away, Vasudeva brings Siddhartha to the river so that he can hear that the "great song of a thousand voices

consisted of one word: Om – perfection." When Vasudeva sees the look of serenity and knowledge shining in Siddhartha's eyes, he knows that it is time for him to go. "I have waited for this hour, my friend. Now that it has arrived, let me go. I have been Vasudeva, the ferryman, for a long time. Now it is over. Farewell hut, farewell river, farewell Siddhartha." Vasudeva then departs for the woods and the unity of all things.

Young Siddhartha

Raised without a father as a rich and spoiled mama's boy, young Siddhartha meets his father for the first time just before the death of his mother, Kamala. Disdaining his father's piety and simple lifestyle, the boy is arrogant and disrespectful. Finding his father's unconditional love and patience impossible to accept, he runs away. When Vasudeva reminds Siddhartha that his son must follow his own path, Siddhartha makes peace with his spirit.

1.5.1 Check Your Progress

Answer in one word/phrase/sentence.

1. What is meant by "Buddha"?
2. Who is Siddhartha's childhood friend and confidant?
3. How does Govinda finally attains union with the universal, eternal essence?
4. Who employs Siddhartha?
5. Who has only one goal, to become empty of thirst, desire, dreams, pleasure, and sorrow, and, thus, to let the Self die?
6. Buddha's revelations came to him under a fig tree, whereas Siddhartha arrives at his final decision under a _____ tree.

1.6 Themes and Other Aspects in *Siddhartha*:

I. Themes

The Search for the Meaning of Life

Hesse's works are largely confessional and autobiographical and deal with questions of "Weltanschauung," of a philosophy of life. Typically, as in *Siddhartha*, the individual's search for truth and identity through what Hesse called the "inward journey" is draped around the plot. Siddhartha, the obedient son of a rich Brahman, awakens one day to the realization that his life is empty and that his soul is not

satisfied by his devotion to duty and strict observances of religious ordinances. He leaves home with his friend Govinda to begin his journey. First, he becomes an ascetic mendicant, but fasting and physical deprivation do not bring him closer to peace. Subsequently, he speaks with Gotama Buddha, who has attained the blissful state of Nirvana. Siddhartha realizes that he cannot accept the Buddhist doctrine of salvation from suffering or learn through the Buddha's teaching. He must proceed on his own path. Turning from asceticism, he lives a life of desire and sensual excitement but years later again finds himself disgusted and empty. Suicidal, Siddhartha finds his way back to a river he had once crossed. He stays there, learning from the ferryman to listen to the river. It is here that he finally achieves peace.

In Siddhartha's final conversation with Govinda, he tries to enumerate the insights he has gained. These include the idea that for each truth the opposite is equally true; that excessive searching – as practised by Govinda – is self-defeating; and that to "find" is, paradoxically, "to be free, to be open, to have no goal." One must simply love and enjoy the world in all its aspects. Although Siddhartha may have reached the highest state of wisdom, he is unable to communicate its essence to Govinda. For another of his realizations is that although knowledge may be communicable, wisdom cannot be. He tells Govinda, "These are things and one can love things. But one cannot love words.... Perhaps that is what prevents you from finding peace, perhaps there are too many words, for even salvation and virtue. Samsara and Nirvana are only words, Govinda." It is only in an act of love, when Govinda kisses Siddhartha, that he too sees the "continuous stream of faces – hundreds, thousands, which all came and disappeared and yet all seemed to be there at the same time, which all continually changed and renewed themselves and which were yet all Siddhartha."

Although *Siddhartha* is set in India and engages with Buddhist thought, it would be naive to read the book as an embodiment or explanation of Indian philosophy. Written after World War I, *Siddhartha* is Hesse's attempt to restore his faith in mankind, to regain his lost peace of mind, and to find again a harmonious relationship with his world. Siddhartha's way is his own, not Govinda's nor Buddha's nor even Hesse's, whose next major work, *Steppenwolf*, offers a complete contrast, replacing serenity with stridency, placing the individual problem in a social context, and stressing the contrast between the "inner" and "outer" worlds for grotesque and humorous effect.

Polarities and Synthesis

Hesse is fascinated by the dualistic nature of existence, particularly the world of the mind, which he calls "Geist," and the world of the body and physical action, which he calls "Natur." Siddhartha experiments with and exhausts both possibilities. In his father's house, he exercises his mind. With the Samanas, he seeks truth again through thinking and the extreme denial of the body. When these efforts fail to bring him peace, he tries another extreme. He immerses himself in material and carnal pursuits, but this life of the body brings him no closer to his goal. When he takes up his life by the river, he learns to transcend both the mind and the body by finding a third way, that of the soul. This synthesis, in fact, is what distinguishes Hesse's Siddhartha from Buddha. For Hesse, the river has part in both realms; it is not an obstacle to be crossed, as in Buddhist symbolism. Rather, Siddhartha is a ferryman who joins both sides of the river, which is the natural synthesis of extremes.

Love and Passion

The importance of love also distinguishes Hesse's Siddhartha from Buddhism. In 1931, Hesse commented, "The fact that my *Siddhartha* stresses not cognition but love, that it rejects dogma and makes experience of oneness the central point, may be felt as a tendency to return to Christianity, even to a truly Protestant faith." In many ways, the novel is about Siddhartha's learning to love the world in its particulars so that he can transcend them. The reader sees him in town with Kamala as they indulge their pleasures. "I am like you," he laments to her. "You cannot love either, otherwise how could you practice love as an art. Perhaps people like us cannot love." But in the end, Kamala gives up her life and follows the ways of the Buddha. On her pilgrimage, she is reunited with Siddhartha and, looking into his eyes before she dies, finds peace. Siddhartha feels keenly the loss of Kamala, but it is not sadness that is in his heart; he knows now that all life is indestructible and that, in a wider sense, Kamala has entered a new life that is in every blossom and in every breeze about him. Kamala also leaves Siddhartha with their son to love. "He felt indeed that this love, this blind love for his son, was a very human passion, that it was Samsara, a troubled spring of deep water. At the same time he felt that it was not worthless, that it was necessary, that it came from his own nature. This emotion, this pain, these follies also had to be experienced." Through Kamala and his son, Siddhartha learns to love the world. He tells Govinda, "I learned through my body and soul that it was necessary for me to sin, that I needed lust, that I had to strive for property and experience nausea and the depths of despair in order to learn not to resist them, in

order to learn to love the world, and no longer compare it with some kind of desired imaginary world, some imaginary vision of perfection, but to leave it as it is, to love it and be glad to belong to it."

Om – Oneness, Totality, Unity

When Siddhartha despairs of ever finding peace, he contemplates suicide at the river. When the word "Om" comes to mind, he realizes the folly of his attempt to end his sufferings by extinguishing his physical being. Life is indestructible. Creation is an indivisible whole. He sees his great mistake in trying always to do something instead of just to be. Siddhartha comes to believe that all possible transformations or potentialities of the human soul are possible not only consecutively, but simultaneously. He explains this idea to Govinda by using the example of the stone: "This stone is stone; it is also animal, God, Buddha. I do not respect and love it because it was one thing and will become something else, but because it has already long been everything and always is everything. I love it just because it is a stone, because today and now it appears to me a stone." Siddhartha's Nirvana is the recognition that all being exists simultaneously in unity and totality.

II. Other Aspects

Setting

Hesse locates his tale in remote India of a time long past, but any realism in the narrative is the symbolic projection of an inner vision, an inner world, an "inward journey," and not an attempt to capture external reality. Hesse, in fact, criticized the tendency to attribute excessive importance to "so-called reality" in the shape of physical events. He intended to take his readers into an elevated, poetic, legendary or "magical" world. Using the landscape of India, the book achieves a unity of style, structure, and meaning that Hesse never again attained with such perfection. He called *Siddhartha* "an Indic poem"; some might call it an extreme of symbolic lyricism. The Indian milieu provides timeless, mythic validity—the legendary times allow the reader to lose the sense of differentiation and to come nearer to the oneness of the human race. The parallels to the Buddha's life are contributing factors to this legendary quality.

Style

Hesse uses an exotically formalized style, more noticeable in the original German but still apparent even in translation. The novel is borne along on a strong

rhythmic current (like a river), on what seems an undertone of chant. All harsh sounds are avoided, while there is much alliteration and assonance. There is frequent use of parallelism in clause structure and repetition of words and phrases. The threefold repetitions, corresponding to the tripartite structure of the work, creates a liturgical aspect which is reminiscent of the Bible, but the language is not really biblical but rather reminiscent of Pali, the language used in the canonical books of the Buddhists. At points this language can achieve something of an incantatory effect, but for the most part it reflects the serene, balanced attitude of meditation. This antiquated, liturgical mode of expression enhances the gospel quality of this tale.

Structure

The short novel is divided into two parts with four and eight chapters. But it is quite obvious that the book falls into three thematic sections: Siddhartha's life at home, among the Samanas and with Buddha (four chapters); his life with Kamala and among the "child people" of the city (four chapters); and his life with Vasudeva on the river (four chapters). The river, which is the all-encompassing symbol of the novel, not only bears the burden of communication of truth but also provides the organizing structure. Temporally and spatially, the three parts of Siddhartha's search for meaning are delimited by his encounters with the river. These divisions are in keeping with Siddhartha's balanced progression from the realm of the mind, through that of the body, to that of the soul. The triadic structure is extended to the very mechanics of expression: to sentences, clauses, phrases, words, and paragraphs. And in keeping with this three-beat pulsation, Hesse even extends his customary projection of the actual self and one alternative to the actual self and three possibilities.

Siddhartha is Hesse's fictionalized self and Govinda, Buddha, and Vasudeva are the possibilities: Govinda is the self-effacing, institution-oriented person Siddhartha should not become; Buddha represents a laudable but undesirable life-denying model; and Vasudeva is an exemplary life-affirming ideal. When Siddhartha becomes this ideal, Vasudeva leaves the scene.

The novel's structure is also determined in part by its legendary form. Siddhartha is clearly regarded as a "saintly" figure. His reunification with the All at the end of the book corresponds to the miraculous union with God in Christian legends. As in Christian canonization trials, his saintliness is attested by witnesses –

Vasudeva, Kamala, and Govinda – all of whom recognize in his face the aspect of godliness and repose.

Symbols

Often in literature, from Heraclitus to Thomas Wolfe, rivers are used as a symbol for timelessness. In Hesse's case this symbol of simultaneity is expanded to include the realm in which all polarity ceases: totality. It is a realm of pure existence in which all things coexist in harmony. Siddhartha expresses this idea of fluidity: "of every truth it can be said that the opposite is just as true." Siddhartha, as ferryman, helps people to cross the water which separates the city, the outer world of extroversion, superficial excitement, and wild pleasures, from the introverted, lonely, and ascetic world of forests and mountains. Siddhartha has himself crossed that river twice in the course of his search, and he has managed to reconcile those two worlds. The river with the city on one side and the forest on the other is a projection of Siddhartha's inner development onto the realm of space. In this way, the geography of the book becomes the landscape of the soul. In the final vision of the book, Hesse renders Siddhartha's fulfillment visually by reversing this process. As Govinda looks into Siddhartha's face at the end, what he perceives is no longer the landscape of the soul but rather the soul as landscape. Siddhartha has learned the lesson of the river so well that his entire being now reflects the totality and simultaneity that the river symbolizes. Govinda "no longer saw the face of his friend Siddhartha. Instead he saw other faces, many faces, a long series, a continuous stream of faces – hundreds, thousands, which all came and disappeared and yet all seemed to be there at the same time, which all continually changed and renewed themselves and which were yet all Siddhartha."

1.7 Summary

Hermann Hesse referred to his novels as "biographies of the soul". In *Siddhartha* (1922), the title character is an exceptionally intelligent Brahman, a member of the highest caste in the Hindu religion, who seemingly has a well-ordered existence yet feels spiritually hollow. Siddhartha embarks on a journey of self-discovery that takes him through a period of asceticism and self-denial followed by one of sensual indulgence. An encounter with Buddha is intellectually meaningful but not spiritually affecting, and Siddhartha continues his own search, ultimately finding peace by a river. Siddhartha's search for truth and identity, the "inward journey" as Hesse referred to this recurring theme in his work, is reflective of the

autobiographical and introspective nature of Hesse's writing. Hesse's works are distinctive, challenging, and unlike most of the works of Western writers. He has enjoyed periods of great popularity as well as periods of either neglect and even scorn. Although his receipt of the 1946 Nobel Prize for Literature spurred a flurry of translations, which included the 1951 English translation of *Siddhartha,* his works did not gain much recognition in the English-speaking world until the 1960s. Hesse excelled in the depiction of personal crisis and private agony; such literature seems to be particularly popular during periods of cultural crisis, which accounts by and large for Hesse's idolization in Germany immediately after two devastating wars. He was similarly venerated in the world during the politically and socially chaotic 1960s and 1970s.

In this unit, you have read about the term 'modernism', and life and works of Hermann Hesse. You have also read: the plot and characters used by Hesse in his novel *Siddhartha,* and also about various themes and aspects presented in this novel.

All these points, no doubt, would be helpful to you to understand the novel *Siddhartha*. They will enhance your understanding of the novel. For better understanding of the novel, it is essential to read the original text.

1.8 Answers to Check Your Progress:

1.2.1 Answers to Check Your Progress

1. "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown"
2. Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, Friedrisch Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud
3. Marcel Proust, William Faulkner, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf

1.3.1 Answers to Check Your Progress:

1. 1946
2. 1911
3. 1924
4. Montagnola

1.4.1 Answers to Check Your Progress:

1. Everyone was convinced of that Siddhartha will soon become a successful Brahman like his father.

2. Siddhartha harbors an insatiable longing to explore the deeper meanings of life, which cannot be learned through codified religious rituals
3. his closest friend, Govinda
4. Kamala
5. Siddhartha dreams that he finds Kamala's songbird dead in its cage
6. Kamala
7. Kamala

1.5.1 Answers to Check Your Progress:

1. "Buddha"? which means "to know," is the title which his followers gave to him.
2. Govinda
3. It is through this kiss and not through Siddhartha's teaching that Govinda finally attains union with the universal, eternal essence?
4. Kamaswami's name, which means "master of the material world," is an appropriate one for the rich merchant who employs Siddhartha
5. The Samanas
6. mango

1.9 Exercises:

A) Answer the following:

1. Do you agree with the view that "*Siddhartha* draws heavily from Eastern religions in its themes". Elucidate.
2. "From beginning to end, virtually every aspect of *Siddhartha* develops out of Hesse's knowledge of Eastern religions". Discuss.
3. "Not only does Hesse borrow names, themes, ideas from Eastern religions, but he also bases and structures his narrative on the life of the historical Buddha". Elucidate.
4. How far do you agree with the view that "*Siddhartha* advances more Western ideas than it does Eastern ones".
5. Consider *Siddhartha* as an instance of modern novel.

6. "Siddhartha's vision presents a remarkable exploration of the deepest philosophical and spiritual dimensions of human existence". Discuss.

B) **Write short notes on**:

1. The character of Siddhartha.
2. The character of Gotama Buddha.
3. The Theme of the 'Love and Passion'.
4. Hesse's use of 'symbols' in *Siddhartha*.
5. The Theme of 'Om – Oneness, Totality, Unity'.
6. The character of Vasudeva in *Siddhartha*.

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Unit-2
Race and Gender in Modern Fiction
The Bride Price
by Buchi Emecheta

Contents:

2.0 Objectives:

After studying this unit, you will be able to

1. understand the Race and Gender reflected in the Literatrue
2. understand the contribution of “Buchi” Emecheta to the literary field.
3. know the plot and summary of the novel
4. know the major and minor characters in the novel.
5. comprehend the themes of the novel
6. understand African Culture and Tradition.

2.1 Section- 1

A) Race and Gender in Modern Fiction

Looking at race and gender through the lens of literature can teach us a lot about how people think, what the rules are, and how things happened in the past. It helps us to explores the complex connections between literary works and how people's ideas about these two major topics have changed over time. It not only shows how race and gender have changed over time and been portrayed in literature, but it also looks at how they have had a huge effect on how people think about them and on their own lives. It gives us a complex look at how race and gender have been shown and re-shown in literature from different times. It starts with early works that were influenced by colonial and imperialist ideas and ends with modern stories that celebrate diversity and fight stereotypes. It shows how literature can be a mirror of society, showing how our ideas about race and gender have changed and grown over time. This exploration isn't just an academic journey; it's also a reflection of how society's values are always changing and how people are always fighting for equality and understanding in a world that is very different and always changing.

Race and Gender:

Concept of Race:

Racism is a set of beliefs that divides people into different racial groups and gives each group traits that make it better or worse than others. People often use this idea to defend unfair and discriminatory treatment based on race or ethnicity. It says that people's behaviour and skills are determined by physical, cultural, or intellectual traits that are unique to these groups. When people are racist, they might be

prejudiced, use stereotypes, be violent, or do other bad things. Racism can also be more systemic, like when unfair policies and practises in schools, workplaces, housing, and healthcare make things worse for some groups. Also, racism can become a part of a society's cultural norms and values. This can happen through literature, the media, and everyday habits, which reinforce stereotypes and push some racial groups to the edges of society. African and Asian colonialism helped racist ideas spread and become accepted all over the world. Colonialism was based on these differences, which made it okay to take advantage of and dehumanise the people who were colonised.

In the early days of sociology and anthropology, race was mostly thought of as a biological and anthropological idea, based on things like hair colour, skin tone, and the shape of the face. At different times in history, people have been led astray by the false belief that skin colour, facial features, and hair texture could reveal deeper, more personal traits such as intelligence, morality, and behaviour. This led to a false ranking of races, with these surface-level traits used to decide how valuable each race was. These misunderstandings were not just social; they went deep into society and affected laws, rules, and how people talked to each other every day. This view of race as a hierarchy led to a lot of different kinds of discrimination. It was also used to justify unfair treatment and oppression. People from other countries were forced to live in Europe and America through racism, as seen when Native Americans and African slaves were abuse. This relationship between the people inside was a lot like the ones between European countries and their colonies in other parts of the world. In this case, racism wasn't just unfair treatment; it was also the way that these groups were routinely and systematically robbed of their rights, freedom, and worth, and forced to work and use as resources.

How the idea of race has changed over time:

Ideas about race have changed since the 1400s, when Europeans first came to America. Some of these ideas came from what people saw and thought they knew about the people who lived in those places. In the 17th and 18th centuries, researchers like Francois Bernier began to put people into groups based on how they looked. This made ideas about racial difference more organised. Two more thinkers, David Hume and George Buffon, added to these ideas. They connected differences in race to things like geography and climate, which often showed how prejudiced and biassed people were at the time.

The idea that races are separate biological entities with clear genetic differences has mostly been disproved by modern science. These days, people think of race as something made up by society based on beliefs, rules, and history, not as something biologically different. A historian named Barbara Fields says that the idea of race has a long history and has been shaped by power structures and societal norms. People who think racial differences are "natural" are wrong. These differences are made up by society and culture and kept alive by them.

Effects of racism:

Over the course of history, racism has led to terrible events such as slavery, the taking over of colonies, and ongoing social and economic inequality. Some people have used racism to hurt others, and it has helped powerful groups protect and keep their power over others. People all over the world are still dealing with the wrongs and differences that it caused that will last for generations.

There is still a lot of racism in the world. It might not be as clear as it used to be, but it is still a big issue that impacts policies, social interactions, and keeps inequality alive. As time goes on, racism can be harder to spot and deal with because it is often more subtle and built into institutions and cultural norms.

The Concept of Gender:

"Gender" refers to the traits and roles that people think women, men, girls, and boys should have. Gender concepts and notions are the roles, behaviours, and social norms that come with being a man, woman, boy, or girl. They also include how these people should interact with each other. Gender is shaped by society, as we can see when we look more closely at it. No matter what gender you are, you are expected to follow the rules that society has set.

Throughout history, men have mostly been in charge. Not only have they made their own laws and rules, but they also make sure that women follow the ones that are already in place. Sometimes people are treated differently because of their gender. This is known as gender inequality or gender discrimination. There are differences in our hierarchical society that come from the gender system. These differences can be mental or logical.

Gender bias:

Gender bias shows up as prejudice, stereotyping, and treating people differently because of their gender. Assumptions that women aren't as good at leading or that

men aren't good at taking care of others are examples of stereotypes that limit people's options and promote unfair behaviour. For example, discrimination based on gender at work could lead to women not getting paid as much as men, being treated differently, and having fewer chances to move up.

Discrimination based on gender can have many different effects on people's lives, including their mental health, personal growth, education, job opportunities, and participation in politics and society. People often can't follow their dreams and reach their full potential because of bias based on gender, which can cause problems like hopelessness, anxiety, and low self-esteem. The gender pay gap, occupational segregation, and undervaluing of work that is usually done by women are all signs that it makes things more unequal in the economy. Prejudice based on gender also makes it harder for girls and women to get an education and a job, and it also makes it harder for men and women to get involved in politics and society.

Feminists movements against gender bias:

Feminism started as a movement to fight against and destroy patriarchal structures that are unfair to women and promote bias. It grew in waves, with each wave focusing on a different area of unfair treatment of women. The first wave focused on unfair laws, especially the right of women to vote. The second wave of activism was about bigger issues like family, work, sexuality, and the right to have children. The third wave focused on how different women's identities and experiences are by focusing on race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation.

Race and Gender in Literature:

Since the 1600s, writers have been writing about race and gender, showing how societal norms and attitudes have changed over time. This in-depth look at race and gender issues in literature shows how literature and the social and cultural climate of different times are connected in a way that is complicated and not always stable.

Race and Gender in Early Writing:

Many of the first books that people wrote had racial views that were common at the time and were influenced by colonial and imperialistic ideas. Literature had both things to say in support of and against these points of view. A lot of the early literature that was written looked at colonised lands and peoples through the lens of Europe. It often praised or criticised cultures that were not European. The well-known books "Robinson Crusoe" by Daniel Defoe (1719) and "The Jungle Book" by

Rudyard Kipling (1894) both have colonial and imperialist themes. These works often made cultures that were not European seem weird or primitive, or like they needed to be "civilised" by European powers.

Most of the time, women were shown in passive roles, as pure and good examples. At this time, most books were written from a male point of view, and female authors and characters were not given as much attention. A lot of women wrote in the 1800s. Jane Austen, the Brontë sisters, and Mary Shelley were just a few. These writers began to question traditional gender roles and show how hard it is to be a woman through their writing. Women were mostly written about as either perfect angels or sad characters. These ideas were called into question when Mary Wollstonecraft wrote "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792). This book helped women fight for their rights and to go to school.

Race and Gender in Middle Age Literature:

This was a time when there were big changes in how race was shown in literature. Black writers such as Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes began to honour Black culture and identity. To do this, they fought against racist ideas and pushed for social change. In the early 1900s, feminist writing did really well. Men ruled society, and women writers like Virginia Woolf and Charlotte Perkins Gilman spoke out against it. They fought for women's rights and independence. The things they wrote changed the social roles and expectations of women and opened the door for more feminist discussions. In the 1800s, a lot more women were able to get their writing sold. Lizzie Borden, George Eliot, and other writers were the first to write about girls' rights and problems.

Race and Gender in Modern Literature:

Literature today shows how quickly things are changing in the world. Literary works that show a variety of experiences and points of view help people understand others better. It has become a strong way to help people accept and understand sex and racial minorities.

Inequality and racism that are built into the system are often looked at in modern literature. It's clear that the fight for racial equality is still going on. Literature today is more interesting because authors of different races and ethnicities are writing in their own voices and with their own points of view. Gender is also a big and complicated theme in modern literature. Many modern authors write about gender identity, roles, expectations, and how societal norms affect people in different ways.

The way race and gender reflected in literature shows how social norms and attitudes are always changing. Literature today has a lot of different voices and points of view. This shows how complicated race and gender are in the modern world. That literature can not only show how society has changed, but also change the way people talk about and understand big issues is shown by this change.

In short, race is a complex and important theme that is explored in many ways in modern literature. These different approaches often show how complicated racial identity, racism, and the ongoing fight for justice and equality are.

Identity and Intersectionality:

Authors today often write about how race interacts with other parts of identity, like gender, class, and sexuality. This way of looking at things helps us understand the complex experiences of people who live in society with multiple identities that overlap. In Chimamanda NgoziAdichie's "Americanah," the main character is an African woman living in America. Her experiences show how complicated racial, cultural, and immigrant identities can be.

