

# **WAYS WITH WORDS**

**LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

**I SEMESTER**

*COMMON COURSE*

*IN ENGLISH*

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**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**

**SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

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**SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

**STUDY MATERIAL**

**Common Course in English**

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**WAYS WITH WORDS**

**LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

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## SECTION ONE: POETRY

### SONNET 29

William Shakespeare

Sonnet 29 shows the poet at his most insecure and troubled situation. He feels unlucky, shamed, and fiercely jealous of those around him. What causes the poet's anguish will remain a mystery. The speaker presents himself in a despicable state of mind, "an outcaste state". Such a designation does not suggest a clear autobiographical narrative, it helps in focusing on the mood in which the outcast, lonely speaker seeks solace in remembrance of the love he experienced in the past. In the sonnet we must first note how the speaker of the sonnets is socially situated and that his relation to the addressee has both personal and worldly dimensions. The speaker feels alone and in disgrace, while desiring the "art" and "scope" of other men. In the opening nine lines, he desires worldly success and recognition of self-worth that seem to elude him.

In the first segment of self-exploration, the speaker deploys the emotive of pain almost as a kind of self-fashioning, describing his identity in expressions of scarcity, jealousy, and self-hate: "I . . . bewep my outcast state," "curse my fate," "trouble heav'n with . . . my bootless cries," "myself almost despising." The source of his suffering seems diffuse and all-encompassing, whereby "sadness" casts its shadow on desired pleasure; but suffering here also implies a religious, Christian connotation of the "sin of despair," extending a metaphor between "material and spiritual well-being" From line 10 onwards, the speaker attempts to transform his wide-ranging feelings of despair by harnessing them to the remembrance of the "sweet love" of his friend.

Haply I think on thee, and then my state,  
Like to the lark at break of day arising  
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;  
For thy sweet love rememb' red such wealth brings,  
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

#### Paraphrase

When I'm in disgrace with everyone and my luck has deserted me, I remain all alone and cry about the fact that I'm an outcast, and trouble God with useless cries, which fall on his deaf ears, and I turn to myself and curse my fate, wishing that I had more to hope for, wishing I had this man's good looks and that man's friends, this man's skills and that man's opportunities, and totally dissatisfied with the things I usually enjoy the most. Yet, as I'm thinking these thoughts and almost hating myself, I happen to think about you, and then my condition changes altogether—like a lark at daybreak rising up and leaving the earth far behind to sing hymns to God. Whenever I remember your sweet love, I feel so wealthy that I can't even think to change my place even with kings.

#### **What is the particular state of mind of the poet in which the poem was written ?**

An examination of Shakespeare's life around the time he wrote Sonnet 29 reveals two traumatic events that may have shaped the theme of the sonnet. In 1592 the London theatres closed due to a severe outbreak of plague. Although it is possible that Shakespeare toured the outlying areas of London, it is almost certain that he left the theatre entirely during this time to work on his sonnets.

The closing of the playhouses made it hard for Shakespeare and other actors of the day to earn a living. With plague and poverty looming it is expected that he would feel "in disgrace with fortune".

Moreover, in 1592 there came a scathing attack on Shakespeare by dramatist Robert Greene, who warned three of his fellow playwrights that "There is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers ... supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse" One can only imagine what grief this assault – this deathbed assault – must have caused Shakespeare.

All is not lost, however, for the sonnet ends with a positive affirmation that the poet can combat his anguish with the "sweet love" of his dear friend.

### **Sonnet 29: The Facts**

- **Sequence:** Sonnet 29 is part of the Fair Youth Sonnets
- **Key Themes:** Self-pity, self-hatred, love overcoming feelings of self-deprecation.
- **Style:** Sonnet 29 is written in iambic pentameter and follows the traditional sonnet form
- **Rhyme Scheme:** abab-cdcd-efef-gg

### **Answer the following Questions**

1. Shakespeare has written ---number of plays and --- sonnets.  
37 plays (More than 30) and 154 sonnets
2. What is tragic flaw?  
The fundamental tragic trait of the Shakespearean hero, his interest, passion or particular habit of mind that leads to his downfall.
3. Rhyme scheme of Shakespearean sonnet.  
abab-cdcd-efef-gg
4. Two major types of sonnets.  
Shakespearean or English sonnets and Petrarchan or Italian sonnets.
5. Figure of speech used in the line "Like to the lark at break of day"  
Simile
6. Name any four tragedies written by Shakespeare.  
King Lear, Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello

**Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.**

#### **1. Evaluate the poem as a sonnet**

Ans: A sonnet is a poem consisting of 14 lines. Derived from the Italian word "sonnetto", the sonnet traditionally reflects upon a single sentiment, with a clarification or "turn" of thought in its concluding lines. Sonnet 29 is one of 154 sonnets written by William Shakespeare. It shows the poet as vulnerable and dismayed. He feels unlucky, shamed, and fiercely jealous of those around him but feels better upon thinking of his beloved. The reason for the poet's anguish is still an enigma and there are doubts whether this sonnet is

autobiographical. The sorrow quoted here might be more rhetorical than real, being part of the sonnet tradition, in which many misfortunes contrive to make the lover unhappy. It also serves to highlight the great joy which ends the poem, when he thinks once more on his beloved, as in the psalms, and rises above the clouds.

**2. The word “state” occurs thrice in the poem. How does the meaning of this word change with each occurrence?**

Ans: Shakespeare repeats the word "state" playing on its ambiguity in meaning i.e "kingdom" and "situation". In the second line "my outcaste state" means the poet is being shunned by the society. In 1592, the poets were jobless due to the closing down of the theatres after the outbreak of plague. Another reason for his outcaste state is his bitter rivalry with Robert Greene, a fellow playwright. In line 10, it is a little obvious that the "state" is used as pun because it does neatly anticipate the meaning of that final couplet, namely that the Bard's humble but blessed state of being loved is wealthier than the "state with king" which stands for kingdom or nation.

**3. This sonnet was composed in around 1592. If we assume that the speaker is poet himself, find out the possible reasons for the speaker to be out of favour with “Fortune and men’s eye.”**

Ans: In 1592 there was a vehement attack on Shakespeare by dramatist Robert Greene, who, in *A Groatsworth of Wit* described him as "... an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers". One can only imagine what grief this deathbed assault must have caused Shakespeare. Moreover, the poets were jobless as the London theatres were closed due to a severe outbreak of plague. The closing of the playhouses made it hard for Shakespeare and other actors of the day to earn a living. These were probably the reasons for the speaker to be out of favour with "Fortune and men's eye."

**IV. Essay Questions:**

**1. Comment on the theme of the poem.**

Ans: Sonnet 29 is one of the sonnets of William Shakespeare's Fair Youth sequence. It focuses on the speaker's initial state of depression, hopelessness and unhappiness in life and the subsequent recovery through happier thoughts of love. It starts off with self-pity and negative impressions as the poet feels jealousy towards the more advantageous men in the world. He wants the life that they are living at the beginning of the sonnet. The poet has his own form of possessions, but they are not good enough for him. It becomes evident that the source of the

speaker's despondency is that he is not with a friend whom he loves. The bad mood is therefore driven by loneliness.

But then the speaker's mood starts to change. This is brought on by thoughts of the man he loves. As to who Shakespeare was in love with is a moot point. He starts to feel happy and this then moves on to feelings of hope. Shakespeare is able to incorporate a small piece of personification into Sonnet 29 around lines 12-13. "From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;" meaning that personification is being applied to heaven by giving it the human quality of sound and allowing it alone to hear the poet's cries of unhappiness with what he owns now. The conclusion of the speaker is that despite his feelings of loneliness because his friend is not around, just thinking of him makes him feel good again. He even goes as far as to say that he would not change anything in his life: "I scorn to change my state with kings" because he is richer than those "states".

Sonnet 29 speaks to all those who have felt that they are worthless or overshadowed by others they deem to be superior but who can overcome dark feelings by thinking of someone they love, who loves them in return.

**2. Describe the changes brought over the mind of the speaker by the "sweet memories".**

Ans. In Sonnet 29, the poet is full of self-accusation and inner turmoil. He is at the verge of an existential crisis and his self-loathing is even having an effect on Fortune. He feels cursed, destiny has been cruel to him. He spends time alone, delving deep in negative feelings and desiring for "this man's art and that man's scope."

Historically it could have been an uncertain time for William Shakespeare. If this sonnet was written around 1592 then the playwright and poet may well have been feeling a bit down. The plague outbreak had caused all theatres to close down, so he would have been unable to perform his plays. Plus, a certain older rival, Robert Greene, had written an insulting deathbed notice, warning all playwrights to beware of the 'upstart crow' who had taken London and the theatre world by storm.

As negativity seeps into him, the Bard thinks of his beloved, and this alters his state. He is filled with exuberance and, rather than wanting to cry to heaven he now sings hymns at heaven's gate like the lark at the "break of day". His beloved's sweet memories bring a 'wealth' far greater than anything owned by a king. The former dark and nefarious world wanes away, life is refreshed and made to realise that "love" makes a man "richer" than all the gold that kings can own.

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## ODE TO AUTUMN

John Keats

### Introduction

In English literature the period from 1790-1850 is often termed as the Romantic period(19th century) There was a new feeling and return to nature from the rules and reason of the preceding century. Many historical events of the times slowly paved way for the romantic era. The French Revolution in 1789, American Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the Reform bill in England were some of them. The slogans of French Revolution, 'Liberty, fraternity and equality' brought a fresh thinking in people's mind. Beauty, inspiration and imagination were the concerns of Romantic poets. The greatest poets of the period were William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron and Robert Southey.

### Exercises

I. Choose The Right Answer From The Following

1. In which year was the "Ode to Autumn" written?

A: 1819

2. With whom was Keats engaged in 1819?

A: Fanny Browne

3. The figure of speech used in the line 'the bosom friend of maturing sun' is \_\_\_\_\_.

A: Personification

II. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each.

1. Why is autumn called the 'seasons of mists and mellow fruitfulness'?

A. Autumn is the season of early mist and ripe fruits.

2. Who is called the bosom friend of maturing sun?

A: Autumn season is called the bosom friend of maturing sun.

3. What constitutes the music of autumn?

A: The wailing of small gnats, bleating of lambs, singing of crickets,  
whistling of robin and the twittering of swallows.

4. Which feminine image was used by Keats to describe the autumn?

A: The image of the Greek harvest goddess, Ceres. Autumn is also  
personified as a winnower reaper, gleaner and cider presser.

5. What makes the poet to put the question, " where are songs of the spring?"

A: The poet is missing the songs of the spring,

he wants songs to accompany autumn's beauty.

6. Explain: "Barred clouds bloom the soft dying day,/And

touch the stubble plains with rosy hue."

A: The evening is approaching, the sky turns into a rosy

shade with scattered clouds in the sky.

7. Why is it said that summer has overbrimmed the clammy cells of bees?

A: The bees have tasted honey from the late autumn flowers until they are satiated.

8. What is the wailful choir described by Keats in the III stanza?

A: The cry of gnats (small insects).

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John Keats son of a stable keeper was born on 1795. He was the youngest of romantic poets who had an early demise at the age of 26. Keats lived aloft from men and from all political measures, worshipping beauty like a devotee, perfectly content to write what was in his own heart, or to reflect some splendor of the natural world as he saw or dreamed it to be. He strongly believed that poetry existed for its own sake. Like all other romantic poets he too was a nature lover and appreciated beauty in everything. Keats is best known for his six odes all of which were written in 1819. They are "Ode on a Grecian Urn", "Ode on Indolence", "Ode on Melancholy", "Ode to a Nightingale", "Ode to Psyche" and "Ode to Autumn." An ode is a lyrical poem praising or glorifying an event or individual.

The poem consists of eleven lined three stanzas which describes the natural progression of seasons, from the ripeness of the crops and its harvest and to the last day of autumn when winter is nearing. There are powerful images drawn from the nature through the personification of Autumn, and the description of its abundance, its beauty and its songs.

### **III. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words each.**

1. How does the poet personify autumn in Keats's poem?

In the poem "to autumn", the season is personified in various ways. In the first stanza the season is personified as "bosom friend" of the sun. They are also said to be "conspiring" on how to yield a rich ripened harvest. In the second stanza Autumn is personified as a goddess. Here Keats might have given allusions to the Greek goddess of harvest, Ceres. She is also personified as a gleaner and a cider presser. In the last stanza there is description of the "soft dying day" which equates with death.