"The Bluest Eye," a 1970 book by Toni Morrison, is a deep look at race, beauty standards, and gender through the eyes of Pecola Breedlove, a young African American girl. The story takes place in Ohio during the Great Depression and shows how racial self-loathing and trying to meet white beauty standards hurt African Americans.

"White Teeth" by Zadie Smith (2000) is a book about two families from different backgrounds that takes place in London. It looks at race, ethnicity, and the immigrant experience in a funny and sharp way. It also looks at Britain's complicated colonial history and how it affects the present.

Historical and social contexts:

A lot of modern works link personal experiences with race to bigger social and historical events. This connection helps us learn more about how past events and systemic structures affect how race works now. "Between the World and Me" by Ta-Nehisi Coates is a great example of this because it connects a personal story with the history of slavery and segregation in the United States.

"Homegoing" by Yaa Gyasi (2016) is a big book that starts in Ghana in the 18th century and follows the parallel lives of two half-sisters and their children and

grandchildren through eight generations. It looks at the effects of slavery on both sides of the Atlantic.

Colson Whitehead's novel "The Underground Railroad" (2016) re-imagines the Underground Railroad as a real train going underground. It won the Pulitzer Prize. It shows the horrible things that happened during slavery and how America's racial history still affects people today in a strange and moving way.

Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel "Beloved," which was published in 1987, is about a mother who is haunted by the ghost of her daughter. The story takes place after the American Civil War. It's a powerful look at the psychological scars of slavery and how love and the horrors of motherhood can drive people to hopelessness in horrible conditions.

Racial injustice and discrimination:

A lot of modern literature talks about the realities of racial injustice and discrimination. It does this by critically examining issues like police brutality, institutional racism, and social inequality. The powerful book "The Hate U Give" by Angie Thomas explores these ideas, showing how racial violence affects people and how important it is to be active in the world.

Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird," which came out in 1960, is a classic book about racism in the American South. The story is told from the point of view of Scout, a young girl. It is a powerful critique of prejudice and a story of moral growth and understanding.

The non-fiction book "Just Mercy" by Bryan Stevenson (2014) is a powerful account of the author's work with the Equal Justice Initiative, with a focus on the case of Walter McMillian. It shows how unfair and unequal the American criminal justice system is when it comes to race.

In 2010, Michelle Alexander wrote a groundbreaking book called "The New Jim Crow." In it, she argues that the War on Drugs and the American criminal justice system are similar to Jim Crow laws that legally separated people of different races.

Resistance and Empowerment Stories:

In modern literature, stories of resistance against racial oppression and stories that give power to voices that have been silenced are important. These books make people think about issues of social justice and how they can help make things better.

"Their Eyes Were Watching God," by Zora Neale Hurston (1937), is one of the most important books in African American literature. It's about Janie Crawford, who goes through several marriages and finds her voice in Florida in the early 1900s.

Born a Crime, an autobiography by Trevor Noah, came out in 2016. It's about his childhood and youth in South Africa during apartheid. Noah was born into a crime family because his mother was black and his father was white. His story shows how to keep going even when things got hard because of his race.

"Kindred" by Octavia E. Butler (1979) is a unique mix of slave memoir, fantasy, and historical fiction. It's about a black woman who goes back in time to the South before the Civil War. She has first-hand experience with the cruelty of slavery, which gives a powerful picture of the effects of slavery and the strength of the human spirit.

Different authors and points of view:

More and more authors from a wide range of racial and ethnic backgrounds are adding their voices and points of view to modern literature. This variety makes the world of literature better by adding more stories and experiences.

The 2003 book "The Kite Runner" by Khaled Hosseini is a moving story about friendship, betrayal, and redemption in Afghanistan from the end of the monarchy to the rise of the Taliban regime and the flight of Afghans to Pakistan and the United States.

"Pachinko" by Min Jin Lee (2017) is an epic historical saga that follows a Korean family through generations, starting in Korea in the early 1900s. It shows how Japanese and Koreans interact with each other and what it's like to move to a new country.

"Interpreter of Maladies" by Jhumpa Lahiri (1999) is a collection of short stories that won the Pulitzer Prize. It shows how Indians and Indian Americans lived between their roots and the "New World," showing their struggles and successes as they tried to find their way between the two.

Race is an important and changing theme in modern literature. It includes exploring identity, historical context, injustice, cultural diversity, empowerment, and different points of view. All of these things help us understand race and its effects on modern society in a deeper and broader way.

Gender in Modern Fiction:

Gender is a theme that changes and grows in modern literature. This is because of how people think and talk about gender identity, equality, and how traditional roles can be broken. These works of literature add to larger conversations about gender and help readers understand the different experiences of people of all genders.

Identifying and expressing gender:

A lot of modern literature is about people whose gender identities and expressions don't fit into the traditional two-type categories. Transgender and non-binary characters and stories show the struggles and successes of people who are figuring out their gender identities.

The book "Middlesex" by Jeffrey Eugenides is about an intersex person named Cal who struggles with gender identity and accepting himself. . "Middlesex" looks at how biology, gender identity, and social expectations all affect each other.

"Stone Butch Blues" by Leslie Feinberg is a book about a working-class butch lesbian named Jess Goldberg. It shows how she deals with gender identity and expression in the middle of the 20th century. The book follows Jess as she learns more about herself and the problems she faces living in a society with strict gender roles.

"Orlando" by Virginia Woolf is a classic story about a man named Orlando who mysteriously changes into a woman and lives through many centuries and different times in history. The book looks at how gender can change and questions common ideas about who we are.

Imagining New Gender Roles:

Some modern literature uses speculation or "alternative world-building" to imagine societies with different gender roles or norms, which goes against what we usually think about gender.

"The Left Hand of Darkness" by Ursula K. Le Guin is a science fiction book that takes place on a planet where people are ambisexual and can switch between male and female at will.

James Baldwin's "Giovanni's Room" is a book about sexuality and desire. It tells the story of David, an American living in Paris who falls in love with Giovanni, an Italian bartender. It explores the complicated themes of love and identity.

"Less" by Andrew Sean Greer is a book about a middle-aged gay writer named Arthur Less who goes on a trip around the world to get away from the fact that he wasn't invited to the wedding of his ex-lover. It's a funny and sad look at getting older and looking for love and purpose in life.

"Stone Butch Blues" by Leslie Feinberg (mentioned earlier): This book talks about more than just gender identity; it also talks about lesbian identity and relationships, giving a full picture of LGBTQ+ life.

Feminism and the Lives of Women:

A lot of modern works are about the struggles and successes of women in a male-dominated world. Many of the time, these stories are about issues like sexism, sexual harassment, and the fight for equal rights for men and women.

Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale" is a commentary on how women are oppressed. It is set in a dystopian society where women's rights are severely limited. It is about a society where women are a slave to religion and have no rights. The story looks at issues like abortion, sexism, and standing up to a patriarchal government.

"The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman is a classic feminist work that looks at how women were mentally and emotionally abused in the 1800s. It shows how the main character goes crazy because she is locked up and doesn't have any freedom.

"The Bell Jar" by Sylvia Plath is a semi-autobiographical book about a young woman named Esther Greenwood who struggles with her identity and mental health in the 1950s. It gives a vivid picture of the expectations and pressures that society put on women at that time.

Toxic Masculinity:

Some new writing looks at how traditional masculinity hurts people and how men are pressured to fit into stereotypical roles. It can help both men and women understand what happens when men act in a toxic way.

"American Psycho" by Bret Easton Ellis is about a Wall Street executive named Patrick Bateman who is rich and violent. He is a perfect example of toxic masculinity because he is obsessed with money, violence, and sexism. It says that his way of life is shallow and violent.

"Fight Club" by Chuck Palahniuk: The unnamed narrator of the story starts an underground fight club to deal with his anger at consumer culture and sexism. It looks at issues like male aggression and how societal expectations of masculinity can hurt people.

"Less Than Zero" by Bret Easton Ellis is a book about a group of rich, privileged young men in Los Angeles who are unhappy and disconnected with their lives. It shows how empty their pursuits are and how they can't connect emotionally, which is typical of a certain type of masculinity.

Race and Gender in Modern African Literature:

Race and gender are central themes in modern African literature. They are woven into the stories in a way that shows how different and complicated people and communities in Africa live. Across the continent, from Nigeria to Zimbabwe, and from the diaspora to the homeland, African novelists have used their writing with deep understanding and sensitivity to explore identity, power, and the changing nature of society. They write about the complicated world of people and how race, gender, and the larger social and political situation affect each other in their books.

Reading the works of famous African novelists opens up a world of different points of view and stories that help us better understand how race and gender affect each other. With works as important as Chinua Achebe's and as modern as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's, these authors have left an indelible mark on literature, forcing readers to face uncomfortable truths and celebrate the beauty of diversity.

African novelists deal with race and gender issues in a deep, nuanced, and always honest way. Through their stories, they explore how strong African women are in the face of oppression by men, how colonialism still affects African societies, and how complicated racial identity is in a globalised world. Each author adds a different voice and point of view to the conversation. This creates a kaleidoscopic picture of what it's like to be African.

Chinua Achebe:

Achebe is known for writing "Things Fall Apart," which was a big deal at the time and made him famous as the "father of African literature." When it came out in 1958, this book told a powerful story about how colonialism affected African societies, especially the Igbo people in Nigeria. Through the main character

Okonkwo and his family, Achebe looks at how race, gender, and power work together, showing how the arrival of European colonisers caused big changes.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie:

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a modern Nigerian author whose books about identity, feminism, and post-colonialism have won her praise around the world. Adichie tells the story of the Nigerian Civil War through the lives of characters who are linked to each other. This shows how complicated race, class, and gender were in Nigeria during the war. In her book "Americanah," she writes about the lives of Nigerian immigrants in the U.S., making a powerful point about race, identity, and belonging in the diaspora.

Tsitsi Dangarembga:

Zimbabwean author and filmmaker Tsitsi Dangarembga is known for her sharp looks at gender, colonialism, and social change. Dangarembga's first book, "Nervous Conditions," is about how hard it is for young Zimbabwean women to deal with patriarchal norms and colonial legacies. Dangarembga shows how race and gender interact in post-colonial Zimbabwe through the character of Tambudzai. She does this by showing how hard it is for African women to claim their identity and agency.

Ngugi Thiong:

"Petals of Blood," Ngugi's novel, looks at how race, gender, and class affect each other in Kenya after it was colonised. The story is about four characters from different backgrounds whose lives unexpectedly cross paths. This shows how tense things are in Kenyan society. Ngugi criticizes how women and underrepresented groups are used for power and money by writing about characters like Wanja, a barmaid who became a revolutionary.

Buchi Emecheta:

Buchi Emecheta was a British author who was born in Nigeria and wrote about the lives of African women, migration, and motherhood. Her book "The Joys of Motherhood" is a powerful look at what it was like to be a woman and a mother in colonial Nigeria. It shows how women had to make sacrifices and deal with problems in a society dominated by men. Follow the life of a Nigerian woman in London in the 1960s in Emecheta's "Second-Class Citizen," a story that looks at race, gender, and immigration.

These writers and their works only show a small part of the vast body of modern African literature. This literature continues to reveal deep truths about the complicated relationships between race and gender in African societies. Readers are invited to confront and interact with the many problems and successes of African people through their stories. This helps us to understand the human experience better across cultures and continents.

Conclusions:

Literature has always had the power to make people think about, question, and change social norms and views. Race and gender have been written about since the beginning of time and are still being written about today. There are a lot of different voices and points of view in modern literature. This shows how complicated and nuanced race and gender are, and how opinions are always shifting. This detailed journey shows how literature can help people understand and care about other people, change public opinion, and add to the ongoing conversation about these tough and important issues.

B. Check Your Progress

1. Select the correct alternative:

1. What major change in the portrayal of race is noted in modern literature?

   a) Focus on biological differences b) Emphasis on racial superiority

   c) Depiction as a social construct d) Ignoring racial themes

2. Which concept has modern science largely disproved regarding race?

   a) Cultural influence b) Genetic differences

   c) Social construction d) Historical context

3. What is the primary role of gender in societal norms ?

   a) Defining educational paths b) Shaping roles and behaviours

   c) Influencing economic policies d) Guiding technological advancements

4. Which of the following is a consequence of gender bias?

   a) Enhanced creativity b) Increased opportunities

   c) Economic inequality d) Improved communication skills

5. What aspect of race does "The Bluest Eye" by Toni Morrison explore?

a) Economic disparity b) Beauty standards

c) Technological influence d) Political systems

Q.2. Answer the following question in one word/phrase or sentences.

1. What is a significant shift in the portrayal of race in literature over time?
2. How is gender bias manifested and what are its effects?
3. What role do feminist movements play in literature?
4. What themes are prominent in modern literature about race?
5. How does modern literature depict the intersectionality of race and gender?

2.2 Section-2:

A. Life and Works of Buchi Emecheta

Life and Works:

Buchi Emecheta was a significant figure in African literature, known for her contributions to post-colonial, African, and feminist literature. Her life and work were deeply interwoven, with her experiences as a woman, an immigrant, and an African deeply influencing her writing. Below is an extensive exploration of her life, works, themes, influences, views on literature, and other relevant aspects.

Buchi Emecheta was born on July 21, 1944, in Lagos, Nigeria, during a period of colonial rule. Her birth came at a time when Nigeria was still under British control, an aspect that would later influence her perception of identity and culture.

Emecheta's early years were marked by a traditional Igbo upbringing. She grew up in Ibusa, a village in Delta State, Nigeria. Her childhood was steeped in the rich oral tradition of the Igbo people, which later influenced her storytelling style. Despite the gender biases of the time, her parents encouraged her education, but her father's death when she was quite young marked a significant turning point in her life.

Emecheta's education began in Nigeria. She attended a missionary school where she excelled despite the societal expectations placed on women. In 1962, she received a scholarship to study at the Methodist Girls' School in Yaba, Lagos. Her educational journey, however, was interrupted by her early marriage.

At the age of 16, Emecheta married Sylvester Onwordi, a student to whom she had been engaged since she was 11. Shortly after their marriage, they moved to

London, England. Her marriage was turbulent and marked by domestic abuse, experiences she later depicted in her novels.

Buchi Emecheta passed away on January 25, 2017. She left behind a legacy as a pioneering African woman writer who opened doors for future generations of writers, especially African women writers.

Literary Works

"In the Ditch" (1972)

"Second-Class Citizen" (1974)

"The Bride Price" (1976)

"The Slave Girl" (1977)

"The Joys of Motherhood" (1979)

"Destination Biafra" (1982)

"Naira Power" (1982)

"Double Yoke" (1982)

"Gwendolen" (1989)

"Kehinde" (1994)

"The New Tribe" (2000)

Emecheta's writing is characterized by its focus on the challenges faced by African women. She tackled issues such as gender inequality, poverty, and the conflict between modernity and traditional values. Her novels often depict strong female protagonists who navigate various obstacles to find their place in the world.

A recurring theme in her work is the concept of 'double colonization,' where African women are subjected to both the traditional patriarchal system and the legacy of colonialism. Emecheta's style blends narrative storytelling with a keen observation of social realities, making her work both engaging and enlightening.

Buchi Emecheta's journey from a young girl in Nigeria to a celebrated author in Britain is a testament to her resilience, talent, and unyielding spirit. Her works continue to resonate with readers around the world, offering insights into the lives of African women and the immigrant experience. Emecheta's life and literature remain

influential, making her one of the most significant African authors of the 20th century.

B. Check Your Progress:

Q. 1: Select the correct alternative:

1. Where was Buchi Emecheta born?

   a) London, England b) Ibusa, Delta State, Nigeria

   c) Lagos, Nigeria d) Yaba, Lagos

2. What is a major theme in Buchi Emecheta's writing?

   a) Science fiction b) Challenges faced by African women

   c) European history d) American politics

3. Which of the following novels was written by Buchi Emecheta?

   a) "Things Fall Apart" b) "The Joys of Motherhood"

   c) "Americanah" d) "Half of a Yellow Sun"

4. What significant experience in Buchi Emecheta's personal life is reflected in her novels?

   a) Travelling around the world

   b) Her early marriage and subsequent immigration to England

   c) Studying at a university in the United States

   d) Working as a professor in Nigeria

5. What concept does Buchi Emecheta's work often explore, highlighting the oppression of African women?

   a) The impact of technology b) Double colonization

   c) Environmental issues d) Economic development

Q. 2: Answer the following question in one word / phrase or sentence.

1. What profession did Buchi Emecheta pursue?
2. In what year did Buchi Emecheta pass away?
3. What is the theme that recurs in Buchi Emecheta's novels, highlighting the struggles of African women?

4. Name the village in Delta State, Nigeria, where Buchi Emecheta grew up.

5. What type of school did Buchi Emecheta attend in Nigeria?

2.3 Section-3

A) Summary of the Novel *The Bride Price*

Buchi Emecheta's novel *The Bride Price* published in 1976 is a classic work by the Nigerian author. The story takes place in post-colonial Nigeria, in the Igbo community, and it vividly shows the struggles and problems women face in a society dominated by men. Emecheta's main goal in writing this book was to show how the bride price tradition in Nigerian culture affects women's rights and freedom.

Emecheta looks at the tricky balance between cultural traditions and the push for modernity through the main character, Aku-nna. After her father's death, Aku-nna went from living in Lagos to returning to the village. This is a common experience for many young women in Nigeria and other similar places. There are themes of love, societal expectations, family pressure, and the search for independence in this book.

The book's setting is very important for understanding its themes and characters. It mostly happens in an Igbo community, which has very strong traditions and beliefs, especially when it comes to marriage and family. The Igbo culture, which is one of the largest in Nigeria, is known for its many traditions. One important part of these traditions is paying a bride price.

The bride price is more than just money. It's a way to show respect and appreciation for the bride's family. It proves that the groom can support his wife and is seen as necessary for the marriage to be legal and accepted by society. But this practise also responsible for how women are treated as goods and how these kinds of traditions affect women's freedom and worth in society.

Emecheta's book isn't just a story about one person's experiences; it's also a critical look at the ways that society sets up roles and limits women's choices and roles. The bride price is broken down as a cultural practise and its effects on women's freedom and social standing are looked at closely. Emecheta challenges traditional ideas about women through her stories, which show that how society sees women needs to change.

The Bride Price also makes a point of talking about the effects of colonialism. The contrast between traditional Igbo culture and Western influences makes it possible to look at the changes and conflicts that happen in societies that have been colonised. The book criticises in a subtle way the ways that colonialism has left its mark on African traditions and values, especially when it comes to gender roles and marriage customs.

in general, "The Bride Price" by Buchi Emecheta is a deep work of literature that shows how gender, tradition, and modernity interact in Nigerian culture. When it came out, it made a big difference in African literature, especially because it showed how women struggle and experience things in a world that is changing quickly. The novel is still important because it shows how culture, gender equality, and the changing of social norms are still being debated today.

Summary of the Novel:

The novel begins with a look in to the lives of the Odia family in Lagos, Nigeria. In the first part of the novel, thirteen-year-old Aku-nna when enters into the family's one-room apartment in Lagos, sees her dad, Ezekiel Odia, standing there in his work clothes and looking tense and uneasy. For some reason, Ezekiel looks like he was caught in the act of a crime (hat in hand). Aku-nna and her younger brother Nna-nndo are confused by this. They look at each other in silence, as if to ask why their dad isn't at work.

Aku-nna’s brother Nna-nndo, who is eleven years old, is shown to be a tall boy for his age. He is proud that he is only starting to write at school with ink. His fingers are often stained with ink from his school. "Ink makes my hair blacker!" he said when asked about the tattoo on his head, showing how playful he is.

Ma Blackie is one of the main characters in the novel. She is shown to be a tall woman with very dark, shiny skin. People always see her with a smile on her face, but she has a serious problem: she can't have more children. Doctors in the area have not been able to help her husband, Ezekiel. Ma Blackie is upset that she doesn't have more children, so she drives two hundred miles to her hometown Ibuza to ask the river goddess for a baby.

While Ma Blackie is away, Aku-nna and Nna-nndo are in charge of taking care of their dad. Ezekiel works hard at the factory making train engines and is proud of what he does. People say he is short and has a soft voice, and they often wonder why he married Ma Blackie since they are so different in height. The answer lies in the

custom of getting married young. They are shown to be a happy couple, even though they look different.

The tension in the family is mostly caused by Ma Blackie's inability to have another child. When he tells her about the high bride price he paid for her and their church wedding, expecting more than just one son, Ezekiel's sadness is clear. Their daughter Aku-nna is almost invisible in this scene because her parents don’t care as much about her because she is a girl and looks weak.

There is a big change in the story when Ezekiel tells his kids he is going to the hospital for a checkup and he will be back for dinner. Aku-nna is confused by this statement, and she notices that her father's foot hurts, which is a result of his service in the war. Even though he said he was sure, there is a feeling of doubt in the room. Because Aku-nna has grown up with Nigerian culture, she doesn't ask her father direct questions. She instead offers to cook him a meal as a way to show her love and support.

The part of the novel where Ezekiel leaves is very moving. By telling his kids how important they are to him and teaching them to be good kids who respect adults, he speaks from the heart. His lips are shaking, which shows how upset he is, and he fights the urge to cry in front of them. The kids follow him to the door and beg him to wait, but Ezekiel leaves quickly, as if the gods told him to. The departure of their father is a start of a chain of events that will change their lives and the way the story goes on.

Buchi Emecheta does a great job of introducing readers to the Odia family and giving them a taste of Nigerian culture and expectations. The characters come to life through vivid writing and interactions that make the reader care about their problems and struggles. The journey of the family starts with Ezekiel Odia's departure to the hospital.

Aku-nna is nervously waiting for her father, Ezekiel, to get home in time for dinner. But as the sun goes down and night falls, Ezekiel is nowhere to be found. Aku-nna thinks about telling their neighbours that her father isn't going to be there, so that someone can take care of them while he's gone. The tension in the family can be felt.

When Aku-nna sees her uncles, Uncle Uche and Uncle Joseph, coming up behind her, she temporarily feels better. Even though her dad doesn't like them, she runs to greet them because she needs to be around adults. But their serious attitude

makes her think that bad news is on the way. Respectfully, Aku-nna stays quiet and doesn't ask any questions.

She shows them her hospitality by giving them the hot, tasty soup and yams she made for her dad. Uncle Uche looks especially worn out and tired, while Uncle Joseph looks worried. Aku-nna is worried about her father's health at the moment and wants to know why he lied about coming back for dinner.

Uncle Uche tells Aku-nna that her dad won't be coming home that night. The reason Ezekiel's feet are swollen is being looked into while he stays in the hospital. When Aku-nna finds out that her father lied to her, she is shocked. She doesn't understand why he lied to her and told Uncle Uche the truth.

Over the course of several weeks, Ezekiel stays in the hospital, and Ma Blackie calls from Ibuza to check on her sick husband. The family in Lagos, on the other hand, tells her that their children are safe and that Ezekiel will be back soon, but they don't tell her the whole truth. In her search for fertility, Ma Blackie keeps praying to the river goddess.

Aku-nna thinks about how their lives have changed since her parents were not there. She really misses them and can't wait for them to come back so that their family life can be normal again. Things still go on and she watches the other families' daily lives in the house they share.

One of the most moving parts of the novel is how young Nigerian men like Dick, a neighbour of Aku-nna, who work as houseboys to save money for their weddings. Aku-nna's dad had also worked as a houseboy at one point. Dick, who usually makes fun of Aku-nna, is surprisingly kind and sympathetic to her during this hard time.

When Aunt Uzo shows up with her baby boy, the story takes a big turn. Aku-nna notices that Aunt Uzo is tired and that her young age is different from her role as a mother. Aunt Uzo is known for telling great stories, and she says she will tell Aku-nna a new one that night.

When Aku-nna tries to cook in the shared kitchen, she has trouble because the wood is wet. Her neighbour Dick offers to help her, which is a very kind thing to do. When Aunt Mary shows up holding Nna-nndo's hand, the climax happens. It looks like both Aunt Mary and Aunt Uzo are sad. It's clear to Aku-nna that something very bad has happened. "We have no father," Nna-nndo says, telling the painful truth.

Here, Buchi Emecheta does a great job of showing how Aku-nna and her family felt and the problems they were having after Ezekiel disappeared and later died. This shows how fragile their world is and how hard it is to be a fatherless family in Nigeria. Losing their father is a metaphor for losing their home and stability. It sets the stage for the family's struggles and changes that will happen later in the novel.