2. Comment on Keats's treatment of nature.

Every minute aspect of the season is picturesquely described in the poem. It tells about the colours, ripeness of the fruits and vegetables and the harvest. It also gives a picture of bees swarming around flowers yet to bloom. Autumn is also a time of vigorous activity. The vegetables are to be collected and sorted out on a granary floor, apples are to be pressed to make cider and all the harvest are to be stored for the upcoming winter. It also talks about the songs of insects and crickets, robins and swallows and lambs bleating at the end of the day.

3. What characterizes the music of autumn?

Music is a combination of sounds. Nature has its own music. Autumn's music is as varied as its beautiful colours. The "wailful choir" of gnats, crickets, bleating lambs, whistling robins and twittering swallows constitute the music of Autumn.

4. Explain the lyrical imagery in "Ode to Autumn".

The poem is rich in imagery, evoking the perceptions of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Each stanza highlights one of the senses. The morning mists are felt and mellow fruitfulness is photographic. Also the sweet smelling flowers and bees attracting to honey filled flowers are appealing to the senses.

The sense of sight is emphasized in the second stanza. Autumn personified as a woman is seen sitting carelessly, her hair lifted in the breeze. The third stanza appeals to the sense of listening, the mellifluous song of autumn.

**IV. Answer the following questions in not more than 300 words.**

1 "Ode to Autumn" is one of the thematically rich odes of English literature. Discuss.

The central theme of the poem is ripeness and maturity. There is a sense of acceptance about the inevitability of the seasonal cycles. The beauty of Autumn is a matter of permanence but in real life it should also pave way for the winter to come. In this understanding there lies the true Keatsian joy as he writes in *Endymion* :- "A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

Each of the three stanzas concentrates on a dominant aspect of Autumn, but also admits and absorbs its opposites as Keats's vision of not considering things in isolation. Keats rejoices, first in the relationship of season, sun and earth and then in fruition that stems from that relationship. The theme in the first stanza is conceive, growth and ripeness. Here all is ripeness. Growth is surprisingly going on. Sun and Autumn are conspiring 'to set budding more and still more.' The cottage-trees bend, under the load of fruit, the vines hang tensely under the weight of grapes. The stanza is packed in sweetness and nourishment. Autumn celebrates the effortless fruitfulness of nature. The totality of nature's dependence is shown when the later flowers are set budding, 'for the bees', thus connecting the three kingdoms of plant, animal and human. The bees are deceived into feeling that summer will never end. There is a blessing in everything.

In the second stanza the theme of abundance is connected with human labor. A broader landscape is described with granaries and furrows. Autumn is personified as a winnower, a gleaner and a cider-presser. First Autumn is seen as a winnower sitting near her store with her hair flowing in the wind. She is also a reaper sometimes, resting near a half-reaped furrow. Autumn is also

represented as a gleaner going home with fruits 'across a brook'. And finally she is seen as a cider presser crushing her apples and watching patiently the last oozings out of the juice for hours.

The last stanza has nostalgia and reminiscence as its theme. The poet is reminded of the song of spring and then he realizes 'not to pine for what is lost' for Autumn has its own music. The close of the year is associated with sunset. The sense of sadness is merged in the feeling of the continuous life of nature, which externally renews itself in the "wailful choir" of insects, bleating of lambs and whistling and twittering of birds. The feeling of pathos, though solemn breathes the spirit of hope.

## 2. How does Keats convey the theme of death and rebirth through death in "Ode to Autumn?"

Among the six wonderful odes of Keats to autumn occupies a distinct place of its own, for it is, in execution, the most perfect of his odes. Keats explores the themes of life in death and death in life in 'Ode to Autumn' through the imagery, metaphoric language and philosophical ideas used in the poem. The concept of death is subtle, it is implied as an underlying tone of the poem. Autumn itself signifies 'shedding off' which metaphorically stands for death. Autumn is a part of the year as old age is of life. Keats has accepted autumn and connotatively old age as natural real life changes. The human forms to which autumn takes shape in the second stanza is then moving on to the real activities taking place around, in the third stanza.

To Autumn portrays Keats's attitude as almost in appreciation or awe of the inevitability of change and death due to the re-birth that follows as shown with the unexpected lively sounds of crickets and red breasts whistling. The poet uses different imagery to show the gradual time change. The 'soft dying day' is compared to the ending of the season. The small insects and crickets sing a "wailful choir" at the end of the day/season. Peace is in the soft music of nature as there is contentment in the old age while being nostalgic about youth ("where are the songs of Spring?") then rebirth occurs and this cycle begins once again. Change is both beautiful and natural.