The complicated and emotional ceremonies took place when Ezekiel Odia died. This shows how Nigerian funerals are a unique mix of European and native customs. Even though Ezekiel Odia was a Christian and went to church, he followed native customs when he had to. Because of this, both native and Christian ceremonies were held at his funeral. In Nigerian culture, mourning is not a quiet thing; it's an art form that's full of life and emotion. People who are grieving don't just cry; they shout, sing, and praise the dead person's good deeds.

Following the death of their father, Aku-nna and Nna-nndo become the main mourners. Because of how her mother has shown grief in the past, Aku-nna cries and sings loudly about her father's good qualities and kindness. She tells him how great he is as a provider, a Christian, and a loving husband and dad. The people in the room can feel her deep sadness as she talks about her loss, and her sobs fill the room. Nna-nndo shows his sadness with loud screams and body language, even though he doesn't say much. The men there help hold him back because they know that boys are expected to be less emotional in these situations than girls.

It doesn't take long for people from all over Lagos to come pay their respects. The cries of Aku-nna and Nna-nndo and the wails of the mourners can be heard all over the neighbourhood. The sadness goes beyond Ezekiel's death; it includes everyone's experience of death.

As the night goes on, the men take charge of the rituals of grief. They hold hands, stand in a circle, and move back and forth. Death is blamed by a singer for taking Ezekiel away before he could enjoy the bride price from Aku- nna's wedding. The men then start dancing quickly and wildly, making a lot of noise as they do so. The women join in with their gourds full of small stones, making a sound that sounds like raindrops on a roof. The Christian hymns and the native songs mix, making a cacophony of sad sounds. As dawn breaks, the tired mourners eat and drink, and many of them lie down on the ground to rest. It's morning, and the moon has gone away.

Inside, Aku-nna thinks about what happened because she can't sleep due to the noise and the sadness of her father's death. She realizes that her father isn't there and that this will change her life forever. Aku-nna has lost her voice from crying so much, but the cool water from the pot, her dad used to wash himself, makes her feel better. When Aku-nna meets Aunt Uzo, she becomes more sad. Aunt Uzo talks about how Aku- nna's life has changed, pointing out that her father isn't there to buy her clothes anymore and she won't get new ones until she gets married. Aku- nna's mind starts to feel heavy as she thinks about how uncertain her future is.

More people come to mourn and visit throughout the day, but Aku-nna and Nna-nndo sit quietly in the middle of all the noise, feeling lost and alone. Eventually, noise from outside stops the mourning. The body of Ezekiel has arrived, and Aku-nna and her brother are being asked to pay their respects. When Aku-nna looks at her father's dead body, she is filled with sadness and realizes that he has died for good.

Eventually, Ezekiel's body is lowered into the grave while people who are sad pour dirt and stones on it. In her sadness, Aku-nna wishes they would be kinder, but she knows that her thoughts are pointless. She realizes that as her father died, Aku-nna and Nna- nndo's lives will never be the same. The truth of her father's death starts to set in as the gravediggers rush to finish the burial.

A few weeks after Ezekiel Odia's funeral, his wife, Ma Blackie, comes back to Lagos from Ibuza to find that her husband has already been buried. Even though her family and friends are there for her, the cost of living in Lagos is too high for her fatherless family. Because of this, Ma Blackie decides to go back to Ibuza, where Okonkwo, Ezekiel Odia's older brother, lives with his family.

The kids, Aku-nna and Nna-nndo, are sad to leave Lagos, which is their only home, and they don't know what their new life will be like in Ibuza. As they get on the bus to Ibuza, Aku-nna thinks about her future. She knows she has to get married soon, and the money she gets as a bridesmaid will help pay for her brother Nna-nndo's schooling. She is afraid to marry a farmer because she has heard how hard it is for women to work on farms. She knows there isn't much she can do, though, except pray to God for help.

The bus goes through several Yoruba towns. When it gets to Benin, the scenery changes, with redder soil and denser forests. Along the way, they meet tall, beautiful women who make an impression that lasts. When they get to Asaba, which is close to Ibuza, they eat in the busy market while they wait for their family to arrive. Soon, a

group of nice women offers to help them carry their bags to Ibuza, which is the start of their warm welcome.

Ogugua, Aku- nna's cousin, is in the group and makes friendship with her by teaching her about their traditions and customs. Aku-nna is shocked to learn that her mother, Ma Blackie, is going to marry Okonkwo, the brother of her late husband. This is how things usually work in their family.

They meet their new teacher, a tall, thin young man, who greets them warmly as they continue on their journey. This encounter makes them more interested and excited about their journey. When they finally get to Ibuza, Okonkwo, the family head, is waiting to greet them. The people in the village are sad about Ezekiel Odia's death and sing songs to him. The Odia family is facing an uncertain future in Ibuza, where traditions and customs will change their lives in surprising ways. This is especially true for Aku-nna and her mother, Ma Blackie, as they try to figure out marriage and life in a new town.

The Ibos kept their old customs alive in the village of Buza, which is on the western shore of the River Niger. Some of them even went into contact with white people. Ma Blackie starts a businss. She traded oil, using the savings from her late husband Ezekiel to buy and sell this valuable good. Ma Blackie bought oil and sold it to white men. The white men would then take the oil to England and make soap out of it. Ma Blackie would then buy the soap from white people and sell it to her people.

Over time, Ma Blackie becomes proud of her kids, especially Aku-nna, a smart and promising girl, who does really well in school. Some people in Okonkwo's family are jealous of their education, especially Aku- nna's. Even so, Okonkwo's sons Iloba and Osenekwu don't think much of formal education because they think it's only for slaves. The clash between traditional values and modern learning is evident in the village. The slaves who have gone to Christian schools and learned are now wealthy and powerful.

Okonkwo says that Aku- nna's schooling is almost over and that her mother's hard work will soon pay off. He also says that he wants to become an Obi, which means giving a big gift to the gods, which is an expensive process and becoming an influential member of his community. Iloba and Okonkwo see that Aku-nna and Okonkwo's daughter Ogugua are about to get married and think that bride prices could help them get rich. They know that Aku- nna's marriage will bring in money, and they talk about their dad's smart plan to get the money he needs to become Obi.

Chike Ofulue teaches at a school with few girls. Aku-nna is one of the few girls there, and he likes how quiet she is. Over the course of the year, Chike can't help but fall in love with his fifteen-year-old student Aku-nna. The changing landscape of Buza makes it clearer to Aku-nna and Nna-nndo how traditions clash and how hard it is to be stuck between two worlds.

In the peaceful town of Ibuza, where Christianity and tradition live together, Chike, a young man from a family that has been slaves, is drawn to Aku-nna, a girl from a well-known free family. People think that everyone is equal in God's eyes, but there are still differences in society, and Chike's slave background makes it impossible for him to marry Aku-nna.

Chike is sure of his good looks and charm, so he doesn't care about the local girls who pretend not to know about his family. Ofulue, his father, has a good life as a teacher and has four wives. He and his family are happy with his adventures with the local girls but finally Ofulue talks to Chike about Aku-nna and upcoming danger.

They talk to Ngbeke, who is their mother and Okonkwo's first wife. She is worried about Aku-nna's future. She thinks that Ma Blackie might ask for her daughter's bride price to pay for her son Nna-nndo's schooling. Ngbeke also thinks that Aku-nna might be an "ogbanje," or "living dead," who will die soon if she marries the son of a slave.

Osenekwu and Iloba defend Aku-nna and tell their mother that she is just a good student and not interested in her teacher, Chike Ofulue. But Ngbeke's anger and worry about Aku- nna's future are clear as she tells them what will happen because of what Aku-nna does.

Ofulue sees how much Chike likes Aku-nna and tells him not to hurt her. Chike tells his father that he loves Aku-nna very much and will never hurt her, even though he is shocked. Ofulue tells Chike to study hard and try again for college, even if he doesn't get a scholarship. This changes the course of their conversation. Chike is upset when his father tells him to study something more normal, like law, instead of sociology because he had failed to get a scholarship before. The conflict between Chike's desire to study sociology and his father's preference for a more conventional path grows stronger. Ofulue's offer to pay for Chike's college education shows that he is worried about Chike's relationship with Aku-nna.

As is often the case with forbidden love, Chike feels even more drawn to Aku-nna. He, on the other hand, doesn't tell her about his complicated family history or

what their relationship means. Chike keeps teaching and helping Aku-nna with her studies even though they are having problems. He is determined to help her pass her exams.

Because of Aku- nna's discomfort and something that happens at school, they find out something that changes their lives in a big way. Aku-nna has her first period under an orange tree. This marks the beginning of her transition into womanhood. This new information makes her relationship with Chike stronger. He is shocked at first, but he is determined to stand by her side.

Every market day in Asaba, they get together and talk by the river in a quiet place. Chike uses a book he bought in Lagos to teach Aku-nna songs. They do some light kissing together, but their relationship is still innocent. Chike cares about and respects Aku-nna and is determined not to hurt her. Even though his father warned him about the problems their relationship might cause, Chike is still devoted to Aku-nna. He wonders what the point of going to college is if it won't make him happier than being with Aku-nna.

As their relationship grows, Chike's plans to go to college become linked to his plans to marry Aku-nna, even though society and his father don't like the idea. Their story is about love that isn't allowed, staying strong, and following your dreams no matter what. In her village of Ibuza, Aku-nna used to be seen as a child, but now she feels like a young woman. She does everything with her friends, but she is different because she has a secret relationship with Chike, a boy from her village.

Aku- nna's menstrual cycle, which shows that she is becoming a woman, makes her life more complicated. She is afraid that she might be seen as "unclean" because of traditional ideas about how pure women should be and what the river god wants. Aku-nna has her third period while she is on a trip with her friends to gather firewood. This marks the start of her transition into womanhood. As Aku-nna learns that her mother, Ma Blackie, is busy with her own pregnancy and can't give her the support and direction she needs, her worries grow. This important event makes her think about her future, including possible suitors like Okoboshi whom she hated.

Okonkwo, Aku- nna's father, plans a party to celebrate her becoming a woman after she has her first period. He also expects a high bride price from her. He also tells her very sternly to stop being friends with Chike Ofulue.

Even though Okonkwo told her not to, Aku-nna reluctantly follows the tradition of letting young men visit her now that she is a woman. Okoboshi, a boy she doesn't

want to marry, is her first visitor. Each young man who comes to see her gives her a gift, and Okoboshi's advances make her feel bad.

Chike, who is deeply in love with Aku-nna, also shows up, but Okoboshi starts a fight by sitting next to her and touching her inappropriately. In order to protect her honour, Chike hits Okoboshi, which leads to a fight. Aku-nna loves Chike, but her village's rules say she can't pick him as he belongs to lower category. This makes her feel torn. As Aku- nna's mother, Ma Blackie, is pregnant with Okonkwo's child, this makes her mother more willing to do what Okonkwo wants. This makes Aku-nna feel betrayed because her mother suddenly agreed to marry her off to Okoboshi.

As the days go by, Aku-nna starts practicing the aja, a traditional dance with other girls. This is a big deal for the fifteen-year-old girls because it means their last Christmas with their dads before they get married.

A good news arrives that Aku-nna has passed her test, which means she can now become a teacher. However, their happiness doesn't last long when, during practice, the oil lamps in the dancing hut suddenly go out and the sounds of strange men can be heard. Men break into the hut and stop the girls from running away, causing panic. These men take Aku-nna away, breaking all of her hopes and dreams. Aku- nna's future becomes less clear, which is a turning point full of tension. Her journey is still centered around her becoming a woman and the struggle between love and tradition.

Chike is thinking about Aku- nna's good grades and his plans for her future. Chike hopes that her job as a teacher will help her family financially and give him time to decide whether to work for an oil company or go to college. He also wants his father to talk to Okonkwo about the possibility of them getting married, and he is ready to pay a big bride price.

But that night as Chike walks home, he hears a voice calling his name, which he at first thinks is just in his head. He soon figures out that it's Aku- nna's voice. He knows that someone is getting married in the village when he hears gunshots and wedding music in the dark. Chike runs home to tell his father the good news about Aku-nna’s test scores.

Chike's dad tells him that he talked to Okonkwo about the marriage, but Okonkwo hasn't said for sure what he thinks. Chike is sad, but he still has hope. Gunshots and party sounds in the distance interrupt their conversation. Chike suddenly realizes that the noise is coming from the hut of the Obidi family. He is

afraid that Aku-nna has been taken by the Obidi family to be with their son Okoboshi.

While this is going on, the other girls go back home to tell their mothers about what happened in the dancing hut. For some reason, the mothers choose to let their men look into it. Okonkwo's first wife, Ngbeke, suggests that they go see Aku-nna, but Ma Blackie tells them that she is still at the dancing hut. After a while of confusion, Ngbeke figures out that Aku-nna has been taken away. She quickly rings the village gong, a traditional music instrument, to let everyone know what's going on.

As more men and women join the search for the kidnappers, chaos breaks out in the village. To get the women to return their daughter, Ngbeke leads them by banging the gong. But they know that Aku-nna will belong to her kidnapper if her hair is cut short. The women's work is for nothing.

Over the course of the night, Okonkwo gets more and more drunk and relaxed. Three men from the Obidi family eventually come up to him and tell him that Aku-nna is now sleeping peacefully with Okoboshi. They agree on a small bride price. Okonkwo agrees, and the two of them talk about the tradition of giving Aku-nna wine to prove she is a virgin.

While this is going on, Aku- nna's brother Nna-nndo finds out where she is and asks his friend Chike for help. But Ma Blackie also knows that Chike loves Aku-nna, and she hopes that he can save her daughter. Chike has to find a way to save Aku-nna, and both Nna-nndo and Ma Blackie are confused. Aku- nna's future looks hard and uncertain, as her fate seems set in stone by tradition and the actions of others.

People carry Aku-nna to her new home, where the women greet her and praise her beauty and softness. People tell her that Chike, who is seen as a slave, is the reason she was taken. Aku-nna is given new clothes and shown a bright bed that she and her new husband, Okoboshi, will share. But she is too scared and uncomfortable to do anything.

As night falls, Aku-nna still won't lie down on the bed and won't accept her situation. She tells him she needs to go to the bathroom and walks away while hearing Chike's special whistle. This lets her know that he is close by. But she can't get away because Okoboshi's sister is watching her.

After some time, Okoboshi confronts Aku-nna. She lies and says she has been with another man, trying desperately to get away from him. This makes Okoboshi very angry, so he hits her so hard. The next morning, Aku-nna is made to fetch water while the women make fun of her and laugh. She feels trapped and hopeless about her situation.

Aku- nna's brother Nna-nndo comes to see her and brings her some comforting words and a letter from Chike. Aku-nna is holding on to the hope that Chike can help her get away. But Okoboshi talks to Nna-nndo, which starts a tense argument that Okoboshi's mother calms down. Okoboshi's mother later tells Aku-nna to go see Okoboshi that night in the hopes that he will forgive her. Aku-nna agrees, but she plans to run away with Chike.

She hears Chike's whistle while she's going to the bathroom and, with his help, runs away from the home of Okoboshi. Aku-nna and Chike start a long journey to safety and finally get to a house from which they plan to keep going to Ughelli. It shows strong and determined Aku-nna gets away from an abusive and forced marriage which gives her some hope in a tough situation.

Chike and Aku- nna celebrates their new found freedom and hope as they are able to escape the harsh conditions. Ben Adegor, an old school friend of Chike's, is introduced. Ben is very important to what's happening because he knew Chike loved Aku-nna very much because they wrote to each other often. As the head teacher at a nearby school, Ben is the one who tells Chike about a job opening at an oil company in Ughelli. Ben is also kind and offers Chike and Aku-nna a temporary place to stay in his old hut so they can start their new life together.

The young couple feels safe and at ease because Ben is friendly and open, and his pregnant wife Rose is also there for them. They are shown around their new house, which has three large rooms and a wide, airy veranda. In this place, Chike takes a big step by proposing to Aku-nna. She says, "Where you go, I go," which is a very sweet way to show her love.

As the happy couple counts the hundred pounds that Chike's father gave them as a wedding gift, their happiness grows even more. This money, which is meant to pay for Aku- nna's education, represents their newfound freedom and chances. Chike's choice to build their life together with the money instead of going to school for himself shows how much he loves Aku-nna.

As they go on a shopping, their excitement doesn't end. Chike buys things that are different from what they had before, like a new English bed with a soft mattress, sheets, curtains, cooking tools, plates, and even a small oil stove. Aku-nna is very thankful for these new things because she had never seen such luxury before. The journey of Chike and Aku-nna gets better when Chike gets a job with an oil company, despite the problems they have had. They can't believe how quickly things are changing, and Aku-nna prays in silence that their happiness will last.

As they walk back to their house with their new things, friends join them to celebrate their new life. Particularly, Ben Adegor prays for their marriage and invokes God's blessing on them. This moment shows that the couple is now part of a community that supports them and wants them to do well.

They name their new bed "Christmas," which is a symbol of their love and union. But at first, it's hard for Chike and Aku-nna to get close because Aku-nna seems hesitant. She finally tells Chike how she really feels and what she's been through. Chike's answer shows that he understands and cares. The things Chike and Aku-nna have acquired, the good things their friends have done for them, and the private moment they share all represent how they ran away from their oppressive past and found love and new opportunities.

Ashamed and angry, Okoboshi lies and says that he slept with Aku-nna, showing a piece of her hair as proof. The people of Ibuza get very angry. Many of them blame Chike's family for Aku-nna's actions. There is a big argument in the community about Aku- nna's status. Some people say that Aku-nna still belongs to Okoboshi as long as Okonkwo, doesn't take any bride price from Chick’s father Ofulue. This argument shows how complicated social norms are and how free men and slaves are different in their community.

The Obidi family blames Chike's family for their bad luck, so they cut down all the trees on Ofulue's land to revenge. This caused a lot of trouble to Ofulue family. Ofulue's sons decide to sue the Obidi family, which starts a legal battle that shows how traditional law and "white man's law" don't always get along.

Unfortunately, Aku- nna's actions have bad effects on Okonkwo, who gets very sick. In his anger, he gets a divorce from Ma Blackie, and she is blamed for what Aku-nna did. Traditionally, a doll that looks like Aku-nna is used to hurt her through a type of magic.

Chike and Aku-nna are happy after getting married in a white man's church. They now live in Ughelli. Aku-nna is a teacher, and her brother Nna-nndo is doing very well. People in their community help them. Chike's job at the oil company is going well, and the company is making good money.

One thing makes Aku-nna unhappy as the bride price hasn't been paid. The family of Chike is willing to pay, but Aku- nna's father, Okonkwo, won't take the money because he thinks that no girl in his family should marry a slave. The problem they haven't solved casts a shadow over their marriage and makes Aku-nna nervous. Ma Blackie, sends her son to live with Aku-nna and Chike because they sent her a secret message. The Ofulue family also starts sending her money, which gives her financial freedom and lets her pay a medicine man to counter Okonkwo's harmful magic.

Aku-nna tells Chike that she thinks she might be pregnant, which makes everyone happy and worried. Chike tells her to stop working and take care of herself because he is worried about her health. It gets harder and harder for Aku-nna to be pregnant because she has terrible morning sickness and can't enjoy food. Her health gets worse, and she feels bad about making her husband Chike so worried. Chike hires a girl from the area to help with housework and tells Aku-nna to get enough rest and food.

Chike's older brother is a doctor, and he checks out Aku-nna and says she is weak because she didn't get enough food when she was young. He suggests that they take her to the hospital for surgery because similar health problems kill a lot of native girls while they are giving birth. The baby wasn't in Chike and Aku- nna's plans, but they're ready to face the challenges together.

Anyway, back in Ibuza, Chike’s dad, Ofulue, keeps asking Okonkwo to take the bride price, but Okonkwo won't give his daughter to a slave. The little doll that represents Aku- nna's health is taken from Okonkwo's hut for unknown reasons. This makes him very angry and makes him make a new doll. Chike's dad comes to visit them in Ughelli. Aku-nna can't sleep because she keeps hearing her uncle's voice calling her back to her family. She is stressed out and afraid of dying all the time. Aku- nna's restlessness doesn't go away even though she sees a doctor and takes sleeping pills. She often cries when she wakes up because she thinks her uncle is trying to take her away. Chike tries to make her feel better, but she is still worried.

One night, Aku-nna goes into labour out of the blue, and Chike takes her to the hospital right away in an ambulance. He thinks about the good times they had together and how they got away from Ibuza. As they arrive at the hospital, Chike is told that Aku-nna needs surgery and that they have a daughter. The news of Aku-nna's illness and the birth of their daughter has a big effect on Chike. Chike starts crying with Nna-nndo, who has come to help him. Aku- nna's condition gets worse, and she stays unconscious.

Finally, Aku-nna briefly wakes up. She smiles and tells Chike how much she loves him. She asks about their baby and tells them to name her "Joy" to show the world how much they love each other. In her last words, Aku-nna tells Chike to be happy and says that they will always love each other. In Chike's arms, she dies peacefully.

At the end of the book, the lesson is taught to all the girls in Ibuza about the sad story of Aku-nna and Chike. They are told how important it is to accept the husband that their people have chosen for them and make sure that their bride price is paid so that they don't have to go through the risks of giving birth. This lesson might not be true, but it shows how tradition and dangerous stories told from generation to generation can have a lasting effect.

A. Check Your Progress:

Q. 1: Select the correct alternative:

1. In the novel, where is Aku-nna's family primarily based?

   a) Ibuza b) Lagos c) Ughelli d) Asaba

2. What causes a significant change in Aku-nna's family situation?

   a) Winning a lottery b) A natural disaster

   c) The death of Ezekiel Odia d) Moving to a new country

3. Who is Aku-nna's love interest in the story?

   a) Okoboshi b) ChikeOfulue

   c) Ben Adegor d) Dick

4. What is a key theme in the novel?

   a) Technological advancements

   b) Space exploration

c) Conflict between tradition and modernity

d) Political upheaval

5. How does Aku-nna's story end?

a) She becomes a successful businesswoman

b) She moves to a different country

c) She dies after childbirth

d) She reunites with her family in Ibuza

Q. 2: Answer the following question in one word / phrase or sentence.

1. What is the occupation of Aku-nna's father, Ezekiel Odia?
2. What is the main reason Aku-nna fears marrying Okoboshi?
3. Name the village where Aku-nna eventually moves with her mother.
4. Who offers Chike and Aku-nna a place to stay after they escape?
5. What name does Aku-nna suggest for her baby?

2.4 Section-4:

A) Major Characters in the Novel *The Bride Price*

1. Aku-nna

The main character in *The Bride Price* is Aku-nna, a young, smart girl whose journey from being a teenager to a woman is at the heart of the story. After her father's death, she moves from Lagos to her home village, where people expect her to follow their traditions. How Aku-nna deals with these social norms, especially when it comes to marriage and the idea of the bride price, is at the heart of how her character grows and how the story is told. In a traditional Igbo community, her character shows how personal wants and social pressures can clash.

She is a touching and complex character who shows the problems young women in traditional societies face. At first, she acts like a submissive and obedient daughter, which is a reflection of her culture. But the book does a great job of showing how she changes from a passive character to one who is strong and defiant.

Her changes start when her father dies. It's a big turning point that takes her from a fairly liberal city life in Lagos to a more traditional village life. This change in

Aku- nna's environment causes her to change in a big way, throwing her into the complicated world of gender roles and traditional customs.

She is having a hard time with how societal norms are controlling her life, especially when it comes to marriage and the bride price. This conflict is made worse by the fact that she loves Chike, a man who is seen as inappropriate by her community because he was born in a former slave family. Her relationship with Chike shows how she is rebelling against traditional and male-dominated norms and how independent and self-aware she is becoming.

One of the most interesting things about Aku- nna's character is how she wants to learn and be independent, which goes against what women in her society have been expected to do. This pursuit not only shows how strong she is, but it also criticises the patriarchal structures that try to limit women's roles to being wives and mothers.

Emecheta looks at colonialism, tradition vs. modernity, and how these things affect people's freedom and sense of who they are through Aku-nna. Emecheta uses Aku- nna's character to look at the bigger problems in society, especially the problems women face in patriarchal societies, where their own wants and needs are often at odds with what society expects of them.

In short, Aku-nna is a sign of strength and resistance. Her change from a traditional girl who obeyed others to a woman who actively questions and challenges the status quo shows how hard it is for women to gain independence and how hard it is to balance tradition and modernity. Her character shows not only how hard it is to be an individual, but also how society and culture worked in general at the time.

2. Chike

Chike is a young man in *The Bride Price* who is smart and up-to-date. He is also the son of a former slave, which makes him controversial in the Igbo community. His character stands for the clash of old-fashioned values with more modern, liberal ones. The way Chike is dating Aku-nna goes against what most people think and against the strict rules in their community, especially when it comes to marriage and social status. His character shows how the way people lived in a traditional society changed during the colonial era.

Chike is a significant and active character who stands for the meeting of modernity and tradition. He is in a special place in society because his father was a

slave and his mother is an educated woman. A big part of the book is his background, which shows how complicated the Igbo community's social structures and biases are.

Chike is shown to be a progressive and likeable person who combines Western and traditional African values. His love for Aku-nna goes against long-held beliefs and customs about marriage and social rank. His character is different from the villager's traditional views, showing how old habits and new ways of thinking can be at odds with each other.

His relationship with Aku-nna becomes the main theme of the book, showing how hard it is to go against social norms and find happiness while dealing with cultural expectations. Chike's character is very important for showing how society changes, how colonialism affects people, and how hard it is for people to be independent within a strict cultural framework.

Chike's love for Aku-nna is shown to be real and deep, going beyond the social norms that say their relationship is wrong. This part of his personality shows how the book explores the idea that love can go beyond social norms and how hard it is to be happy when family and cultural expectations are in the way.

When traditional values and modern ideas clash, Chike is the personification of that. Because his father was a slave, he is a break from the past and a challenge to the strict social orders in the Igbo community. Because of his background, he is an outsider in his community, and this has a big effect on how he thinks and acts throughout the novel.

In addition, Chike's character also looks at identity and belonging. Because his father was a slave, he has to deal with a complicated social situation where he is neither fully accepted in the traditional society nor fully integrated into the colonial culture. This search for identity and acceptance is a recurring theme in the book, and it has a lot to do with how Chike grows as a person.

In essence, Chike's character has many sides and represents the conflict between tradition and modernity as well as the search for one's own identity in a world that is changing quickly. His part in the book is very important for showing how society changes, how colonisation affects people, and how hard love and marriage are in traditional African society.

To sum up, Chike is more than just a love interest in the story. He is a representation of modernity and change, standing up to old rules and giving a fresh

look at how African society changed during the colonial era. He gives the book more depth as it explores cultural identity, social class, and the complicated nature of love during a time of change.

3. Ma Blackie:

Aku-nna and Nna- nndo's mother is Ma Blackie, who is also known as Ma Palagada. She is married to Ezekiel Odia and has two children with him. Following the traditional practise of going back to one's roots in times of trouble, she returns to her home village after her husband's death. A lot of traditional Igbo values can be seen in her, especially in how she handles marriage and how important the bride price is to her. She is an example of strength because she deals with the problems that come with being widowed and social expectations, specially making sure that her children have a good future within the rules of her community. Traditional values have a big impact on what she does and how she makes decisions throughout the book. This makes her a central character in the story's themes of family, tradition, and social norms.

In the cultural setting, Ma Blackie is a character who represents traditional African womanhood and motherhood. Throughout the story, Ma Blackie's actions and choices are often based on upholding these traditional values, especially when it comes to marriage and family honour. Her worry about finding a good bride price for Aku-nna shows how important this practise is in her culture and how it affects a woman's social standing.

In addition, Ma Blackie's character also looks at themes of strength and change. After her husband died, she had to deal with the difficulties of being a single parent and the expectations of society. She had to show the strength and endurance that are often needed in women in her situation. Ma Blackie's character is used as a way to look at the roles and expectations of women in traditional Igbo society, as well as how hard it is to balance personal wants with societal duties.

4. Okonkwo:

Okonkwo is Aku- nna's uncle. After her father dies, he takes over as head of the family and marries with Aku-nna’s mother Ma Blackie and provides them shelter. He is very traditional and has a lot of power over Aku- nna's life, especially when it comes to her marriage and the bride price. His character shows how the Igbo community follows traditional rules and social norms, which affects how the story develops and the main character's journey.

Okonkwo represents the traditional values of Igbo society. Since he is Aku-nna's uncle and the brother of her late father, he becomes the male head of the family when his brother dies. His traditionalist views have a big effect on what happens in the book, especially when it comes to Aku- nna's wedding and the bride price. Okonkwo's character stands for the expectations and pressures that society puts on Aku-nna, and the choices he makes have a huge impact on her life. His adherence to traditions and his position as the family's leader bring out the deeply rooted cultural norms that the novel critically examines.

5. Nna-nndo:

Nna-nndo, Aku- nna's younger brother, moves back to their home village with their mother after their father dies. His story is similar to Aku- nna's because they are both figuring out how to live in a society where traditions are important. Nna-interactions nndo's and experiences show how these traditions affect young people in the Igbo community from a man's point of view. His part in the story helps to show how family relationships and social norms work in the context of tradition.

Though he is not as important as his sister Aku-nna, but he is still very important to the story's cultural and familial dynamics. As Aku- nna's younger brother, he also goes through the change from living in the city of Lagos to living in the traditional village after their father dies. Nna- nndo's character shows how young men in the Igbo community deal with the traditions and expectations that are put on them.

His actions and reactions in the story show things from a male point of view, which is different from Aku- nna's female-centered experiences. Emecheta explores themes of masculinity, family duty, and how cultural norms affect young people in a subtle way in Nna-nndo. In terms of Igbo traditions and customs, his character adds to the larger picture of how families work and what roles people play in society.

6. Okayoboshi:

Okoboshi is a village boy who is seen by Aku- nna's family as a good match for her. Igbo society has strict rules about what a husband should be like, and he is the example that Aku-nna should follow. His character brings out the cultural norms and pressures that come with marriage in the community.

Okoboshi is a character who stands for the traditional Igbo ideas and rules about marriage. Because Aku- nna's family thought he was a good match for her, he

represents the traditional idea of a husband in their community. His presence in the story shows how young women like Aku-nna are influenced by culture and society when it comes to marriage. For example, Okoboshi's character is different from Aku-nna's wants for freedom and love, showing how personal goals and social duties can clash. The part he plays in the story brings out the themes of tradition, social expectations, and the struggle for freedom within the limits of cultural norms.

B) Check Yor Progress

Q. 1: Select the correct alternative:

1. What is the main challenge Aku-nna faces in *The Bride Price*?

   a) Educational difficulties

   b) Financial problems

   c) Societal norms and traditions regarding marriage

   d) Professional career choices

2. How does Chike's background affect his relationship with Aku-nna?

   a) He is wealthy and influential b) He is from a former slave family

   c) He is a foreigner d) He is a renowned scholar

3. What role does Ma Blackie play in the novel?

   a) A progressive thinker

   b) A traditional mother upholding Igbo values

   c) A rebellious character

   d) A village elder

4. What is Okonkwo's relation to Aku-nna?

   a) Father b) Uncle c) Brother d) Neighbor

5. Who is Okoboshi in relation to Aku-nna?

   a) Her teacher b) A potential suitor

   c) Her cousin d) Her best friend

Q. 2: Answer the following question in one word / phrase or sentence.

1. Where does Aku-nna move to after her father's death?

2. What is the main conflict in Chike's character?
3. What significant event impacts Ma Blackie's life in the novel?
4. What is Nna-nndo's role in the Igbo community's tradition?
5. What does Okoboshi symbolize in the novel?

2.5 Section-5

A) Themes in the Novel

1. Cultural Traditions and Modernity:

The main theme of the novel is "Cultural Traditions and Modernity". It is a critical look at how deeply rooted cultural practises and Western ideas affect Nigerian society. This contrast is especially clear in how the novel handles the idea of the bride price. In many African cultures, the bride price is an important part of the wedding ceremony because it shows respect and appreciation for the bride's family. Modern values, on the other hand, make this practise more visible and make people wonder what it means for women's freedom and consent. The main character, Aku-nna, becomes important to this theme. She is very aware of the bride price that will be paid for her as a young girl. Aku-nna is exposed to modern ideas about women's rights and self-determination, through, her goals and experiences, especially in school. She feels conflicted and out of sync with her cultural background because of this exposure. The book also shows how young people figure out who they are in a world where values are often at odds with each other. It is shown that characters like Aku-nna and her brother are torn between honouring their culture and embracing the new ideas and opportunities that come with living in a globalised world. Their experiences show how Nigerian society as a whole was changing at the time. Old traditions are being looked at again in light of new ideas about marriage, gender, and individual rights. The theme also talks about how hard it is to adapt to a new culture. It looks at how people and groups deal with change while still trying to hold on to their cultural identity. This is especially important in places like Nigeria that were colonised and have long-lasting effects on their social and cultural structures. The theme of "Cultural Traditions and Modernity" in the book really brings to life a society that is changing. By using its characters and story, the book shows how hard it can be to respect cultural traditions while also adopting modern values. It makes smart points about how hard it is to adapt to a new culture and how changing social norms can affect people's lives. This theme is not only important to the story, but it

also comes up in larger conversations about how to keep cultures alive and how to let them change in modern societies.

2. Gender Roles and Feminism:

The Bride Price by Buchi Emecheta's "Gender Roles and Feminism" theme is a moving look at what it's like to be a woman in Nigerian society, which is dominated by men. This theme runs through the whole story and shows how deeply rooted gender differences and societal expectations are against women. At the centre of this theme is the main character, Aku-nna, whose life is greatly affected by the gender roles and cultural norms that are common in her community. Aku-nna learns from a young age about the bride price that will be paid for her marriage. This is a stark reminder of how she is treated as a commodity in a society dominated by men. Even though this is a culturally important tradition, it shows how marriage is based on transactions and how women are treated like objects. In the book, Aku-journey nna's is a symbol of the larger fight for women's freedom and autonomy. The traditional roles of wife and mother are expected of her, but her goals for education and personal growth are not in line with those roles. Emecheta uses Aku-character nna's to criticise the rules that limit women's roles in society and to get the reader to think about whether these rules are fair and still useful in a world that is changing. The book also talks about feminism, but not in a very activist way. Instead, it does this by showing how the characters subtly fight against male-centered expectations. Aku-refusal nna's to marry someone she wasn't supposed to, her desire to learn, and her eventual declaration of independence were all acts of defiance against a system that uses old rules to control and define women. The way other female characters are written in the book also helps to explore this theme. These characters show different sides of what it's like to be a woman in a patriarchal society, from submission to rebellion. They show the different ways that women deal with and fight against the rules that are put on them. Not only does Emecheta show how unfair things are for women in "The Bride Price," she also praises their strength and determination. The book makes a strong point about how society needs to change in order to achieve gender equality. It wants to change the way people think about traditional gender roles and see women for who they are as people, not just for their roles in marriage and family. Because it looks at gender roles and feminism, "The Bride Price" is still an important and interesting story that speaks to current issues of women's rights and gender equality. It shows how good Buchi Emecheta is at telling stories and how much she wants to show how hard life is for women in traditional societies.

3. Family dynamics and Loyalty:

In "The Bride Price," this theme of family dynamics and loyalty is a critical look at how complicated and often difficult family relationships are in Nigeria. It looks at how societal norms, family expectations, and personal wants affect and are affected by each other in Aku-family. nna's The book shows how complicated these relationships are by showing how family loyalty and following cultural norms can clash with personal goals and desires. The story shows how societal expectations can change family structures and the roles of each member in the family. Aku-life nna's shows the problems that happen when personal goals or situations clash with traditional family duties and roles. The theme also looks at how things like social pressures, gender roles, and economic status make these relationships even more complicated. "The Bride Price" shows the ups and downs of family life in a society that is changing quickly through its characters and how they interact with each other. It makes smart points about how important family relationships are while also criticising the strict parts of traditional family expectations. This theme is not only important to the story, but it also comes up in larger conversations about family, loyalty, and cultural change in the modern world.

4. Love and Marriage:

"Love and Marriage," the fourth theme of "The Bride Price," examines deeply the difficulties of romantic relationships in traditional Nigerian society. The novel shows a strong contrast between the ideals of romantic love and the reality of arranged marriages, which are common in the culture it is set in. The relationship between Aku-nna and her suitor, which goes against the usual rules about marriage, is at the heart of this theme. Their love story is shown as an example of how people can fight against the societal norms of arranged marriages, where decisions are often based on family duties and money concerns rather than love. The traditional view of marriage as a business deal is criticised by Emecheta through this theme, especially the bride price. The bride price is a traditional practise that is respected, but it is also seen as a way to use women for money, turning marriage from a holy union into a business deal. Alongside this point of view, the book also shows a more modern, individualistic view of love and marriage, where choice and emotional connection are valued. The theme also talks about how these different ideas about marriage have changed the characters' lives. Aku-struggle nna's to find her own way in love is a metaphor for how people's ideas about marriage are changing as society becomes more modern. True love and mutual respect should be the basis of marriage,

according to the book, which goes against traditional ways of doing things that often forget about these things. The themes of love and marriage in "The Bride Price" make it a moving look at how relationships work in traditional societies and how they are changing. That story not only shows a struggle and love between two people, but it also criticises the rules that society sets for marriage. The theme is an important part of the book because it gives us more information about the characters and the society in which they live.

5. Economic Hardship and Class Struggle:

This theme looks at the characters' socioeconomic problems and shows how their lives and choices are deeply affected by their class and economic situations. The book shows the problems that low-income families in Nigeria face and looks at how money problems affect relationships, social standing, and life choices. Hard times financially are a constant background in the story, affecting everything from the characters' chances of getting married to their chances of going to school. The idea of the bride price is heavily influenced by money issues. A suitor's ability to pay is often just as important, if not more important, than how well they get along with the bride. On top of that, the theme shows how economic differences affect society as a whole. It looks at how differences between classes keep inequality going and make it harder for people from lower socioeconomic groups to get ahead. The characters' hopes and dreams are often limited by their limited funds, which is a harsh reflection of the harsh realities of a society where money and status have a big impact on one's future. The Bride Price is a powerful critique of the social injustices caused by economic inequality because it shows how hard it is to make ends meet and the struggle between classes. The story not only shows how people struggle and get through hard times, but it also makes a point about the social structures that affect the characters' lives. The theme runs through the whole book and gives us a deeper understanding of the problems people face in a society where wealth inequality is common.

6. Colonial Influence:

"The Bride Price's" story is subtly based on the theme of "Colonial Influence," which shows how colonisation changed Nigerian society and culture. This theme isn't as obvious as some others in the book, but it's an important part of how the story is told. Nigeria's colonial past has left permanent marks on its social, cultural, and economic structures. These structures affect the lives of the characters and the

changes they see in society. Through this theme, the book talks about how colonialism has changed social norms and values, especially when it comes to gender roles, marriage, and schooling. As a result of colonial rule, traditional Nigerian practises are mixed with Western culture. This makes for a complicated web of identity and cultural conflict. This theme also looks at how hard it is for the characters to balance their traditional culture with the modern, post-colonial world they live in. The theme also looks at how economic and social hierarchies are still affected by colonialism. It criticises in a subtle way how Nigeria's socioeconomic landscape has been changed by colonial legacies that have kept inequality alive. "Colonial Influence" is a complex theme in "The Bride Price" that adds to the book's look at cultural identity and how societies change. It gives the story a historical background that helps the reader better understand the characters' lives and how society works. This theme is very important to fully grasp the book and its commentary on Nigerian society after being colonised.

Conclusion:

The main ideas in "The Bride Price" are Cultural Traditions and Modernity, Gender Roles and Feminism, Family Dynamics and Loyalty, Love and Marriage, Economic Hardship and Class Struggle, and Colonial Influence. Together, they give us a rich look into Nigerian society. They talk about how difficult it is to choose between tradition and modernity, how difficult it is for women to be independent, how complicated family relationships are, how different people have different ideas about love and marriage, how real economic differences are, and how colonialism still affects people today. These themes show the difficulties and changes that happen in a society that is trying to figure out its cultural identity and new rules.

B. Check Your Progress:

Q. 1: Select the correct alternative:

1. What is the primary theme of "The Bride Price"?

   a) Technological advancement b) Cultural Traditions and Modernity

   c) Space exploration d) Political conflict

2. Which theme in "The Bride Price" explores the complexities of being a woman in a male-dominated Nigerian society?

   a) Economic Hardship and Class Struggle

b) Love and Marriage

c) Gender Roles and Feminism

d) Colonial Influence

3. What theme in *The Bride Price* examines the tension between personal desires and traditional family duties?

   a) Cultural Traditions and Modernity

   b) Family Dynamics and Loyalty

   c) Economic Hardship and Class Struggle

   d) Love and Marriage

4. Which theme in the novel deals with the challenges of romantic relationships in traditional Nigerian society?

   a) Economic Hardship and Class Struggle b) Love and Marriage

   c) Gender Roles and Feminism d) Colonial Influence

5. What theme in *The Bride Price* reflects on the lasting impacts of colonialism on Nigerian society and culture?

   a) Love and Marriage b) Gender Roles and Feminism

   c) Colonial Influence d) Cultural Traditions and Modernity

Q. 2: Answer the following question in one word / phrase or sentence.

1. How is the bride price depicted in the novel?
2. What does Aku-nna's relationship with Chike symbolize in the context of the novel?
3. What is the main conflict for Aku-nna's family in *The Bride Price*?
4. What aspect of Nigerian society is critiqued through Aku-nna's experiences in the novel?
5. What historical context influences the story's setting and characters?

2.6 Section - 6

A) Answers of Check Your Progress

Answers of Section-1

Q.1: Select the correct alternative

c) Depiction as a social construct

b) Genetic differences

b) Shaping roles and behaviors

c) Economic inequality

b) Beauty standards

Q.2: Answer in one word / phrase or Sentence:

1. From biological concepts to societal constructs.
2. Through stereotypes and discrimination, affecting opportunities and mental health.
3. Challenging patriarchal structures and promoting gender equality.
4. Racial identity, historical context, and the fight against injustice.
5. By showing how these aspects interplay in shaping individual experiences.

Answers of Section-2

Q.1: Select the correct alternative

c) Lagos, Nigeria

b) Challenges faced by African women

b) "The Joys of Motherhood"

b) Her early marriage and subsequent immigration to England

b) Double colonization

Q.2: Answer in one word / phrase or Sentence:

1. Writer
2. 2017
3. Gender inequality and the conflict between modernity and traditional values

4. Ibusa
5. Missionary school

Answers of Section-3

Q.1: Select the correct alternative

b) Lagos

c) The death of Ezekiel Odia

b) ChikeOfulue

c) Conflict between tradition and modernity

c) She dies after childbirth

Q.2: Answer in one word / phrase or Sentence:

1. Factory worker
2. Traditional purity expectations
3. Ibuza
4. Ben Adegor
5. Joy

Answers of Section – 4

Q. 1: Select the correct alternative:

c) Societal norms and traditions regarding marriage

b) He is from a former slave family

b) A traditional mother upholding Igbo values

b) Uncle

b) A potential suitor

Q. 2: Answer the following question in one word / phrase or sentence.

1. Her home village
2. Conflict between tradition and modernity
3. The death of her husband
4. Representing the male perspective on traditions

5. Traditional marital expectations

Answers of Section-5

Q.1: Select the correct alternative

b) Cultural Traditions and Modernity

c) Gender Roles and Feminism

b) Family Dynamics and Loyalty

b) Love and Marriage

c) Colonial Influence

Q.2: Answer in one word / phrase or Sentence:

1. A symbol of traditional practices clashing with modern values
2. Defiance against traditional marriage norms
3. Balancing personal goals with societal expectations
4. Gender inequality and women's autonomy
5. Colonial history and its effects

B. Exercises:

1. How does Buchi Emecheta portray the conflict between traditional Igbo culture and modern values in *The Bride Price*?
2. Analyse the representation of gender roles and the concept of feminism in *The Bride Price*.
3. Discuss the impact of colonial influence on the characters and societal structure in *The Bride Price*.
4. Explore the theme of family dynamics and loyalty in *The Bride Price* and its impact on the main characters.
5. Examine the depiction of economic hardship and class struggle in *The Bride Price* and how it influences the narrative.

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Unit-3
Postmodernism in Fiction
José Saramago (1922-2010) – *Blindness* (1995)

Contents

3.0 Objectives:

After completing the study of this unit, you will

- know about 'postmodernism'
- know about the life (and works) of José Saramago
- know the plot summery of *Blindness*
- learn about the characters in *Blindness*
- learn the themes and other aspects in *Blindness*
- be able to answer the questions on *Blindness*

3.1 Introduction:

This unit begins with the discussion about the term 'postmodernism', and continues to take into account a few biographical details of a renowned Portuguese writer, José Saramago (1922-2010). It also presents the detailed summary of his famous novel *Blindness*, the analysis of the characters in the novel and the critical commentary on the themes, motifs and symbols used in the novel.

3.2 Postmodernism

The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory (J. A. Cuddon) defines 'Postmodernism' as follows:

Postmodernism is a general (and sometimes controversial) term used to refer to changes, developments and tendencies which have taken place (and are taking place) in literature, art, music, architecture, philosophy, etc. since 1940s or 1950s. Post-modernism is different from modernism, even a reaction against it. It is no easier to define than many other -isms. Like them, it is amorphous by nature.

To talk of post-modernism is to imply that modernism is over and done with. This is not so. There never is a neat demarcation line. Originally, *avant-garde* movements in literature and the arts in general were modernist; *avant-garde* influences continue. It might be said that there is a new *avant-garde*. Besides, post-modernism is still happening. When something else develops from it or instead of it, it will, perhaps, be easier to identify, describe and classify.

As far as literature is concerned it is possible to descry certain features in postmodernism. For instance, there is literature which tends to be non-traditional and

against authority and signification. Here one may cite experimental techniques, in fiction as displayed in the *nouveau roman* and the anti-novel. There have also been experiments with what is called concrete poetry, though there is nothing particularly post-modernist about that (or even modernist, for that matter) since Simias of Rhodes was experimenting with pattern poems in the 4th BC. In drama one might cite experiment with form, content and presentation in such developments as the Theatre of the Absurd, Total Theatre, the 'happening'.

Other discernible features of postmodernism are an eclectic approach, aleatory writing, parody and pastiche. Nor should we forget the importance of what is called magic realism in fiction, new modes in science fiction, the popularity of neo-Gothic and the horror story. It is used widely in reference to fiction, notably to the novels (or Anti-Novels) and stories of Thomas Pynchon, Kurt Vonnegut, Italo Calvino, Vladimir Nabokov, William S. Burroughs, Angela Carter, Salman Rushdie, Peter Ackroyd, Julian Barnes, Jeanette Winterson, and many of their followers.

Postmodernism is the name given to the period of literary criticism that developed toward the end of the twentieth century. Just as the name implies, it is the period that comes after the modern period. But these are not easily separated into discrete units with specific dates as centuries or presidential terms are limited. Postmodernism came about as a reaction to the established modernist era, which itself was a reaction to the established tenets of the nineteenth century and before.

What sets Postmodernism apart from its predecessor is the reaction of its practitioners to the rational, scientific, and historical aspects of the modern age. For postmodernists this took the guise of being self-conscious, experimental, and ironic. The postmodernist is concerned with imprecision and unreliability of language and with epistemology, the study of what knowledge is.

An exact date for the establishment of Postmodernism is elusive, but it may be said to have begun in the post-World War II era, roughly the 1950s. It took full flight in the 1960s in the face of global social and political unrest. In 1968 it reached an early zenith with the intense student protests in the United States and France, the war for independence in Algeria, and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. The beginning of space exploration with the launch of Sputnik in 1957, culminating in the 1969 landing of men on the moon, marks a significant shift in the area of science and technology.

At the same time, Jacques Derrida presented his first paper, *Of Grammatology* (1967), outlining the principles of deconstruction. The early novels of Kurt Vonnegut Jr. and Alain Robbe-Grillet were published; Ishmael Reed was writing his poetry. The Marxist critics, Fredric Jameson and Terry Eagleton, who saw a major shift in the social and economic world as a part of the postmodern paradigm, were beginning their creative careers. As time progressed, more and more individuals added their voices to this list: Julia Kristeva, Susan Sontag, and, in popular culture, Madonna. (In her openly sexual music and music videos she broke down the limits of sexuality and femininity. Still, while some believe that her career is a setback for feminist movement, others believe that she opened the doors to a wider acceptance of female and human sexuality.)

In a speech at Independence Hall in Philadelphia on July 4, 1994, Vaclav Havel, then president of the Czech Republic, said:

The distinguishing features of such transitional periods are a mixing and blending of cultures and a plurality or parallelism of intellectual and spiritual worlds. These are periods when all consistent value systems collapse, when cultures distant in time and space are discovered or rediscovered. They are periods when there is a tendency to quote, to imitate, and to amplify, rather than to state with authority or integrate. New meaning is gradually born from the encounter, or the intersection, of many different elements.