Although the poem contains only three stanzas, Keats has been successful in expressing the beauty, charm, the symphony of autumn and ageless human activities in the lap of nature. The poem blends living and dying, the pleasant and unpleasant because they are inextricably one; he accepts the reality of mixed nature of the world.

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## A ROADSIDE STAND

Robert Frost

### Introduction

Robert Lee Frost (1874-1963) was an American poet. He is highly regarded for his realistic depictions of rural life and his command of American colloquial speech. His work frequently employed settings from rural life in New England in the early twentieth century, using them to examine complex social and philosophical themes. A popular and often-quoted poet, Frost was honored frequently during his lifetime, receiving four Pulitzer Prizes for Poetry. His family life was miserable. His father died of tuberculosis and mother died of cancer, only two among his six children survived, and a streak of mental illness ran throughout his family. Farming was his first love as a profession but it was a failure and so he took to teaching and writing turned very successful. In 1916 Frost was asked to recite his poem "The Gift Outright" at John F Kennedy's presidential inauguration.

### Exercises

1 From which anthology is the poem A Roadside Stand taken?

A: A Further Range(1936)

2 The woods are lovely dark and deep is from the poem

A: Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

3 Euthanasia is a term which means-----

A: Mercy killing

4" The sadness that lurks near the open window"-what is the figure of speech employed here?

A: Personification

### II Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each:

1. What are the reasons for which a car may stop in front of the roadside stand, according to the farmer?
2. According to the farmer a car may stop in front of the roadside stand to enquire the price of the produce, to demand a gallon of petrol ,to ask the route or to merely reverse the car. But unfortunately no one would purchase the farm produce.

2. What is the promise offered by the motion pictures?

The promise of motion pictures is the prosperity and glamour portrayed by Hollywood films

3. What is the attitude of the city dwellers towards the roadside stand?

Having failed to see the wretchedness of the poor, the city dwellers complain that the roadside stand, with its artless paint, ruined the beauty of the nature. Another complaint is that the letters are wrongly written.

4. Explain the figure of speech in 'selfish cars' and 'polished traffic'.

The figure of speech is transferred epithet. Polished traffic portrays the insensitive attitude and gentlemanly appearances of the city-men. They appear to be 'polished' outside but their minds do not understand the sufferings of the poor people. The cars are selfish because the people who travel in them are self centered.

5. How is the country's sale of gain contrasted with that of the city?

Money is the measuring rod of growth for the village people. They estimate their economic growth by means of the small amount of money at hand. He feels a 'lift of spirit' with money in his reach. The city dwellers are hurrying to make money while the village people are not able to acquire money to taste the luxuries of city life.

6. Who are the 'beneficent beasts of prey' and the 'greedy good doers'?

The business class and the political parties and leaders are the greedy good-doers mentioned here. These good doers intend to make money out of the poor people by appearing beneficent to them. Similar to 'greedy good-doers,' 'the beneficent beasts of prey' is also an indication to the greedy people who make money in the name of social and political and charitable works. Both the expressions are oxymoronic and alliterative.

### III. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words each

1. Comment on Frost's skilful use of figures of speech in the poem

A number of figures of speech have been used to emphasize on the poem's theme.

Transferred Epithet:

It is a figure of speech in which the modifier is shifted from the animate to the inanimate

There are two examples of transferred epithet in "A Roadside Stand."

- a. 'Polished traffic' referring to the city dwellers who pass by the countryside and sometimes they take out a moment to scrutinize the surroundings around them.
- b. 'Selfish cars' is yet another use of a transferred epithet. This refers to the car owners who do stop at the roadside stand but to ask about the police or the gas stations.

Personification:

"The sadness that lurks behind the open window there..." here sadness is an example of personification. Sadness dwells in the windows of the farmers because they wait for cars to stop and make a purchase.

Alliteration and Oxymoron: Alliteration is the repetition of consonants in a sequence of words. 'Greedy good doers' and 'beneficent beasts of prey' are examples of alliteration as the consonant g and b are repeated. Oxymoron is the juxtaposing of terms which are contraries or opposing ideas. Here 'greedy and good', 'beneficent and beast' are contrary ideas.