This state of mind or of the human world is called postmodernism. For me, a symbol of that state is a Bedouin mounted on a camel and clad in traditional robes under which he is wearing jeans, with a transistor radio in his hands and an ad for Coca-Cola on the camel's back.

This speech outlines the essence of Postmodernism in all its forms: the mixing, the disintegration, and the instability of identities.

3.2.1 Check Your Progress

1. Jacques Derrida presented his first paper, _____ (1967) outlining the principles of deconstruction.
2. The Marxist critics, _____ , saw a major shift in the social and economic world as a part of the postmodern paradigm.
3. In Philadelphia on July 4, 1994, _____ , was the president of the Czech Republic.

3.2.2 Terms to Remember

1. **Absurd** – a term derived from the existentialism of Albert Camus, and often applied to the modern sense of human purposelessness in a universe without meaning or value. Many 20th century writers of prose fiction have stressed the absurd nature of human existence: notable instances are the novels and stories of Franz Kafka, in which the characters face alarmingly incomprehensible predicaments. The critic Martin Esslin coined the phrase 'theatre of the absurd' in 1961 to refer to a number of dramatists of the 1950s (led by Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco) whose works evoke the absurd by abandoning logical form, character, and dialogue together with realistic illusion. The classic work of absurdist theatre is Beckett's *En attendant Godot (Waiting for Godot,* 1952), which revives some of the conventions of clowning and farce to represent the impossibility of purposeful action and the paralysis of human aspiration. Other dramatists associated with the theatre of the absurd include Edward Albee, Jean Genet, Harold Pinter, and Vaclav Havel.

2. **Anti-novel** – a form of experimental fiction that dispenses with certain traditional elements of novel-writing like the analysis of characters' states of mind or the unfolding of a sequential plot. The term is usually associated with the French *nouveau roman* of Alain Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute, and Michel Butor in the 1950s, but has since been extended to include other kinds of fictional experiment that disrupt conventional narrative expectations, as in some works in English by Flann O'Brien, Vladimir Nabokov, B. S. Johnson, and Christine Brooke-Rose. Antecedents of the anti-novel can be found in the blank pages and comically self-defeating digressions of Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67) and in some of the innovations of modernism, like the absence of narration in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931).

3. **Concrete poetry** – An experimental movement inaugurated in 1953 by the Swiss writer Eugen Gomringer. Concrete poets use words as elements in visual patterns, to make us look in surprise at their sometimes dizzying texts (rather than read them sequentially, in the usual fashion). An example is the apple shaped poem made up completely of the word *apple* – with one small interruption, the word *worm* hidden in its center. As is apparent from this instance, concrete poetry at times tends to devolve into a mere gimmick. Concrete poems are extreme examples of *pattern poetry.* The shape of the pattern poem mimes or mimics its theme, in an act of typographical sculpture. The earliest known examples are from Greek Hellenistic poetry (third century BC). George Herbert's "Easter Wings" resembles a pair of wings on the page, his "The Altar" an altar.

4. **Magic realism** – a kind of modern fiction in which fabulous and fantastical events are included in a narrative that otherwise maintains the 'reliable' tone of objective realistic report. The term was once applied to a trend in German fiction of the early 1950s, but is now associated chiefly with certain leading novelists of Central and South America, notably Miguel Angel Asturias, Alejo Carpentier, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) is often cited as a leading example, celebrated for the moment at which one character unexpectedly ascends to heaven while hanging her washing on a line. The term has also been extended to works from very different cultures, designating a tendency of the modern novel to reach beyond the confines of realism and draw upon the energies of fable, folklore and myth while retaining a strong contemporary social relevance. Thus Gunter Grass's *The Tin Drum,* (1959), Milan Kundera's *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1979), and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) have been described as magic realist novels along with Angela Carter's Nights *at the Circus* (1984) and Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988).

5. ***nouveau roman*** – the French term ('new novel') applied since the mid-1950s to experimental novels by a group of French writers who rejected many of the traditional elements of novel writing, such as the sequential plot and the analysis of characters' motives. The leading light of this group was Alain Robbe-Grillet, whose essays on the novel in *For the New Novel* (1963) argue for a neutral registering of sensations and things rather than an interpretation of events or a study of characters: these principles were put into practice most famously in his anti-novel *Jealousy* (1957). Other notable *nouveaux romans* include Claude Simon's *The Wind* (1957), Nathalie Sarraute's *Planetarium* (1959) and Michel Butor's *The Modification* (1957); Sarraute's *Tropismes* (1938) is often cited as the first *nouveau roman.* The *nouveau roman* influenced the style of several filmmakers of the 1960s, notably Jean-Luc Godard and Michelangelo Antonioni.

6. **Parody** – It refers to an imitation of a serious literary work or the signature style of a particular author in a ridiculous manner. A typical parody adopts the style of the original and applies it to an inappropriate subject for humorous effect. Parody is a form of satire and could be considered the literary equivalent of a caricature or cartoon. Henry Fielding's *Shamela* is a parody of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*. Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (written 1798-99, publ. 1818), offers a parody of the Gothic novel.

7. **Pastiche** – a literary work composed from elements borrowed either from various other writers or from a particular earlier author. The term can be used in a derogatory sense to indicate lack of originality, or more neutrally to refer to works that involve a deliberate and playfully imitative tribute to other writers. Pastiche differs from parody in using imitation as a form of flattery rather than mockery, and from plagiarism in its lack of deceptive intent. A well-known modern example is John Fowles's novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969), which is partly a pastiche of the great Victorian novelists. The frequent resort to pastiche has been cited as a characteristic feature of postmodernism.

8. **Science fiction** – a popular modern branch of prose fiction that explores the probable consequences of some improbable or impossible transformation of the basic conditions of human (or intelligent nonhuman) existence. This transformation need not be brought about by a technological invention, but may involve some mutation of known biological or physical reality, e.g. time travel, extraterrestrial invasion, ecological catastrophe. Science fiction is a form of literary fantasy or romance that often draws upon earlier kinds of utopian and apocalyptic writing. The term itself was first given general currency by Hugo Gernsback, editor of the American Magazine *Amazing Stories* from 1926 onwards, and it is usually abbreviated to SF (the alternative form 'sci-fi' is frowned upon by devotees); before this, such works were called 'scientific romances' by H. G. Wells and others. Several early precedents have been claimed for the genre – notably Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) – but true modern science fiction begins with Jules Verne's *Voyage au centre de la terre* (*Journey to the Center of the Earth*, 1864) and H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895). Once uniformly dismissed as pulp trash, SF gained greater respect during the 1950s, as writers like Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, and Arthur C. Clarke expanded its range. SF has also had an important influence on postmodernist fiction by writers not devoted to this genre alone: Thomas Pynchon, Kurt Vonnegut, Doris Lessing, and Italo Calvino are significant examples.

3.3 José Saramago: Life and Works

José Saramago was born on November 16, 1922, in Azinhaga, a small village in the province of Ribatejo, Portugal. His parents were landless peasants, Josee de Sousa and Maria da Piedade. His name would have been Josee de Sousa as well, but a registrar took it upon himself to give the newborn the name of a wild radish that was also the family's nickname within the village: Saramago. In 1924, the family

moved to Lisbon; shortly thereafter Saramago's older brother Francisco died. Although Saramago did well in school, he had to withdraw at the age of twelve because his parents could not afford the expense. He then enrolled in a technical school where he spent five years learning to be a mechanic. The school also offered courses in French and literature, and Saramago developed a keen interest in the written word, spending many hours in the local public library. After graduation, he worked for two years as a car mechanic then as an administrative civil servant.

In 1947, Saramago published his first novel, *The Land of Sin,* but he did not publish a novel again until 1976. In the interim years, Saramago worked as a publishing production manager, a translator, a literary critic, and as a newspaper editor until he was fired for his communist views. During his subsequent unemployment he decided to devote his time to writing. He published poetry, newspaper articles, short stories, plays, and novels. Saramago married Ilda Reis in 1944. They had one child, Violante, born in 1947, but the couple divorced in 1970. He then married Pilar del Rio, a Spanish journalist, in 1988. That same year, Saramago gained worldwide attention with the translation of *Baltasar and Blimunda,* a 1982 novel written in the style of magical realism. In 1991, that attention turned to notoriety with the publication of *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ.* The Portuguese clergy and Vatican protested what they perceived as its blasphemous storyline, and the following year the undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture refused to allow the novel's entry into a European competition. Disgusted by this treatment, Saramago left Portugal and moved to the Canary Islands.

Saramago has written a number of highly acclaimed novels, but perhaps his best known work is *Blindness,* published in Portuguese in 1995 and in English in 1997. The sequel, *Seeing,* was published in English in 2006 and has the same setting as *Blindness,* but is actually on a very different topic. Saramago has received honorary doctorates from the University of Turin and the University of Sevilla, as well as numerous other national and European awards, culminating in the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1998. He was the first Portuguese author to win a Nobel Prize.

Saramago suffered from leukemia. He died on 18 June 2010, aged 87, having spent the last few years of his life in Lanzarote, Spain.

3.3.1 Check Your Progress:

Answer in one word/phrase/sentence.

1. When did José Saramago receive the Nobel Prize for Literature?

2. Saramago gained worldwide attention with the translation of _____, a 1982 novel written in the style of magical realism.

3. The sequel to *Blindness*, _____ , was published in English I 2006.

3.4 Plot Summary of the novel – *Blindness*:

Chapter 1

Waiting at a stop light, a man suddenly goes blind with a white blindness. A stranger drives him home, but the blind man turns down the stranger's offer to stay with him until his wife comes home because the blind man fears having a stranger in his house. When his wife arrives, she calls an ophthalmologist, and they are able to get in for an examination right away, but they discover that the stranger has stolen their car. The doctor is unable to determine the cause of the blindness.

Chapter 2

The stranger who stole the car leaves it to contemplate his actions only moments before he, too, goes blind. Meanwhile, the ophthalmologist ponders the mysterious case of sudden white blindness and plans his course of research on the subject. That evening, however, he goes blind as well. At the same time, one of his patients from the afternoon, a prostitute who leaves wearing sunglasses to ease her mild conjunctivitis, goes to meet a client and soon thereafter goes blind.

Chapter 3.

A policeman takes the car thief home, and another policeman removes the panicked girl in the dark glasses from her hotel and takes her home to her parents. The doctor spends the night thinking about his situation. He finally tells his wife the next morning and then realizes that if the blindness is contagious, he could infect her, but she remains calm. When the doctor tries to talk to an official at the Ministry of Health about a possible contagion, the doctor runs into bureaucratic roadblocks, so he calls the director of his hospital who wants to be cautious to avoid starting a panic. As the day goes by, however, and more cases are reported, the ministry calls the doctor to find out if all the cases are his patients then tells him that he needs to be quarantined. When he gets in the ambulance, his wife gets in with him declaring that she, too, has gone blind.

Chapter 4

The Commission on Logistics and Security, after debating several options, decides to use an empty mental hospital to quarantine the newly blind on one wing and those infected in another. By the end of the second day, all the blind have been rounded up and placed under armed guard at the asylum. The doctor and his wife arrive first. She is not really blind, so she inspects the facility. Then the first blind man, the one who stole his car, the girl with the dark glasses, and the boy with a squint who had also been the doctor's patient all arrive. The boy keeps crying for his mother. They all make an attempt to get acquainted. Then the loudspeaker announces the rules of their quarantine and the process for receiving food rations. The six internees decide to organize with the doctor as their leader. One man starts to blame the doctor for being their link to blindness, and the first blind man realizes he is with the man who stole his car. They scuffle but are separated. The doctor's wife leads the group single file to the lavatories. The thief tries to fondle the girl, so she kicks him with a stiletto heel. The doctor and his wife have to try to bandage the wound. Upon returning, they count the beds to learn their places.

Chapter 5

The next morning, the thief has a bad fever from the wound. More people arrive, and when introductions are made, the first blind man discovers his wife, and other connections are made. The girl with dark glasses asks the thief for forgiveness, and he apologizes, too. When the doctor and his wife go to get the group's food, they try to ask for assistance for the wounded man but are brutally rebuffed. They are receiving rations for only five when there are ten, then three more arrive from the infected ward. Shortly thereafter, a crowd of blind people arrives from the city, the ward is filled, and some go to the other empty ward. The doctor realizes how difficult sanitation will be. The thief tells the doctor's wife that he knows she can see. That night, he crawls out of the ward, hoping to convince the guard to send him to a hospital; instead, he is shot, and the others are told to come drag away the body.

Chapter 6

The doctor and his wife have to negotiate with the guards for a spade. Digging the grave is very difficult, and no breakfast rations come. When the soldiers finally deliver some food, they are so startled by the internees who had come to the front to wait that the soldiers open fire, killing a number of people. The infected, too afraid of contamination to move around the dead to get to the food, watch as the blind come,

remove the bodies to the yard, and carry away the containers. The people from the second ward cannot be coaxed into burying their dead. The doctor discovers that there is no more toilet paper in the lavatories. His wife helps to clean him, then she too worries about the sanitation problems and when she will go blind. As most sleep, some couple has sex, and the sounds disgust those who are awake.

Chapter 7

The doctor's wife's watch stops because she forgot to wind it, and the further disorientation of the loss of time causes her to sob uncontrollably. The girl in the dark glasses consoles her. While waiting for the food to arrive, some people from the two wards talk to each other testily. The guards are so afraid of contagion that they make the internees come out into the yard to get their food, and the people have to crawl around to find where it is placed. One man becomes so lost that he has to be guided back by the shouts of the group. Taking advantage of this distraction, someone steals some of the food containers. After this incident, the wards decide to set up a committee to oversee distributing the food equally. However, a large group of people arrives, and there is panic and shoving as they try to find their way into the building. A man with a black patch waits outside until the chaos subsides then finds his way to the first ward where happenstance provides him the last remaining bed there.

Chapter 8

The crowded conditions convince the second ward to bury their dead and try to police their garbage as the first ward has been doing. The man with the black patch turns out to be a cataract patient of the ophthalmologist, and he was in the waiting room that first day of the epidemic. He has brought a radio, which the group agrees to use only for news to preserve the batteries. However, as they search for news, they hear some music, and it causes them to cry about what they are missing. The doctor's wife is able to get the correct time and restart her watch. The man with the black patch is able to tell the group what has been happening on the outside since they were interned, which amounts to the inability of the government to meet the demands of the situation since the blindness struck everywhere with great rapidity. Each member of the ward recalls what they were seeing when they went blind, and people realize that the girl with the dark glasses is a prostitute. The news claims that there will soon be a unified government and help for all.

Chapter 9

The extent of the filth and sewage in the hallways becomes a severe problem. The doctor's wife contemplates telling the others that she can see but realizes that too many demands would be made of her. The men from the third ward arm themselves with sticks and metal rods and take all the food, telling the others that they will have to pay for rations. The inmates ask for help from the soldiers but are once again rebuffed because the soldiers have been told to let the inmates kill each other so there will be fewer of them. The head of the third ward gang reveals that he has a gun and demands payment in the form of jewelry and other valuables. The two other wards decide that they have no choice but to comply. While looking for valuables, the doctor's wife discovers that she packed a pair of scissors. The doctor and the first blind man turn in the valuables and realize that one of the hoodlums is a man who is experienced at being blind and has a Braille machine with which he is keeping inventory. The leader puts his gun against the doctor's head, and the doctor considers trying to grab it but does not.

Chapter 10

Listening to the radio, the old man with the black eye patch hears the news station go silent as the people who are broadcasting are all struck blind. The doctor's wife decides to go outside while the others sleep to sit and think. She observes the other inmates as she walks by their beds, including a couple making love, and she cries to see that there is still tenderness amid the terror. Her wandering ends at the third ward, where she counts the hoodlums and sees that they are not distributing all the food containers but stockpiling them.

Chapter 11

Conditions in the asylum become worse as the lack of proper nutrition and the spread of influenza create greater misery. When a group tries to protest to the hoodlums, their ward is given no provisions for three days in punishment. The hoodlums then demand further valuables, so the wards scrounge to find anything that might be left and turn that over. A week later, the hoodlums demand women. After much arguing, the seven women of the first ward decide they can pay the price so that all may eat. The girl with the dark glasses has already been taking care ofsome of the men sexually, even the old man with the dark patch. One night, the doctor, too, crawls into her bed, not knowing that his wife is watching. The doctor's wife, however, sits on their bed and assures them that she understands. She then tells the

girl with the dark glasses that she can see. The next day the women go to the third ward where they are brutally and repeatedly raped. As they leave, one of the women collapses from her injuries and dies. The doctor's wife brings water in plastic bags to the ward so the women can clean themselves and the body of the dead woman.

Chapter 12

Four days later, the thugs come for the women in the second ward. The doctor's wife slips in line with them carrying her scissors and, unnoticed, goes to the leader's bed where she thrusts the scissors into his throat. When the woman he is molesting feels the spurting blood, she screams, and pandemonium ensues as the death of the leader is discovered. The accountant grabs the gun, but the women make their way out of the ward. The doctor's wife stabs another hoodlum to death, and another woman strangles a man. The doctor's wife shouts threats at the men, and the accountant says that he will kill her the next time he hears her voice. The hunger that follows, though, is due more to the fact that the deliveries of food have stopped. The men finally decide to try to overtake the hoodlums, and the doctor's wife says the women should go, too, to take out their bitter feelings. The woman she saved from the hoodlum leader has come to their ward to listen and she says, "Wherever you go, I shall go." That night, the power goes out. The next day, the assault on the hoodlums results in two from the other wards being killed by gunshots. In the aftermath, the doctor's wife tells her group that she can see. Everyone returns to their wards, but the woman who said "Wherever you go, I shall go" is energized by the effort and searches for a lighter she has hidden that she uses to set fire to the hoodlums' barricade. She dies, but so do all the hoodlums. The fire and smoke drive the inmates out into the yard where they discover that there are no soldiers and that they are free.

Chapter 13

Most of the inmates wait in the yard for daytime in the vain hope that the soldiers or the Red Cross will bring food. The doctor, the doctor's wife, the girl with the dark glasses, the boy with the squint, the first blind man and his wife, and the old man with the black eye patch huddle together planning their route to their various homes. What they find is a city in which everyone has gone blind. The doctor's wife finds out that the soldiers went blind last and that people have left their homes in search of food with little hope of finding their houses again. Even if they do, someone else has probably taken it over. The streets are littered with trash and excrement. The doctor's wife leaves her group in an appliance shop while she hunts

for food. She finally finds a supermarket and figures that there must be a storage unit that the blind could not find. She finds a basement filled with foodstuffs and carries out as many bags as she can, but some in the outside crowd can smell the food, and she hurries away. She gets lost and sits down to cry. A dog comes up and licks away her tears. She embraces him then sees signs set up for tourists directing them to various areas. She and the dog find their way back to the group and all eat and then sleep.

Chapter 14

The group finds new clothes and shoes then makes its way to the flat of the girl with the dark glasses. There are bodies in the streets from those who left hospitals after there was no more care, from those who have died of starvation or violence or accident in their blindness. At the girl's flat, neither her parents nor their neighbors are home except for an old woman who has been living off the chickens and rabbits in her yard, eating them raw since she could not cook. The group spends the night in the girl's flat which is clean and comfortable. However, the lavatories are unusable, and they must all defecate in the yard. They make plans about staying together and where they will live. The old man with the black eye patch tells them he has only a room and no family. They make their way to the fifth floor flat of the doctor and his wife, going past dogs eating a corpse, and sights of disarray that the old man with the black eye patch is able to explain, such as runs on the banks, that he remembers from before entering the asylum.

Chapter 15

The flat of the doctor and his wife is intact. The doctor's wife finds clean clothes for everyone. She also finds bottled water, which they drink as if it were rare wine. The next morning it is raining, so the men and women take turns on the balcony, cleaning their clothes, shoes, and themselves with soap as if in a shower. The old man with the black eye patch, however, asks to wash in a tub, and the girl with the dark glasses slips into the bathroom and scrubs his back for him. The first blind man, his wife, and the doctor's wife leave to look for food and to go to the first blind man's flat. There they find a writer who moved in when his own flat was taken from him. The writer is very polite, and it is decided that he and his family should stay there. They all exchange news about the asylum and life on the outside. The writer has been keeping notes, even though no one may ever read them. That night the doctor's wife reads to the group.

Chapter 16

Two days later, the doctor wants to visit his office. He and his wife and the girl with the blind glasses find everything undisturbed. They go to the girl's flat and find the old woman dead and half devoured by animals. They bury the body in the back yard and leave a lock of the girl's hair on the doorknob for her parents to find. That night the doctor's wife reads to them again. The girl and the old man with the black eye patch talk of love and living together when they are finally able to go off on their own. In effect, they become engaged.

Chapter 17

The next day the doctor and his wife and the dog go back to the supermarket where they discover that people found the basement but fell to their deaths because they could not manage the treacherous stairs. The doctor's wife is so sickened by stench and guilt that they take refuge in a church, but there is no room until the dog growls and a place opens up. She faints, but upon opening her eyes, she sees that all the sacred images in the church have had their eyes covered with cloth or paint. When the doctor's wife tells her husband, others hear and are frightened enough by this bizarre occurrence to go running out of the church, many leaving their belongings behind. So the doctor's wife goes through things and finds enough food to fill their bags half full. That night, the first blind man suddenly regains his sight. The excitement that ensues causes all of them to stay awake all night waiting for their sight to return. The next to regain sight is the girl in the dark glasses who assures the old man with the eye patch that she still wants him even after seeing how he looks. The doctor gets his sight back the next dawn. The girl wants to go to her flat to leave a note for her parents and the old man goes with her. The first blind man and his wife go to their flat to find out if the writer has regained his sight, too. They all can hear people shouting in the street that they can see. The doctor's wife says that she does not think that any of them went blind but were already blind people who could see, but do not see.

3.5 Major and Minor Characters:

The Boy with the Squint

Separated from his mother, the boy with the squint has no one to take care of him in the asylum. At first, he cries continuously for this mother, so the girl with the dark glasses comforts him. Only a small boy, he is scared and sometimes wets his

pants. Adopted by the girl with the dark glasses, he is taken into the core group; the group cares for and protects him and takes him wherever they go.

The Car Thief

At first seeming to be a kind stranger who helps the first blind man to get home, the car thief is actually sleazy and opportunistic. He steals the first blind man's car and tries to fondle the girl with the dark glasses. Her forceful reaction results in a severe wound that becomes infected. His only moments of remorse and sincere feeling come when he apologizes to her for his actions and thanks the doctor's wife for her care. He also figures out that the doctor's wife can see, but he does not tell anyone except her. Seeking medical assistance, the car thief accidentally gets too close to the internment camp's gates and, in their panic, the guards shoot him. He is the first blind internee to die.

The Doctor

As an ophthalmologist, the doctor is supposed to know how to treat eyes and help people see, so the epidemic not only strips him of his sight but also his purpose. Without his sight, he cannot so much as bandage a wound. Yet he is not one "to surrender helplessly to despair." He is thoroughly devoted to his wife, and they consult each other on everything, but he also has a moment of weakness when he seeks sexual comfort from the girl in the dark glasses who can more completely understand his situation. Even though he can do nothing for their eyes, the doctor is still seen as an authority figure and is chosen as a leader by the other blind internees in the ward. He takes his position as leader seriously and shows courage when asked to stand up for his fellow inmates. He actively works to make their situation better, even though he is often unsuccessful in getting what they need. The doctor is a thoughtful and kind man who, strengthened by his wife's courage, tries to make the best of a horrible situation.

The Doctor's Wife

The doctor's wife makes a decision that demonstrates her remarkable generosity and simultaneously propels her into a horrifying journey. As her husband is being taken away to be quarantined, she claims that she is also blind so she can accompany him. However, she is not blind, and as the only person left who can still see, she alone fully experiences the horror that eventually surrounds them. She learns that she is not necessarily lucky to have escaped the blindness because she is witness to the rapid disintegration of society and the fragility of human decency. She is extremely

"close to her husband in everything" but does not become angry or jealous when her husband sleeps with the girl with the dark glasses because she knows it will bring both of them comfort. The doctor's wife does as much as she can to help all those around her instead of using her sight to take advantage of or control anyone. Yet the doctor's wife is not immune to the character changes that their situation creates, and, after she is brutally raped by the hoodlums, she develops the militancy needed to use her hidden scissors to murder the hoodlums' leader. It pains her terribly to realize that even good actions can lead to bad when she learns that a number of blind people fell to their deaths because they followed the scent of the food she had found in the grocery basement. The doctor's wife does everything she can to hold on to her own humanity and that of the others in her care, and this struggle makes her the unforgettable heroine of the story.

The *Dog of Tears*

Although he does not appear until late in the story, the dog of tears acts as a companion to the doctor's wife in a way the others cannot. He, too, can see the chaos that has overwhelmed the city, and he becomes unfalteringly loyal to the woman who shares his pain. He licks the tears of the doctor's wife in an effort to comfort her; she embraces him and cries even harder because she has found someone who understands. Their providential meeting allows the doctor's wife to gather the strength to keep moving forward. In addition, the dog of tears offers protection to the group of seven for he is a "gruff, ill-tempered animal when he does not have to dry someone's tears."

The First Blind Man

The first blind man suddenly sees nothing but white while waiting at a stop light. Then all those with whom he comes in contact, the car thief who helps him get home, his wife, the ophthalmologist he consults, and all the people in the doctor's waiting room, become blind as well. Thus begins the epidemic. Once in the internment camp, he and his wife join forces with the doctor and the doctor's wife in trying to maintain order and civility. The first blind man shows courage when he accompanies the doctor to deliver the ward's valuables to the hoodlums, and he tries to protect his wife when they are told that the hoodlums want the women. The first blind man, though initially frightened by his sudden disability, shows great resilience and loyalty.

The First Blind Man's Wife

The first blind man's wife insists on seeking medical help when he goes blind, thus bringing them to the ophthalmologist's office and making the contacts that lead to the start of the epidemic and the core group that evolves from there. The first blind man's wife is separated from her husband when she is sent to the ward for those who have been contaminated and he is sent to the ward for the blind. After she too falls blind, they are reunited and are inseparable for the rest of the ordeal. She is normally "docile and respectful towards her husband," but when she is told that the women are wanted by the hoodlums, she refuses to be protected by her husband. She says she is "no different from the others." Horrific though it is, she has an opportunity to provide food for her husband and the group, and so she does it. She shows great courage in sacrificing herself for others.

The Girl with the Dark Glasses

Before the epidemic, the girl with the dark glasses is a prostitute used and discarded by strangers; however, as a blind internee, she becomes a compassionate caretaker who is embraced by strangers. When the boy with the squint cries for his lost mother, it is the girl with the dark glasses who becomes his surrogate parent. When the doctor is looking for comfort, she allows him into her bed. She is a tough woman, but she is more concerned about the welfare of her family and new friends than many of the others in her same situation. She is truly grieved that her reaction to the car thief's groping caused his fatal wound and asks his forgiveness. Although she acts mature, she is actually young, and her search for her family reveals that she is just a girl who misses her family and needs someone to take care of her just as much as she takes care of others. Perhaps for this reason, she becomes close to the old man with the black eye patch, and his gentleness and paternal attention bring her comfort. Even though they seem like an odd match, they become a couple.

The Hoodlums

As soon as they arrive at the internment camp, the hoodlums smell an opportunity to take advantage of others. They have no morals and try to grab whatever they can for themselves in the moment with no consideration for others or the consequences of their actions. Although they are just as blind as the rest of the inmates, the ringleader has a gun and the hoodlums make bludgeons which they use to terrorize the other inmates. The hoodlums gain control of all the food and use their cache to cruelly extort valuables from the other blind people and demand sex from

the women. One of them, an accountant, was already blind before the epidemic, so he knows how to function in blindness and use a Braille machine to keep track of the bounty from their extortion. The hoodlums are parasites who make an already dire situation much worse. In the end, justice is served when the other inmates finally revolt, and all the hoodlums die in a massive fire.

The *Old Man with the Black Eye Patch*

Kindly and resilient, the old man with the black eye patch is more willing than others, perhaps because of his age, to confront and resist the forces that are trying to destroy his humanity. He appreciates art and in fact went blind while in a museum looking at a painting. Since he is the last of the doctor's patients to go blind, he is able to tell the first ward what has been happening outside in the city since their quarantine. Also, he has brought a radio, which gives them a little news and a moment of beauty as they listen to music. The old man with the black eye patch is patient and tries to come up with games to distract the other internees from their situation. He slowly builds a connection with the girl with the dark glasses, even though he cannot imagine what she sees in an old man like him. He does not think he has much to offer a young girl like her, but their bond brings comfort and hope to them both. Their relationship is a step towards regaining their humanity and a sense of normalcy.

The Old Woman

The ultimate survivor, the old woman is another example of what happens when society collapses and a person's humanity is slowly stripped away. She has holed up in her apartment and eats the rabbits and chickens that live in her back yard. Since she cannot cook, she eats them raw, and her apartment is a den of filth and rotting carcasses. Her animal instincts are in charge; she is territorial and suspicious, in many ways like the dog of tears. "Hard of heart," she winds up dying alone.

The Pharmacist's Assistant

The pharmacist's assistant insults the girl with the dark glasses when they first get acquainted and is chagrined later that she goes to the beds of other men, but never comes to him. He is usually active in the affairs of the first ward and is killed in the attempt to attack the hoodlums.

The Woman Who Said "Wherever You Go, I Go"

The woman who said "Wherever you go, I go" is in the process of being raped by the hoodlums' leader when the doctor's wife drives her scissors into his throat. In gratitude, she tells the doctor's wife, "Wherever you go, I go." She devotes herself to the one who saved her life and saved her, too, from a life that is unbearable to live. It is in this devotion that she finds her power. When all the other plans to overthrow the hoodlums fail, the woman who said "Wherever you go, I go" realizes she has the ability to do something. She has a lighter, and she uses it to start a fire that kills not only the hoodlums but also herself.

The Writer

The first blind man and his wife find the writer living in their flat when they return. The writer has been displaced from his own flat and sought shelter with his family in whatever other safe place he could find. Like the doctor, the writer feels that his purpose has been lost in the blindness because there is no one to read what he writes. Nonetheless, he keeps writing with a pen and paper, making a record of the catastrophe. The first blind man and his wife allow the writer to stay in their place since they want to remain with their group from the asylum.

3.4.1 Check Your Progress

Answer in one word/phrase/sentence.

1. Who figures out that the doctor's wife can see, but he does not tell anyone except her?
2. Who is thoroughly devoted to his wife, but he also has a moment of weakness when he seeks sexual comfort from the girl in the dark glasses?
3. _____ does everything she can to hold on to her own humanity and that of the others in her care, and this struggle makes her the unforgettable heroine of the story.
4. _____ offers protection to the group of seven for he is a "gruff, ill-tempered animal when he does not have to dry someone's tears.".
5. _____ is the last of the doctor's patients to go blind.
6. When _____ cries for his lost mother, it is the girl with the dark glasses who becomes his surrogate parent

3.5 Themes and Other Aspects in *Blindness*:

I. Themes

Response to Crisis

Albert Camus wrote *The Plague* about a deadly disease that causes survivors to question how they are to go on when so many around them have died. Similarly, Saramago was inspired to write *Blindness* by an initial hypothetical question: What would happen if a highly contagious, debilitating, and non-lethal disease struck a community? Saramago examines how people might react if a non-lethal disease disabled everyone to the point that the basic social system and support services in their way of life were no longer functioning. Choosing blindness as his disability, he paints the bleakest possible picture of the social devastation that would result. The point may be to remind people that struggle is a part of the human condition, and sometimes extreme difficulties can arise which test beliefs about oneself and one's society. Thus beside the hypothetical question Saramago attempts to answer, there are important questions the text presents to readers: What would people do in a crisis? Are people sufficiently prepared to handle a crisis? Are people sufficiently committed to their personal values to know for sure that they would react ethically and with courage? *Blindness* serves as a reminder to each individual to establish ethical foundations for the times when they are needed the most. There is also a cautionary reminder here: During crisis people do what they must to survive; even the unthinkable is possible. This reminder may give readers heightened compassion for disabled others and for whole communities that are fragmented by a widespread disaster, for example, the ravages of a communicable disease or war.

Worst and Best in Human Nature

In this depiction of how people may react in a community exposed to a highly contagious and disabling disease, Saramago includes examples of the worst and the best behavior under stress. An early example of the worst is with the seemingly kind man who assists the first blind man but who then turns around and steals the blind man's car.

The worst kind of response continues when the government moves in quickly to order the affected people into quarantine at a former asylum. The government does not provide medical attention or insure adequate facilities. It shows no humane consideration to the people who are in desperate need of assistance. Many individu-

als give up in despair, are unable to cooperate, and become hostile and lawless. The very worst is shown by the third ward men who have a gun and use it to confiscate all the food and then use the rations to extort valuables and sexual access to the women in the other wards.

The best behavior is shown by the ophthalmologist's wife who is willing to give totally of herself for others. Further examples of good come from the people in her group who cooperate with each other, try to maintain civilized conduct, and take care of each other. The writer remains civil. The internalized civility of these people suggests that once the epidemic is over, the social fabric will be restored and the city will be reestablished.

Saramago presents so dark a picture that readers may be surprised by the happy ending. The conclusion suggests that there is hope that the best may triumph over the worst in human nature.

Social Disintegration

The theme of how crisis brings out the worst and best in people is connected to the theme of how social disintegration is the result of the worst traits in human nature. As vice rages unfettered by law, social order disintegrates. The message of this theme is about how fragile the social structure is that sustains civic order. Saramago advises readers to appreciate the qualities of everyday life that they take for granted, which were not easily established and which are vulnerable when catastrophe hits. In established societies, the ongoing government and peace are handed down from previous generations. Those who do not struggle to achieve social order need to be reminded of its vulnerability. Saramago provides in *Blindness* a picture of social breakdown: no health services; no government protection from lawless predators; no electricity, gas, water, or garbage collection services; no legal recourse for damages or rights violations. The society that enjoys these social structures and services is obligated to uphold and maintain them with vigilance and conviction. Otherwise, as *Blindness* warns, catastrophe can disrupt the longstanding social order and structure.

II. Style

Absence of Proper Nouns

Saramago does not use proper nouns in this novel. The characters are not given names; rather they are distinguished by a particular action or physical trait, the

epithet standing in for a name. Perhaps Saramago provides an explanation for the namelessness of his characters in a comment given by the writer: “Blind people do not need a name, I am my voice, nothing else matters.” No quotation marks set off dialogue, although the start of a new speaker is signaled by capitalization. However, there is no space break when a new speaker is introduced and sometimes no identification of the speaker. The result is a text that can be confusing and daunting to new readers. Saramago’s choice here perfectly suits his subject matter. His intention is to create a drama that has universal application, one that is not true just of certain individuals in a particular place and time and facing a particular crisis. Rather he wants to show the basic verities of human instinct and interaction under extreme circumstances. The incremental chaos that engulfs the world of the novel could occur in any country among any group of people trying to cope with sudden disability and fraying social structure. Using this strategy, Saramago drives home the point that the distinction between those who are afflicted and those who are spared is only superficial; in essence, human nature is universally the same.

Allegory

An allegory is a symbolic representation of abstract ideas or principles. Characters and objects may personify these concepts while the action of a plot may state something about the concept. In short, the elements of an allegory represent one thing in the guise of another. While the allegorical story makes sense on its own, it is almost like a parallel universe to that which it represents in real life. The purpose is to convey indirectly a statement about human conduct or experience. The writer may use allegory to deliver a politically or socially challenging statement without directly naming anyone or citing any actual situation. In the case of *Blindness,* Saramago’s allegory serves as a warning that even in modern times social disintegration can occur swiftly, and each person must have the integrity to display the best of human traits under worst circumstances. Blindness, treated literally in this story, is a metaphor for widespread denial and resistance that prompt people to ignore or reject the basic truths about base human nature and the fragility of any social structure.

3.6 Summary

José Saramago has been a bestselling author of plays, short stories, novels, poems, and other works in Portugal for many years. Some of his works have been translated into more than twenty languages. A well-known atheist and communist, Saramago wrote religious or political satires. He published several critically

acclaimed novels before 1991 when his highly controversial *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ* was banned as blasphemous in a number of countries. Yet, in 1998, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for *Blindness*, an allegorical novel. The Portuguese edition, *Ensaio sobre a cegueira* (Essay on Blindness), was published in 1995 and translated into English in 1997. *Blindness* raises questions about the frailty of social structures and the strengths and weaknesses of human nature. The central question is: What would happen if everyone suddenly went blind? To imagine an answer to this question, Saramago writes a story about an epidemic that creates chaos in the capital city of an unknown country in the late twentieth century. It is a worst case scenario of government and social failure in which the best and worst in humankind is portrayed. This tale has no specific setting, no names for the characters, and no chapter titles. It is written in Saramago's unique style that uses little punctuation, long sentences that can continue for a paragraph, and paragraphs that can run for pages. Since 1995, Saramago has continued to publish extensively, including a sequel to *Blindness* published in English in 2006 as *Seeing.*

In this unit, you have read about the term 'postmodernism' and life and works of José Saramago. You have also read the plot and characters used by Saramago in his novel *Blindness,* and also about various themes and aspects presented in this novel.

All these points, no doubt, would be helpful to you to understand the novel *Blindness*. They will enhance your understanding of the novel. For better understanding of the novel it is essential to read the original text.

3.7 Answer to Check Your Progress:

3.2.1 Answer to Check Your Progress:

1. *Of Grammatology*
2. Fredric Jameson and Terry Eagleton
3. Vaclav Havel

3.3.1 Answer to Check Your Progress:

1. in 1998
2. *Baltasar and Blimunda*
3. *Seeing*

3.4.1 Answer to Check Your Progress:

1. the car thief
2. an ophthalmologist, the doctor
3. The doctor's wife
4. the dog of tears
5. the old man with the black eye patch
6. the boy with the squint

3.8 Exercises:

A) Answer the following:

1. "Saramago's allegory serves as a warning that even in modern times social disintegration can occur swiftly, and each person must have the integrity to display the best of human traits under worst circumstances". Elucidate.
2. "Choosing blindness as disability, Saramago paints the bleakest possible picture of the social devastation that would result". Discuss.
3. *Blindness* serves as a reminder to each individual to establish ethical foundations for the times when they are needed the most". Discuss.

B) Write short notes:

1. Absence of proper nouns in *Blindness*.
2. The theme of social disintegration in *Blindness*.
3. Saramago's use of 'allegory' in *Blindness*.

3.9 References for Further Study:

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Unit-4
Postcolonialism in Indian Fiction
Aravind Adiga: *The White Tiger*

Contents

4.0 Objectives:

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

a) understand major trends in Postcolonialism in Indian Fiction

b) know the contribution of Aravind Adiga to Postcolonial Indian Fiction

c) know the plot summary of *The White Tiger*.

d) know the major and minor characters.

e) understand the themes and other aspects of the novel.

4.1 General Topic: Postcolonialism in Indian Fiction

- **Postcolonialism**

Postcolonialism deals with the critical analysis of history, culture ,literature and various discourses specific to the former colonies of England, France, Spain and other European imperial power. It has focused on the studies of Third World Countries such as Africa, Asia and The Caribbean Islands. Some scholars extended its scope to the countries such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand which achieved independence much earlier. Postcolonial literature reflect the social, political, economic and cultural practices which arise in response and resistance to colonialism. Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), Albert Memi's *The Colonises and the Colonised* (1965), and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978)Homi Bhabha's *Nation and Narration*(1990) and *The Location of Culture* (1994) are key texts of postcolonial theory. Postcolonial literature focuses on various issues like migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, and responses to imperial discourses. Common features of postcolonial writing, according to Bill Ashcroft, include place -displacement, search for identity, abrogation and appropriation of language and hybridity.

The postcolonial crisis of identity revolves around the dialectic of place and displacement. As a critical theory, it examines the colonial experience from the perspective of the colonized society. It emerges after the era of colonialism, which was rooted in the belief of the superiority of European or imperial culture. Conversely, postcolonial literature emerges after the withdrawal of imperial power, as the newly liberated societies seek to establish their identity. It responds to the discourse of colonization, addressing issues like hybridity, otherness, globalization, and homelessness. In the late 20th century, the term "postcolonial" gained prominence, overshadowing concepts like postmodernism and post-structuralism. Works like Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, and Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* are some of the early postcolonial texts that explored national identity, social conflicts, cultural imperialism, and historical aspects deeply rooted in consciousness of the colonised nations. Indian English Literature is emerging as an indigenous species of literature in postcolonial period. Let us discuss key features of Indian English Fiction to understand the contribution of Aravind Adiga to it.

- **Postcolonial Indian English Fiction**

Postcolonial Indian English Literature refers to the writings produced in English by Indian authors after the British Imperial rule, which lasted for over two hundred years. During colonial period, Indians faced various hardships, particularly in the cultural and moral aspects of their lives. In response, Indian writers emerged with the

goal of uniting their people and erasing colonial perspectives. Despite the presence of many regional languages in India, these writers chose English as their medium, leading to the development of what is known as Indian English Literature. Early works of Indian English authors explored themes such as nationalism, East-West encounter, rootlessness, alienation, gender discrimination, hybridity etc. Among various genres, the novel became the most successful and effective in conveying these narratives. Amit Chaudhuri, in his book *The Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature*, highlights the postcolonial novel as a symbol of ideal hybridity, celebrating the West's reinterpretation of itself through an exploration of Indianness.

The rise of Indian English writing in the postcolonial era indeed marked a significant development in the literary landscape. This period saw a conscious effort by Indian writers to break away from the literary traditions established during colonial rule and explore new themes and techniques that reflected the socio-cultural changes brought about by independence. Postcolonial literature in India not only delved into the experiences of colonization but also sought to construct a new identity, often questioning established systems and interrogating the complex relationship between culture and imperialism. Prominent early contributors to Postcolonial Indian English Literature include Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R.K. Narayan. Modern-age writers include Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, and Shashi Tharoor. The genre also provided significant opportunities for women writers, such as Nayantara Sehgal, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, and Jhumpa Lahiri.

Indian English Literature gained prominence with many Indians using English as a medium of creative expression. Postcolonial literature by Kamala Markandaya, Khushwant Singh, Salman Rushdie, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Ruth Prawar Jhabvala, and Arundhati Roy reflects the postcolonial experience. Writers like R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao contributed to reshaping Indian English literature, paving the way for new talents like Anita Desai, Arun Joshi, Shashi Deshpande, and Shobha De. Indian English fiction achieved global recognition, with Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* standing out as a landmark novel. This work won the Booker McConnell Prize in 1981, symbolizing a turning point in post-independence Indian fiction in English. Likewise, Postcolonialism in Indian literature signifies a continual shedding of Western influences and the emergence of a new consciousness and celebration.

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, among female writers, explored intercultural conflicts. Her work, *A Backward Place*, intricately blends European and Indian sensibilities, offering a comparison and contrast of two cultures. Jhabvala's novels often delve into the setting of postcolonial India, portraying characters grappling with a sense of displacement, Western influences, and a loss of national identity. Her works serve as powerful studies of postcolonial India, exploring social, cultural, economic, and political aspects.

Anita Desai, a prominent contemporary English author, is known for her novels that focus on the psychological development of her protagonists. In major works like *Cry, The Peacock*, *By The Fireside*, *Bye Bye Black Bird*, and *In Custody*, she places equal emphasis on female characters, highlighting essential features that shape their identities. Her award-winning novel *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* delves into Sita's awareness of urban dichotomies, exploring themes of compassion and the struggle to break free from societal constraints.

Kamala Markandaya, is another notable Indian women writer, contributes significantly to Indian feminism. *Nectar in a Sieve* addresses the challenges faced by women in colonial India, while *The Golden Honeycomb* delves into the impact of Indian independence on a native community. Similarly, Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* subtly conveys the importance of harmony between one's inner and outer self. The late 1970s witnessed the emergence of a new generation of novelists and writers from convent and elite backgrounds, reshaping the landscape of postcolonial Indian English literature.

The theme of the East-West encounter is explored by Indian women writers like Bharati Mukherjee, Gita Mehta, and Nayantara Sahgal. Mukherjee's *Wife* portrays the challenges faced by Indians adapting to Western life, while Nayantara Sahgal's novels, such as *The Time of Morning* and *A Situation In New Delhi*, touch upon contemporary political issues and the post-independence turmoil in India.

Arundhati Roy, a novelist, and activist, addresses social justice, human rights, and inequalities in her non-fiction writing. While in *The God of Small Things*, she challenges gender and class discrimination, highlighting the responsibilities of a writer and social activist.

Manohar Malgonkar's *The Devil's Wind* decolonizes historical facts, questioning British perspectives and highlighting events suppressed by colonial powers. Arun Joshi's characters in novels like *The Foreigner* and *The Apprentice* struggle between

colonial and post-colonial egoism, modern and centric self-image, and material and spiritual realms.

Indian writers grapple with the challenge of expressing their cultural and social heritage in a foreign language, English. They use English as a dynamic tool to explore complex Indian realities, native forms, sentimental thoughts, customs, and cultures. The postcolonial writer aims to decolonize and reshape the English language. Therefore, postcolonial literature reflects a complex interplay of cultural, social, and historical elements, challenging colonial legacies and asserting the identity of decolonized nations through a diverse and dynamic use of the English language. Indian English writers have effectively shed light on postcolonial issues like ignorance, illiteracy, starvation, suffering, and humiliation, using various literary forms to reflect the experiences of native people during the colonial period. Their works serve as a significant medium for societal awareness and self-expression.

It can be said that Postcolonial Indian English Literature serves as a powerful medium for expressing the diverse experiences of Indians, shedding light on the challenges faced during and after the colonial era. Postcolonial fiction not only reflects a conscious awareness of history but also actively restructures historical narratives. These narratives often invent new metaphors for cultural landscapes, exploring themes like family affairs, domestic plots, and the fast-changing lifestyles that result from postcolonial experiences. Postcolonial fiction, especially in India, is intricately woven with kinship relations and generational dynamics, highlighting the loss of common symbolism in a divided world.

One challenge faced by postcolonial literature is the difficulty of transcending the distant vision of the white world. Critics like Aijaj Ahmed and Ashish Nandi criticize the cultural hybridity concept, suggesting that encounters between Europe and non-Europe are often determined by advanced capital, with European modulation playing a significant role.

The early Indian English novelists, influenced by their colonial experiences, mimicked European styles but faced dislocation and challenges as they tried to describe a world that had imposed a sense of inferiority upon them. Despite being informed by English literature, the growth of Indian novels in English had deep roots in native oral and written traditions. These colonial/hybrid texts sought to reconstruct narratives rooted in oral history to reclaim a nationalist identity.

In the modern context of information and communication technology (ICT) and global mobility, postcolonial studies address the loss of identity and the emergence of new identities. Writers like Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Jhumpa Lahiri, and others focus on themes of displacement, dislocation, exile, and the myths of identity. They contribute to reshaping constructions of both West and East, engaging with ethnic, cultural, communal, and political conflicts.

The term "diaspora" is crucial in postcolonial literature and authors like Rushdie, Lahiri, and Bharti Mukherjee, writes back to the Indian center, challenging and reshaping notions of cultural identity. Postcolonial literature becomes a space where global and local identities intersect.

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* has highlighted historiographic meta-fiction expressing national consciousness through a mythical retelling of history. Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* portrays the complexities of Indian identity in the U.S., while Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters* explores nostalgia and the quest for fluid identity.

Authors like R.K. Narayan, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, and others contribute to the postcolonial consciousness, reflecting a growing awareness of the nation. Amitav Ghosh uses a third-person authoritative narrator to construct Indian identity through history, myths, and memory. These writers celebrate diversity as a counter-narrative to hegemonic powers attempting to efface unique cultural voices.

- **Key features of Postcolonial Indian English Fiction**

Identity and Hybridity: Writers often explore the themes of identity and hybridity, reflecting the complex blend of Indian and Western cultures. The characters in these works grapple with the challenges of negotiating multiple cultural identities.

Language and Linguistic Experimentation: Authors engage in linguistic experimentation, incorporating indigenous languages, dialects, and expressions into various literary forms. Salman Rushdie, for example, is known for his use of 'magical realism' and linguistic playfulness in his works.

Colonial Legacy and Historical Narratives: Many works delve into the historical legacy of colonialism and its impact on the Indian psyche. Amitav Ghosh's *Glass Palace*, Attia Hossain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* and Arundhati

Roy's *The God of Small Things* are notable examples that explore the historical and political contexts of postcolonial India.

Postcolonial Critique: Authors critically examine the consequences of colonialism, addressing issues such as cultural imperialism, social inequality, and the clash between tradition and modernity .Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* Kamala Markandaya's *The Coffer Dams* are the best responses to colonial legacy.

Feminist Perspectives: Postcolonial Indian English fiction often incorporates feminist perspectives, exploring the experiences of women within the socio-cultural milieu of post-independence India. Writers like Anita Desai and Arundhati Roy highlight gender issues in their works.

Diaspora and Globalization: The Indian diaspora and the impact of globalization are recurring themes in postcolonial literature. Writers often explore the experiences of Indians living abroad and the complexities of diasporic identity. Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* are examples of works dealing with diaspora and cultural displacement.

Social Realism: Many authors employ social realism to depict the socio-economic and political realities of postcolonial India. Issues like poverty, caste discrimination, and communal tensions are often explored. Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* is an early example of social realism in Indian English fiction.

Overall, postcolonial literature in India provides a rich tapestry of narratives that not only reflect historical experiences but actively participate in reshaping cultural identities in a globalized world. This literature witnesses a surge in creative expression as Indian writers sought to articulate their experiences, identity, and perspectives through the medium of English, which had been a legacy of colonialism. The literature reflects the complex interplay of cultural, social, and political dynamics in postcolonial India.

4.2Text: Aravind Adiga: *The White Tiger*

Aravind Adiga- Life and Works:

Aravind Adiga was born on October 23, 1974, in Chennai. He enjoyed a privileged upbringing in a wealthy family with strong connections. After initial education in Mangalore, his family moved to Australia, where he continued his studies. Adiga later pursued English literature in New York, ultimately earning degrees from Columbia University and Oxford University. His professional career as a journalist

began since 2000. He also worked as a financial correspondent in New York. In 2003, he came India to work as a correspondent for TIME magazine and published various articles on politics, business and the arts. Having a strong foundation of magazine writer, he tried to prove himself as novelist.

He is one of the leading postcolonial novelists in modern India. His works attempt to throw a light on the issues refer to the caste, class, race, and corruption present in politics as a form of new colonialism in modern India where a black is colonizing another black. Like Mulk Raj Anand's *Untochable* and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* Arvind Adiga's novels are the painstaking accounts of the social history of the poor people. Now having this brief introduction about Arvind Adiga let us discuss in detail his life and works.

Adiga made a resounding entry into Indian English literature with his debut novel, *The White Tiger.* This realistic work earned him the prestigious Man Booker Prize in 2008. The novel, featuring the character Balram Halwai, sparked both praise and criticism, creating an enigma around the emerging novelist. However, the subsequent novels by Adiga did not attain the same level of widespread recognition. His novels, laden with ambition, political insights, and cultural nuances, may be more suited for those who appreciate high-tension references and literary allusions. Adiga's writing style, while accessible, may not resonate with the masses seeking entertainment in literature.

Adiga's writing is characterized by a deep exploration of themes such as ambition, political ideology, cultural issues, and religious references. His novels often depict characters striving for success, embodying the rags-to-riches narrative. Adiga's language is generally accessible to average readers, though he incorporates high-tension references, allusions, and analogies that appeal to a more literary audience. His major works include- *The White Tiger* (2008), *Between the Assassinations* (2008), *Last Man in Tower* (2011), *The Selection Day* (2016) and *Amnesty* (2020).

Aravind Adiga holds a significant position in postcolonial Indian fiction due to his unique perspective and narrative style. His works delve into the complexities of postcolonial India, addressing socio-political issues and the impact of globalization on the country's social fabric. The way he portrays his characters, they often striving for success in the face of economic disparity and societal constraints reflects the postcolonial challenges India faces in the 21st century. The exploration of power

dynamics, corruption, and the clash between tradition and modernity underscores his engagement with the evolving narrative of postcolonial India. Also, his works revolve around the theme of ambition and the pursuit of success through which he critiques the lingering effects of colonialism on the psyche of the Indian population. His narratives provide a varied perspective on the complexities of identity, shedding light on the struggles and aspirations of individuals navigating a postcolonial landscape.

After placing the author in the tradition of postcolonial Indian English fiction let us discuss the text.

4.3 List of Characters:

1. Balram Halwai - the narrator in the novel, known as The White Tiger
2. Vikram Halwai - Balram's father and an ignorant cart rickshaw driver.
3. Balram's Mother - dies when Balram was a young boy.
4. Kishan - Balram's older brother
5. Dharam - young cousin of Balram who accompanies him in Delhi
6. The Stork - landlord of Laxmangahr
7. Mr. Ashok - the elder son of Thakur Ramdev, Balram's employer after Balram moves to Delhi.
8. Pinky Madam - unconventional Americanized Christian wife of Mr. Ashok, who represents new India.
9. Kusum - matron of Balram's family
10. Wen Jiabao - the Chinese Head to whom Balram tends to his letter

4.4 Summary of the novel:

Aravind Adiga's first novel *The White Tiger* (2008) won the Booker Prize for fiction. It is a saga of the class of society who left behind in the fast economic growth of the modern India. The novel is divided into eight chapters. Now we will summarize all the chapters briefly.

In the first Chapter *The First Night*, Indian entrepreneur Balram Halwai starts writing a letter to Chinese premier Wen Jiabao, who is visiting India on diplomacy. Balram communicates his favour as local businessman that Jiabao needs to know and

comprehend the life of Indian entrepreneurship. He needs to learn the truth about the status of Indian entrepreneurship and its scope if any. Balram warns Jiabao not to accept and be rely upon the promises of the politicians and government may offer to him. Additionally, he suggests that Jiabao should not purchase the smuggled American business books that youngsters sell in the road.

To impress Jiabao, Balram depicts the lavish Bangalore office. He stays in the office to write a letter to Jiabao and conveys him that he will remain there day and night to recount his story. He respects the Indian tradition and prays the Divine beings prior starting a story. Balram refers to himself as a 'half-baked Indian' since he was deprived of finishing his proper education as a child. In any case, he guarantees that this inability to attend formal education was not really aharm because many Indian entrepreneurs are in much the same way 'half-baked Indian' and has no entrepreneurial soul.

To portray his physical appearance and essential personal delicacies, Balram references a police banner that was given for his arrest three years ago after an event that he describes as 'an act of entrepreneurship.' He ridicules the cloudy, deficient police report and fills in the missing data. He especially takes note of his outward change from the unfed labourer in the banner to the chubby entrepreneur he is today. He additionally specifies that as a youngster, he was just called 'Munna' or 'boy', until a teacher named him 'Balram'-the name of the god Krishna's companion.

Balram proceeds to depict his local town of Laxmangahr, a hub of poor rustic people, representing 'India of Darkness', as opposed to current day Bangalore city. For Balram the city of Bangalore stands for the metropolitan, prosperous 'India of Light'. Laxmangahr sits on the banks of the holy Ganga river, where orthodox Hindus have cremated their dead for a long time and where Balram's mother was cremated when he was a little boy. He depicts the horrible experience of her last rituals and recalls that that he was scared not by the rituals but the way the dark mud of Ganga river sucked his mother's remains in her body. This incident of seeing his mother's body merged into the river mud holds a long-lasting impact on the mind of a little boy Balram. His mind boggles as he realizes the hopelessness and meaninglessness of life. Despite its significance as a holy site, he stays away from the bank of Ganga river forever.

Since his childhood Balram Halwai struggles against the enemies such as hardships, ill health, and poor upbringing. His family has been a victim at the hands

four landlords who are corrupt and awful in nature to whom Balram labels as 'The Animals'. The four landlords namely The Water Buffalo, The Raven, The Stork, and the Wild Boar bring defame to themselves due to their ego of looking after the town as caretakers, misbehaving with women of the town, and never losing a single opportunity to impose taxes on the local people.

Balram's father, Vikram Halwai, a local rickshaw driver, keeps minimum expectations for his child to complete his schooling and be known as a good human being in the society. Balram considers that to live life like a man means trying to follow Vijay, the Bus Driver who has assured job despite many rumours he hears about Vijay.

Balram's school largely depends upon the fund provided by the politician and run by a corrupt teacher. The hypocrisy of the teacher is evident when he steals funds for not getting paid regularly. He recalls the incident happened in the school when the other day the School Inspector visited the school. While inspecting the students he founds Balram more intelligent and a promising student. Therefore, he calls Balram as 'White Tiger' the rarest animal in the jungle. The inspector furthermore offers him a scholarship which boosted Balram to continue his education at least to some extent.

Balram's family is dependent upon his grandmother's, Kusum's leadership. Kusum is economically challenged as she doesn't have any other option than taking loans from the landlords. The Stork from whom Kusum receives a loan is very tricky and clever. After realizing Kusum's inability in paying off his loan the Stork demands that Balram should leave his schooling to work for his family and pay back the debt. Balram goes to work with his brother, Kishan in the town teashop. However, this is an amazing turn of destiny, Balram claims for his entrepreneurship.

As the story progresses, Balram remembers 'Black Fort' the only site on the hill away from his village. The fort is a remarkable old structure on a slope above town, built by foreigners a long time back, which both captivated and terrified Balram all through his childhood. Balram grasps the magnificence of the Black Fort and its richness and appreciates himself for having capability in understanding such complex things. Unlike his fellow villagers, he claims that he possesses all the skills to brake off the chains of poverty and slavery.

In Chapter two *The Second Night* Balram initially meets Ashok in the city of Dhanbad, where he moves after his father who dies from tuberculosis in a clinic

across the river from Laxmangahr. It is the main medical clinic in the locale, yet Kishan and Balram come across a horrible experience that there are no doctors there. A Muslim patient at the emergency clinic adds to the situation that corrupt doctors and government authorities plot to try not to staff town medical clinics. Every one of the patients waiting for the doctors fly hurriedly to pay attention to his explanation with a specific delight. Their father dies on the floor of the clinic, never having seen by a doctor.

After Balram's father's demise, Kusum manages Kishan's wedding with a neighbourhood young lady in return for a large dowry, and afterward sends both Kishan and Balram to Dhanbad to work in a teashop. Balram had worked in a teashop in Laxmangahr yet was dismissed for listening in on clients and ignoring his work. Rather than rubbing the floors like different workers whom he calls 'human spiders' considering their bug like approach to hunching and cleaning, Balram attempts to know more and more from the clients. Attracted by the well-to-do climate of Dhanbad, a wealthy city in coal business, Balram attempts to realize all he can about his new home by listening in on miners who come to the tea shop.

After hearing a miner discussing how the private drivers are being paid high salary, Balram asks his family to pay for him to take driving license. Kusum ultimately agrees when Balram promises to send the family his month-to-month income once he finds a new work. Balram become aware of a driving teacher ready to take him on, however the man is distrustful that Balram's background of sweet makers, may cause a hindrance to be a trained driver. Balram disproves his teacher, nonetheless, and the later shows him not just how to drive and fix a vehicle; he likewise learns a few life lessons. As compensation for completing the preparation, his trainer takes Balram to lose his virginity in Dhanbad's shady area of town.

Tragically, Balram's instructor can't assist him with getting a new job, thus Balram strikes out to look for one all alone. He visits rich families to offer his services as a 'trained driver,' however is not entertained for his 'entrepreneurial' behaviour until at one house he meets Mr. Ashok who is a son of the Stork of Laxmangahr and has recently come back to India from the US.

Ashok, the Stork, and Ashok's more established sibling Mukesh Sir also known as 'the Mongoose', question Balram about his family background. While sharing his family background with his new masters Balram thinks that his future bosses ask for

the family background since they need to have the option to find his hometown and communicate his any misbehave to them.

Balram persuades the Stork's family that he needs a job, and the family can rely on him as a driver surely. He becomes the competitor to Ram Prasad, the family's existing driver. Balram presently has at least a good job to solve his issue of bread and butter and khaki uniforms of which he was fond of. However, it is surprising to know that although he is formally a 'driver,' he has to carry out many multitasking responsibilities anytime and anywhere. Sometimes he had to get engaged in cleaning, cooking, and massage the Stork's feet every evening. During the massaging, the Stork and his children talk about coal, legislative issues, and China. Balram listens eagerly, engrossing everything 'like a wipe' as an entrepreneur ought to, yet in addition since he feels himself to be important for the family and that his masters' destiny will be his own.

Balram portrays his relationship with Ram Persad, the family's 'number one' servant. Still Balram does n't achieve the number one status. Although, we see them staying in the similar room, they are the competitors and keep hating and arguing each other. Ram Persad lays on a bed, while Balram naps on the floor. Ram Persad drives Mr. Ashok and Pinky Madam around in the rich Honda City, while Balram drives various people from the family in the less astounding Maruti Suzuki.

Balram gets his most memorable chance to drive Mr. Ashok and his wife in the Honda City when Ashok chooses to visit Laxmangahr, their common family town. Balram drives the couple to lunch at the Wild Boar's home. As Ashok and Pinky visit the Wild Pig in his delightful home, Balram visits with his own loved ones. During lunch, Kusum annoys him for failing to send cash, while commending his prosperity and taking steps to arrange his marriage. She serves him a rich Rooster dish, which just stresses how pretty and malnourished Kishan has become. Irritated by his family's requests and their disregard of Kishan, Balram stomps out of the house and moves up to the Black Fort.

When reached there, Balram looks down over Laxmangahr and spits. His reactions tend him to recall a sonnet by the Muslim writer Iqbal about God and Satan. As indicated by Balram, Satan dismisses God's proposal to turn into His worker, similarly as Balram spits down on the town underneath him, dismissing the conditions into which God set him and his own family's appearing work to get him into a ruined existence of captivity. On the drive back to Dhanbad, nonetheless,

Balram reflexively contacts his finger to his eye while driving beyond a sanctuary as an indication of confidence and regard. Over the period, Balram revisits the Black Fort with his employer Mr. Ashok and his modern wife Pinky Madam. He suddenly experiences the change in him as now he gets the boldness to visit the fort alone. While standing and looking over the village gives him the feeling of being superior to the fellow villagers. Ultimately, he proves his superiority and imagines the murder of Mr. Ashok.

In the third chapter entitled *The Fourth Moring* Balram is seen writing a letter to Chief Jiabao which can be considered as a critique on Indian democracy and alerts Jiabao that he should not accept the flyer depicting the Indian politicians that he is surely expected to receive from the politicians or government. Balram undergoes certain incidents where he comprehends how Indian democracy is exploited at the hands of corrupt people like his employer who sells all employee's votes in favour of Great Socialist's party at the teashop in Laxmangahr. This act of the employer oppresses Balram's political voice.

The political issues in the Darkness i.e., the rural area at the time of the first election are influenced by The Great Socialists' party in which Balram could cast a vote. While the Great Socialist presents himself as a messiah of poor people, he and his corrupt ministers are murderers, rapists and even do not hesitate to manipulate elections to remain in power. His command over the political jurisdiction remains unchallengeable that any resident who tries to oppose the Great Socialists are considered as mad out outcast.

The Great Socialist protected his power in Laxmangahr by making settlement with the four local landowners (Stork, Raven, Wild Boar, Buffalo). In this election year, the landowners deviate from the political influences of The Great Socialist and decides to begin their own oppositional party against them. Vijay, who has changed himself from a bus driver into a political activist, bluntly supports the the Great Socialist against the new party. At the end the elections between two parties are managed mutually. However, the role of police personnels in the elections is surprising when they divert and misguide the people by telling them that going to the voting is pointless: their votes won't be counted, and the political decision will be counted for the Great Socialist.

Balram relates how on one Election Day, a rickshaw puller desperately moved toward the polls, attempting to vote for himself. Surprisingly, at the spot whole

voting system was managed by the Great Socialists. The mad man is charged responsible for messing the voting activity and beaten by the policeman and Vijay until he fell off the ground. Balram, ironically, raises an issue that the local police don't have enough time to catch the murderer like him, however, they feel proud of threatening a poor until he/she bite the dust.

In the chapter *The Fourth Night* the fascination of Balram about Delhi,the capital of India is showcased when he exposes Delhi's luxury towers, apartment blocks, and its puzzling network of streets where drivers are effortlessly lost. To satisfy Pinky Madam, who misses America, Ashok has leased a house in the modern, suburb of Gurgaon. It is funny to know that Balram gets lost more than once as he attempts to find the building of his master. For this reason, sometimes he gets scold by Mukesh Sir, while Ashok covers him and grabs his attention with a feeling sorry for look.

In Delhi, Ashok, Pinky, and Mukesh Sir used to visit shopping stores. Balram spends his time meanwhile chatting with some other drivers. Here, the readers first meet with the character Vitiligo Lips, one of the drivers. Vitiligo shares his thorough experience as a driver in the city like Delhi and gives Balram tips to be a good driver. He offers Balram a terrible magazine called "Murder Weekly" which every one of the drivers read. He likewise says he can assist Balram with tracking down whores and unfamiliar alcohol for Ashok. Nevertheless, Balram rejects and demands that Ashok is a decent man.

Shortly after his meeting with Vitiligo Lips, Balram is asked to drop Ashok and Mukesh Sir to offer bribes to ministers. He drives them to their spot in the Honda City. The Honda City car is described as 'dark egg' as it saves the owner from Delhi's contaminated air. The irony of the incident is that after finishing the task of offering the bribes while returning to home they had to pass the statue of Gandhi. This was a very awful and embarrassing experience for Mr. Ashok.

Because of his damaged relationship with Pinky Madam, Mukesh Sir gets back to Dhanbad. At the point when Balram carries him to the railway station, Mukesh Sir gives few orders about how he ought to act as a driver and attempts to encourage Ashok to train Balram. Ashok bids a farewell to his brother and assures him that Balram is reliable that there is no reason to worry. After Mukesh Sir's flight, Balram starts a course of personal development. He attempts to change his vices and starts caring more for his appearance. He quits biting Paan, the tobacco-like substance, and

limits any association with different drivers, deciding to reflect alone in his vehicle as opposed to stay with them. He purchases a western shirt and slips into one of Dehli's shopping centres, ordinarily forbidden to poor people. He states this experience, as a great leap in throwing the limitations of being an outlaw.

On the night of Pinky Madam's birthday, Ashok orders Balram to dress as a Maharaja and serve the pair supper. After supper Ashok and Pinky get into a battle, and afterward request that Balram drive them into Delhi for a drink. While returning home, Pinky demands driving them home even though she is drunk, and the vehicle slams into an unidentified thing. Thinking that they have killed a small kid, Balram jumps in the driver's seat and paces back to the apartment. He affirms that the mishap's casualty was a child however assures Ashok that the child belongs to a poor homeless parent who will not dare to fill a case against them.

The following morning, Mukesh Sir appears from Dhanbad. He skilfully proves Balram that he is not only a family driver but also a part of the family. Therefore, in his influence, Balram agrees to sign a report expressing that Balram, not Pinky Lady, was driving the vehicle that hit the unidentified individual. The Mongoose uncovers that he is ready to bribe the judge appointed to their case. After convincing Balram’s grandmother Mukesh sir settles the matter. Balram through the narrative comments that there are many helpless drivers having no fault forced to accept and punished for the crimes done by their masters.

The Fifth Night Chapter opens with a surprising incident for Balram because having no reason he gets trapped in the hot-and –run matter due to the force of his master. Here, Balram introduces one of the novels significant symbols which is the Rooster Coop. The allegory of Rooster Coop fits to the condition of India's poor people. They resemble Roosters jammed together in lock up, watching each other while going to the butcher yet unfit or reluctant to get away from a similar destiny. India's well-off people have victimized poor people because the poor don't rebel and tolerate their own mistreatment..

After accepting the offense of killing the kid which he had not committed, Balram sits in his room scared and alone until the Stork, arrives in Delhi, calls him to the family's apartment. Rather than talking about Balram's future and what Balram fears, the Stork asks him to massage his feet. Balram is reassured by the family members that they have rich contacts with the police officers and managed the story

presenting no eyewitness of the accident consequently no charges will be pressed on Balram.

A couple of days after the hit and incident, Pinky Madam wakes Balram early in the morning and asks him to drive her to the airport. She offers Balram some cash prior to getting a plane back to the US, leaving India breaking her marriage to Ashok. Afterward, Ashok treats Balram furiously for blaming him to support Pinky Madam in her escape and almost tosses Balram over a railing, however Balram thumps Ashok back by kicking him in the chest and shields himself by saying he didn't have any idea what Pinky planned. This incident serves as a setback to Ashok as his anger moves in a state of sadness. In the tough time followed by this incident, Balram takes care of his master by cooking for him. The plight of Ashok touches the tender heart of Balram for he forgets the despair he had to undergo in hit and run incident due to his master.

The Mongoose arrives in Delhi to help Ashok through his detachment from Pinky Madam, and furthermore bearing a letter to Balram from Kusum Granny. Ashok and the Mongoose read resoundingly the letter, in which Kusum desires Balram to wed and modestly forces him to send cash to his family, which he has failed to send for quite a long time. Balram feels fascinated by the momentary reliefs of marriage, however, realizes he won't ever achieve a higher social position or better life for himself if he permits himself to be burdened with the requirements of really focusing on a family.

Balram in the sixth chapter *The Sixth Morning* claims that Delhi corrupted him, made him fit for murder and rebellion, just after the city ruined his master, Ashok. After Pinky's take off, Ashok starts going out to bars and clubs around evening time. As his driver on these outings, Balram encounters Delhi's corrupt underside. He feels that Ashok's thirst for women is infectious.

Other day when Ashok goes for outing in the evening, Balram, for the sake of passing time visits nearby book bookstore. He extends some casual chat with the shopkeeper and is tempted to stand beside the rack of books to get recharged by the knowledge these books impart to the readers. Balram is also overwhelmed with the thought of Pinky Madam’s financial support to him by offering 4700 rupees. After he returns Ashok to the apartment complex, he drives the Honda City foolishly around Delhi and spits all around the vehicle.

The next night, Balram drives Ashok around the city to deliver bribes. On the way to his trip Ashok meets a minister's assistant who offers a proposal to Ashok to hire an attractive Ukrainian whore. As soon as Ashok accepts the proposal, Balram notices a lady entered the car and stimulating Ashok with her stimulating charming appearance. It was surprising, fascinating, and exciting experience for Balram, therefore, after dropping Ashok at home, Balram visits the hotel again where the lady had made her stay to capture her charm. Yet, her plain goes in vain for not getting a chance to glance the lady. In frustration, he arranges an unnecessary drive around Delhi and went home.

The *Sixth Night chapter* begins with the last evening meeting between Mr. Ashok and the minister's assistant. In this meeting, Balram meets Vitiligo Lips (the driver of another businessman) and requests him to track down a brilliant haired whore for him. He additionally asks the more expert driver for counsel on the most proficient method to fraud his master. Balram starts selling fuel from the Honda City's tank, visiting corrupt mechanics that cheat for the charges of repairing the car. Thus, Balram does not miss any opportunity to cheat his master as he opines that this should be the way of treating the master, without any guilt.

Utilizing the cash he took from Ashok, Balram recruits a brilliant haired whore with the assistance of Vitiligo Lips. Unfortunately, the whore serving to him is not as attracting as Ashok's Ukrainian young girl. It is very comic and interesting to know that Balram finds that the young girl's hair is not natural, however, they are dyed so he gets irritated. In the feat of anger, he starts fighting with the owner of the hotel for not providing a promising girl to him.

When Balram gets back, he knows that Ashok was waiting for him in the servant's quarters. Ashok shares is agony with Balram that though he has experienced the life of a rich Indian man, but now it is turning very painful and cruel for him to continue with the same image. He requests that Balram carry him to a teashop where he can eat like a 'simple man.'

Ashok keeps on bribing ministers on time, by offering money kept in an Italian bag. One morning, Balram brings the red bag down to the vehicle while Ashok gets ready to leave the house. He opens the bag and, amazed by the enormous amount of cash inside, can't free himself of the possibility of taking it. He thinks over internally that taking the cash wouldn't be very wrong. Ashok wanted to save himself from not

paying the taxes. He had paid the tax the poor people like Balram might have been helped by the government.

Balram stops at a book market where a Muslim book retailer reads him a sonnet stating a line as ‘You were looking for the key for years/but the door was always open!’ He interacts with the book seller boy and asks some questions to him regarding the role of poems in a man’s life but in vain. Furthermore, he visits the slaughterhouse in Old Delhi.

The next day, Balram finds an iron wrench in the parking area outside Ashok's apartment. Expecting to involve it as a weapon, he takes it back to his room where he meets his young cousin Dharam. Balram then discovers that Kusum sent Dharam to Delhi with a letter regarding how the arrangements of Balram’s marriage is being done in his absence. She additionally takes steps to let the Stork's family know that Balram hasn't sent back any cash in months.

Soon after Dharam's appearance, Ashok discovers that the existing national government has lost the election to a few oppositional parties, including the Great Socialist’s party. The Stork's family had guessed that the national government would win by a surprising margin and is mad of the fact that they failed to bribe the winning party. Balram drives Ashok to manage the situations by meeting with two of the Great Socialist’s representatives and he hands over his Honda City to them once they agree to bribe him. Balram is stunned to find that one of the men driving is his child Vijay.

The next morning, Balram asks Ashok for time off with the goal that he can take Dharam to the Delhi Zoo. Balram's nerves are nervous the entire morning with the information on the wrongdoing he intends to carry out. At the point when he and Dharam happen upon a white tiger walking forward and backward in his enclosure, Balram stares at the creature and swoons. Back at the apartment, Balram directs a letter for Dharam to record on paper. The letter is composed as though according to Dharam's perspective, and closures with Dharam seeing Balram recapture cognizance from his weak, and Balram shouting out that an expression of remorse to his Kusum Granny, yet that he can't continue to live in an enclosure for his entire life. He arranges Dharam to mail the letter to Kusum Granny when he, Balram, leaves in the vehicle with Ashok the following day.

After killing Ashok in a feat of anger Balram remains calm and spend enough time to leave the dead Ashok. He also takes care to look after Dharam and his rescue.

His actions lead him in dilemma that at one hand he feels necessity of some unpleasant deeds and on the other hand he recalls his genuine responsibility about Ashok and his family. Balram is grateful to Mr. Ashok and his wife Pinky Madam for being close to them even though he is the murderer of Mr. Ashok. He credits all the great ideas to Ashok and his family; he learned a lot of what he is in life and Indian culture from listening their discussions. He depicts himself not as a unique scholar, but rather as a unique audience.

In the last chapter entitled in The Seventh Night we do realize that Balram changes his name and accepts his master's name as Ashok. It indicates that Balram does not want to forget his past out rightly. At the end of the novel Balram wants to avoid the mistakes done by his former employer. He corrects Ashok's mistakes and decides to treat his employees professionally.

4.5 Plot Analysis:

The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga is a story told through a series of letters written by Balram Halwai, a poor villager from India, to the Chinese Premier, likely to visit India. Balram narrates his life story, starting as a family driver in Delhi. The novel investigates themes of poverty, corruption, and social mobility in modern India.

The narrative of the story revolves around the journey of Balram and his rise from a lower background to a successful entrepreneur. He works as a driver for a wealthy family, the Storks, and soon realizes how his masters are corrupt and are oppressors of the Indian society. The inflamed ambitions of Balram tend him to dream as a successful entrepreneur in future ahead. To achieve his goal, he doesn't hesitate to murder of his employer, Mr. Ashok. His act of killing Ashok can be considered as an example of dismantling the oppressor's system. The novel is a fine balance of the life struggle, ambitions, and threats Balram confronts in the cutthroat competition of modern India.

Balram, a mouthpiece of lower-class society, is a victim of an unlawful social structure of the country. His conflict is a documentary of deep-rooted evil of division of society on the ground of class, culture, caste in the dark soil of the country even after its independence from the clutches of British colonial power. He belongs to the new generation of modern and global India wherein he hopes to match his ambitions in accordance with the fast-changing society around him. His life vision of transforming himself from a rickshaw driver's son to a successful entrepreneur

indicate how he is influenced of modern glamour of upper-class society represented by his master Mr. Ashok and his family. Balram narrates his life story to the premier of China Wen Jiabao who is likely visit to India in the forms of letters to explain the entrepreneurship in India.

Balram composes from his lavish office in the city of Bangalore, however the story starts in his country genealogical town of Laxmangahr. All through his life as a youngster, Balram's desperate family lives helpless before four horrible, shifty property managers, alluded to as "The Creatures": The Raven, The Stork, The Bison, and The Wild Pig. Regardless of the troublesome life he is naturally introduced to, Balram succeeds in school. His scholastic potential and individual honesty recognize him from his cohorts, carrying him to the consideration of a meeting school reviewer who names him "the White Tiger," after the most uncommon and canny animal in the wilderness.

Balram's family perceive his true capacity and believe he should finish his schooling, yet his grandmother Kusum eliminates him from school so he can attempt to help the family. At the point when he and his sibling Kishan start working in a teashop in neighbouring Dhanbad, Balram ignores his obligations and goes through his days paying attention to clients' discussions. He hears one client talking contemplatively about the high profit and simple life that India's confidential escorts appreciate and asks his grandma to send him to driving school. Kusum concurs, however Balram should vow to send home his wages once he gets a new line of work.

His preparation complete, Balram thumps on the entryways of Dhanbad's rich families, offering his administrations. By a fortunate turn of events, he shows up at the house of the Stork (one of Laxmangahr's creature property managers) one day after the Stork's child, Mr. Ashok, gets back from America with his wife, Pinky. The family enlists Balram to turn into Ashok's driver. Truly, Balram is to a greater extent an overall worker to the family, while another worker, Persad, has the honour of driving them.

Balram discovers that the Stork's family fortune comes from unlawfully selling coal out of government mines. They pay off clergymen to deliberately ignore their deceitful business and permit the family to try not to make good on annual assessment. Sadly, the family as of late had a conflict with the district's decision legislator, alluded to as the Incomparable Communist. The family dispatches Ashok

and Pinky to Delhi, where Ashok will disperse more payoffs to offer to set things right. At the point when Balram discovers that the couple will require a driver in Delhi, he plans to have Slam Persad excused, and goes in his place.

Once in Delhi, Balram observes Pinky and Ashok's marriage self-destruct. Pinky gets back to the US and leaves Ashok after she kills a small kid in mishap. In her nonappearance, Ashok goes out to bars and clubs, employing a whore .Noticing his lord's progressive debasement and driving him through Dehli's seedier locale, Balram becomes disappointed and angry. Although Ashok is a generally kind expert, Balram understands that any liberality Ashok has shown him is just a small portion of what he can bear. Ashok has no genuine interest in assisting Balram with accomplishing a superior life, or in changing the situation.

Balram plans to kill Ashok and escape with the pack of the cash that he hauls around the city to pay off legislators. Notwithstanding the gamble of being gotten, Balram should battle with the rationale of "the Rooster Coop": the arrangement of mistreatment where India's poor, including Balram himself, are caught. That's what Balram knows whether he kills Ashok, Ashok's family will kill all his own family members in Laxmangahr in reprisal. Balram is likewise kept down by the appearance in Delhi of his young cousin Dharam, who Kusum sends from Dhanbad with the interest that Balram assist with raising him.

Balram at last takes steps to continue with the homicide, utilizing a weapon he has moulded out of a wrecked alcohol bottle. One day as he drives Ashok to convey an especially huge pay off, Balram imagines that there is a mechanical issue with the vehicle. He pulls over, persuades Ashok to stoop down and inspect the wheel, then welcomes the separated jug on Ashok's head. After killing his lord, he gets back to Ashok's loft, gathers Dharam, and escapes with his young cousin to Bangalore.

When Balram recovers his nerves in Bangalore enough not to fear prompt catch, he starts meandering the city and paying attention to discussions in cafes - similarly as in the teashop in Dhanbad — to design his best course of action. He before long discovers that Bangalore's business world spins around rethinking, and that numerous enormous innovation organizations work on a night time plan. Balram makes a taxi organization called ‘White Tiger Drivers’and the endeavour is a colossal achievement.

When he plunks down to recount his story, Balram is a well-off man who minds his own business, still unfortunate that one day his wrongdoing will be found.

Notwithstanding, he finishes up his letter to Wen Jiabao guaranteeing that regardless of whether he is found out, he won't ever lament his wrongdoing: it merited carrying out essentially because it empowered him to encounter life as a liberated person as opposed to as a worker.

4.6 Themes in the Novel:

1) Globalization

The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga investigates the theme of globalization from the perspective of Balram Halwai, a village boy turning driver who explores India's changing financial scene. The novel portrays the distinct split between the rich and the poor, featuring how globalization compounds this hole. Balram's shift from a provincial town to turning into a driver for a rich family in Delhi opens him to the differences made by globalization.

Globalization brings financial freedom yet in addition to exploitation. Balram observes the ascent of Technology and capitalism, but on the other hand he is caught inside a framework that doesn't permit him to think beyond the oppressed mind set. The difference between the globalized urban communities and the rustic regions highlights this uniqueness.

The novel addresses the conflict of conventional values with modern one. Balram, in the same way as others, wrestles with the disagreement between the conventional slavery he was the part of and the stimulus energized by openness to a globalized world. Globalization influences power structures. Balram sees how people with great influence, whether through political impact or monetary control, control globalization to keep up with their strength, prompting defilement and abuse. The novel likewise investigates the effect of Western goals and culture on India. Balram respects the Western world's opportunity and amazing freedom, yet he is additionally aware about the side effects of it found in India.

The novel *The White Tiger* can be read as a documented record of unpleasant effects of globalization on the conventional lifestyle of Indians. Adiga examines the role of globalization in reshaping the economic and social structures in India.

2) Education

The White Tiger is a tale about how education, formal and in any case, shapes people. Balram first accepts his name - The White Tiger -in a study hall setting. However, throughout his journey he endeavours to epitomize his name by developing

a savage, sly streak and contending in Indian culture. After being pulled out of school at an early age, Balram is left with just pieces and bits of proper training. This leads him to allude to himself as a "silly" or "half-baked" Indian. He sees his "half-baked" education not as a shortcoming, yet rather as one of the preconditions for an enterprising soul. He accepts that getting a sense of ownership with one's own schooling requires and fabricates an imaginative, ingenious psyche, and answers the unexpected finish of his education by realizing his best at work. He guarantees he is certainly not a unique mastermind, but instead a unique audience, and pieces together a comprehension of India by listening in working, changing impasse, humble positions into learning open doors.

As a grown-up, Balram regards conventional figuring out how to some extent. He partakes in the nearness and actual presence of books, yet additionally scoffs at the stale smelling, "foul taste" they leave in his mouth. Balram professes to advance more from "the street and the asphalt" from concentrating on the steady changes of Indian culture to develop the adaptability and flexibility he accepts an independent man ought to have. As a rule, Balram underlines the significance of being receptive to one's environmental factors.

3) Morality and Indian Society

The White Tiger depicts India that has lost its customary social design, yet additionally grown out of a traditional moral structure. Balram's depiction of the Light India versus the Dark India in the novel, which undermines normal relationship of ‘Light’ with ideals, and ‘Darkness’ with unethical behaviour, mirrors this annoyed of virtues. In the interim, Rooster Coop rationale beats Dim India: men obediently act as per familial and strict qualities, yet they do so because they are frightened into accommodation, not out of veritable craving to carry on with a decent existence. In the two cases, individuals penance profound quality as they battle for endurance inside India's ferocious social scene.

All through the book, Balram makes a half-hearted effort of strict confidence and supplication generally to dazzle his lord with his dedication. However, he contends that he is both ‘shrewd and earnest, accepting and ridiculing’ while: this flighty hug of confidence is ordinary of Indian culture.

Amidst India's ethical surprise, Balram fosters his very own ethical structure established on his feeling of himself as a ‘white tiger’ an uncommon animal with predominant knowledge who lives in the wilderness yet is excluded from its

guidelines. His hug of this thought that he is extraordinary and therefore has the right to exist outside lawful and moral codes permits him to legitimize killing his lord Ashok, intentionally and insensitively uncovering his own family to likely lethal retribution, so he can start his most memorable business-White Tiger Drivers-with Ashok's cash. He trusts that the battle to get away from social and financial oppression in Indian culture, to go ‘independent’ and accomplish command over one's future, bests customary thoughts of good versus evil, God versus Satan, delivering activities the peruser should think about indecent justifiable.

4.7 Symbols in the Novel:

1) The Stork

The stork symbolizes various aspects of the protagonist Balram Halwai's life and the socio-economic context of India. The stork is a recurring motif throughout the novel, representing both hope and harsh realities. Represents the corrupt and greedy nature of the rich, preying on the poor, similar to how a stork preys on fish. It is very interesting to know that The Stork signifies the concept such as dreams and ambitions, corruption, Westernization and progress, and dual nature representing both freedom and exploitation.

2) The White Tiger

Balram's regular knowledge and trustworthiness put him aside from his companions since the beginning. On one event, his scholastic ability so dazzles a visiting school inspector that the official considers him a "White Tiger": the most honourable and canny creature in the wilderness. All through his life, Balram's idea of himself as a White Tiger and as an outstanding individual moves him to encourage for him and battle for his own progression. His conviction that he is some way or another exceptional likewise makes him feel absolved from customary moral and lawful guidelines, engaged to carry on with life in his own particular manner.

The morning before he kills his lord Ashok, Balram experiences a white tiger in the Delhi Zoo. After staring at the creature and blacking out on the spot, he chooses to carry out the homicide and directs a letter to his grandma Kusum saying 'sorry' ahead of time, and making sense of that he can't live in an enclosure any longer. Balram's relationship with his namesake encourages him and persuades him that he is legitimate in pushing ahead with his arrangement.

3) The Rooster Coop

The Rooster Coop is Balram's image for depicting the abuse of India's poor. Roosters in a coop at the market watch each other butchered individually, yet can't or reluctant to rebel and break out of the coop. Also, India's needy individuals see each other squashed by the affluent and strong, crushed by the stunning imbalance of Indian culture, however, can't get away from a similar destiny. Truth be told, he contends that the poor effectively prevent each other from getting away, either determinedly by chopping each other down, or less intentionally however similarly as capably, through a culture that causes them to anticipate such maltreatment and bondage. The Rooster Coop Balram portrays is one that is "watched from within."

Balram accepts that the conventional Indian nuclear family keeps the Rooster Coop of social imbalance alive. If a worker endeavours to escape or resists his manager, the prevailing's family will rebuff the worker by killing or severely tormenting his loved ones.

4) The Black Fort

Thinking back on his past from his extravagant office in Bangalore, Balram envisions what the analysts and police would have learned about him had they gotten back to his hometown of Laxmangahr. He snickers to himself that the police could never find the genuine piece of information to what separated him from different residents, what made him fit for envisioning a superior life: his interest with the Black Fort.

The Black Fort was the main sight to behold in Balram's devastated tribal town. The stronghold is an excellent old structure on a slope above town, built by unfamiliar occupiers a long time back, which both captivated and scared Balram all through his childhood. He guarantees that his capacity to see the value in its magnificence checked him right off the bat as not quite the same as his kindred residents and showed his fate not to stay a slave. At the point when he gets back to the town years after the fact with his well-off ace Mr. Ashok and his special lady Pinky Lady, he at last gets the boldness to visit the post alone. From the extremely top, he peers down on Laxmangahr and spits-he has in a real sense transcended the Rooster Coop, and from inside this stronghold addressing the force of previous occupiers, he dismisses his previous life his family that carries on with that life. A brief time frame later, he kills Ashok.

4.8 Character Analysis:

1) Balram Halwai

Known with the name "Munna" – meaning Kid – and towards the end of the novel as "Ashok Sharma," Balram is the narrator and entrepreneur . The White Tiger is a mind-blowing tale as a self-proclaimed "independent entrepreneur": a rickshaw driver's child who ascends India's social stepping stool to turn into a chauffeur and later an effective money manager. He retells his biography in a letter to visiting Chinese authority Chief Jiabao, determined to teach the chief about business in India.

He depicts his excursion, from growing up as poor in the country town of Laxmangahr to carrying on with the existence of an effective finance manager in Bangalore, with satire and negative humor. He gladly confesses to degenerate and at times deadly plans and conduct that assisted him with moving to the highest point of Indian Culture. To get by in current India, he has decided to live in his own specific manner, established on his feeling of himself as a "white tiger": a rare species of animal with prevalent subject knowledge, due to his extraordinariness, to an elective moral code that legitimizes any activity that assists him with excelling.

2) Vikram Halwai

Vikram Halwai, Balram's father is a poor, uneducated cart driver who dies of tuberculosis. During his life, he battles surprisingly well to satisfy his significant other's desire that Balram be offered a chance to wrap his schooling and move up on the planet. Balram follows his battle for up versatility to a wish his dad once communicated: that even though he, at the end of the day, consumed his time on earth being dealt with "like a jackass," He believes that one of his children should have the option to live like a man.

3) Balram's Mother

Balram's mother dies when he is a young man in Laxmangahr. However she is a minor figure behind the scenes of his life, Balram relates that she had incredible desires for her child, and demanded he finish his schooling. There was deep rooted strain between Balram's mother and grandma Kusum, who doesn't have confidence in assisting Balram with understanding his true capacity. Seeing his mother's memorial service on the banks of the Ganges as a kid, Balram figures out the sadness

and uselessness of her life and takes steps to make a superior future for himself as she would have needed.

4) Kishan

Kishan is Balram's more established sibling who really focuses on him after their dad passes on. However, Kishan is a powerful, caring figure in Balram's life, Balram regrets his sibling's absence of "pioneering soul": as such, his failure to face Kusum and pursue his own choices, as Balram does. Kishan permits Kusum to work him hard, take most of his wages, and organize his marriage .

5) Dharam:

Dharam is Balram's young cousin, whom Kusum ships off Delhi for Balram to tutor. Dharam's shows up at a pivotal, convoluting things similarly as Balram is formulating his arrangement to kill Ashok and escape with his lord's cash. Balram ultimately completes the homicide at any rate and escapes Delhi with Dharam, proceeding to really focus on the young man after setting up a good foundation for himself in Bangalore.

6) The Stork:

The Stork is one of the four animal landowners of Laxmangahr and father of Mr. Ashok and Mukesh Sir. He possesses the waterway beyond Laxmangahr and burdens any resident who fishes there or boats across it. The main part of his family's fortune, comes from unlawfully selling coal out of government mines. He conveys liberal payoffs to political authorities who choose to disregard his deceitful dealings and permit him to dodge annual assessment.

7) Mr. Ashok

Mr.Ashok is the Stork's son and Balram's master. Mr. Ashok returned back from America with his wife Pinky is a gentler, milder character contrasted with his well off and entitled relatives. He feels baffled by the far and wide debasement in India and his family's job in it, however, obliges his family members, passing out pay-offs to clergymen and currying favour with legislators. Contrasted with the other affluent individuals around him, Ashok shows even more outward indications of sympathy for Balram. Ashok turns out to be progressively debauched and goes into something of a descending twisting after his wife, Pinky leaves him and returns to America. Balram feels areas of strength for a, association with his lord, yet following a while in his administration presumes that Ashok is no less horrible and egotistical

than his dad and sibling, that the liberality he offers isn't anywhere close to what he could bear to give.

8) Pinky Madam

"Pinky Madam" is a complex character whose presence embodies the disparity and contradictions within Indian society. She represents the privileged class, a wealthy Delhiite married to Ashok, who comes from an affluent family involved in politics and business. Pinky Madam is depicted as more progressive and sympathetic compared to her husband and family. She is educated, well-travelled, and seemingly more compassionate towards Balram, the protagonist and the family's driver.

Throughout the novel, Pinky Madam grapples with her own sense of guilt and unease about the vast socio-economic differences she witnesses daily. Her attempts to bridge the gap between her world and Balram's seem genuine, yet she remains somewhat naive about the systemic issues that perpetuate poverty and exploitation. She offers Balram some hope and encouragement to break free from his predetermined destiny, but her actions also highlight the limitations of her influence and the inherent power dynamics deeply rooted in society.

Ultimately, Pinky Madam's character serves as a reflection of the conflict between the desire for change and the constraints imposed by societal structures, privilege, and personal limitations. Her presence in the narrative underscores the complexities and contradictions within the social fabric of modern India.

9) Kusum

Kusum is a significant character in the novel .She is Balram Halwai's grandmother and plays a crucial role in shaping his worldview and aspirations. Despite her relatively brief appearance in the story, Kusum has a profound impact on Balram's life. Kusum embodies traditional values deeply rooted in the caste system and societal norms. She represents the old ways of thinking, adhering to customs and traditions that define the roles of men and women in Indian society. Her influence on Balram is significant as he grows up seeing the world through her lens. She is portrayed as a strong, determined woman who has faced hardship and struggles in her life. Her resilience is evident in her survival despite various challenges, and this resilience is something Balram admires and learns from.

She exerts a considerable influence within the family and depicted as a figure of authority and respect. This authority is reflected in Balram's interactions and his understanding of family dynamics. Kusum embodies the societal expectations of

women in India during her time. She upholds the roles of a devoted wife and a dedicated mother, emphasizing the importance of family and sacrifice. Despite her adherence to traditional values, Kusum values education and sees it as a path to a better life for her grandchildren. She sacrifices much to ensure Balram receives an education, seeing it as a way out of their impoverished circumstances.

Kusum's influence on Balram is profound. She instils in him a sense of duty and responsibility towards his family. However, her traditional values also become a source of conflict within Balram as he grapples with the desire for upward mobility and breaking away from the confines of his social class. Her character serves as a representation of the clash between tradition and modernity in Indian society. Her presence in Balram's life shapes his perceptions, aspirations, and the internal struggle between societal expectations and personal ambitions. Through her, Adiga highlights the complexities and challenges faced by individuals trying to break free from the traditional constraints of society.

10) Wen Jiabao

Wen Jiabao is not a character as such in the novel; instead, he is referenced in a letter written by Balram Halwai, the novel's protagonist, to the Premier of China, Balram addresses the Premier in an attempt to bring attention to the corruption and social issues prevalent in modern India, particularly focusing on the vast disparity between the rich and poor.

Balram admires Premier Wen Jiabao and uses him as a symbol of hope and progress. He contrasts the developments and improvements in China under Wen Jiabao's leadership with the stagnation and corruption in India. Through this letter, Balram attempts to highlight the stark differences in governance and progress between the two countries. Wen Jiabao is portrayed as an influential figure who symbolizes change and development in Balram's eyes. Balram, a disillusioned and ambitious young man from a poor background, sees China's progress as a model for what India could achieve if it were to address its deep-rooted issues. Though Wen Jiabao does not physically appear as a character, his name is used by Balram as a representative of effective governance and progress, contrasting sharply with the corrupt and oppressive system Balram feels trapped within.

4.9 Check your progress.

1. In which year did Aravind Adiga win the Man Booker Prize for his debut novel, *The White Tiger*?

2. Where did Aravind Adiga pursue his education in English literature?
3. Who is the author of *The Namesake* ?
4. Who used technique of Magic realism in Indian English Novel for the first time?
5. Who is regarded as Social Realistic Writer in earlier Indian English Fiction?
1. Who is the protagonist of *The White Tiger*?
2. Who is Balram's employer in the story?
3. Balram Halwai was passionate in the novel to become an _____
4. Why is the Chinese Premier visiting Bangalore?
5. Which prestigious award did *The White Tige*r win in 2008?
6. How did Balram learn about China?
7. Whom does Balram Halwai address in a letter in the novel?
8. What does Balram mean by the term "half-baked"?
9. What is the primary setting of the novel?
10. What term does Balram Halwai use to describe the lower class in the novel?
11. Where does Balram work after he is pulled from school?
12. Who is "The Stork"?
13. The Rooster Coop is a metaphoric representation of what aspects of Balram's life and situation?
14. What is the primary implication of Balram being given the nickname "White Tiger"?
15. What is the name of the wife of Ashok in the novel "The White Tiger" by Adiga?

4.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

1. 2008
2. Oxford University
3. Jhumpa Lahiri
4. Salman Rushdie
5. Raja Rao
6. Balram Halwai
7. Mr. Ashok
8. Entrepreneur
9. To learn about Entrepreneurship
10. Man Booker Prize
11. From a book
12. The Premier of China
13. Undereducated
14. New Delhi

15. The Roosters 16. A Tea shop

17. A wealthy landowner in Balram's hometown

18. Poverty and servitude

19. That like the white tiger, Balram is rare and special

20. Pinky

4.11 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 Balram Halwai to rediscover his identity.
3) Comment on the theme of morality in Indian society reflected in the novel.
4) Write a detailed note on the Narrative technique used in *The White Tiger*.
5) How does the novel portray the effects of globalization on India?

b) Write short notes on the following in about 100 to 150 words.

1) Character sketch of Balram Halwai.
2) The Stork
3) The symbolic use of the white tiger
4) Metaphorical use of the Master-Servant relationship

4.12 References and Further Reading:

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