2. What is the persona of the farmer that is revealed in the dramatic monologue?

The villagers are hurt and angry- they feel the pain of rejection and the meanness of the city-dwellers. They are heartless in their indifference. While their complaint is only against the scenery, the complaint that the rural people have is that their needs have been ignored. All they desired was to share a bit in the abundance of city wealth, to experience some of the luxuries that they had seen in films, in the Hollywood movies. Someone had suggested to them that it was the political party in power that had been preventing them from getting rich.

3. Do you think euthanasia would be a better title for this poem? Justify

Euthanasia or mercy-killing, is sometime administered to people who are terminally ill and for whom there is no hope. Frost says that he admits that he thinks death is the only solution to put them out of their deep grief and pain. Some critics are of the view that Frost is talking about euthanasia symbolically. In that, eventually, as the city grows, it will completely obliterate the rural areas and its people, or in other words, the city will bring about the death of the villages. Cities will prevail, villages will disappear. Cities and city-dwellers will live, while villages and village-dwellers will die.

#### 4. How does the farmer access city life?

Frost goes on to say that even though these people have benefactors (good-doers), who plan to relocate them in villages where they can have easy access to the cinema and the store, they are actually selfish ('greedy good-doers' and 'beasts of prey') and only help these "pitiful kin" to indirectly advantage themselves. The altruists wish to make these villagers completely dependent on them for all their benefits and comforts, thus robbing them of the ability to think for themselves and be independent. 'The ancient way' could mean the old way when people worked during the day and slept at night. This is being reversed by the new 'greedy good doers' who teach these people to not use their brain. They are unable to sleep at night because they haven't worked during day time or because they are troubled by their new lifestyle.

#### **Answer the following questions in not more than 300 words each**

##### 1. Analyse the poem as a critique of modernization.

The poem begins with a description of the roadside stand, and the intention behind it, which is for the farmer to earn some money from people passing in their cars. However, no cars stop and the people who do notice the roadside stand are critical of how it spoils the view because it is ugly, or that it is badly painted and the signs for North and South are wrongly pointed. No one notices the berries and the squash that are for sale. The farmer tells the travelers to keep their money if that's the way that they feel and points out that the view is not as hurt as he is by them ignoring him. All he wants to do is to be able to enjoy some of the things that they take for granted. Frost expands his theme by saying that 'good-doers' who want to re-locate the country people into the cities so that they can access stores and cinemas are actually doing harm because they are forcing these people to become reliant and unable to think for themselves. The poem continues with the poet's personal feelings of his despair at the dashed hopes of the farmer. He continues with the thought that the country people have made no progress and it might be better to put them out of their misery, but then good sense prevails and he puts himself in their position. The poem is a critique of modernization because of the meaninglessness and lack of emotion in the rich people. They city dwellers who are supposed to be the products of modernization only show lack of concern for the products of farmers and even find fault with them. In their mad pursuit of making profit they cease to show kindness or compassion towards poor. Indeed the poor villagers are victimized by property speculators, capitalists and politicians who conspire to rob them of their native land and lure them into mesmerizing world of the cities where they cease to think and act for themselves. But the villagers do not feel oneness with city life even after they settle there. Instead they feel the hollowness of city life and face the reversal of time and work ethics. The decline of the poor, the innocent and agrarian way of life is contrasted with the unfeeling, hollow

attitude of the modern. The poet tries to convey the idea that modernization diminished not only the past but the innocence of villagers.

## 2. Comment on the symbolic significance of the roadside stand

The roadside stand symbolizes the farmers wish to enjoy the luxuries of city life. It is a symbol of the lives of poor and deprived countryside people who struggle to live with the thoughtless city people who don't even bother to notice the roadside stand that these people have put up to sell their goods at the edge of the highway outside. It is also a symbol of hope of the farmers since they believe that passing cars would buy the produce and earn a bit of the money that supports cities from falling into ruin. However, no cars ever stop and the ones that even glance in the direction of the stand without any feeling of compassion only comment about how the construction spoils the view of the surroundings or how badly painted the wrongly pointed North and South signs are or to notice without interest the wild berries and squash for sale in the stand or the beautiful mountain scene. The farmer tells the rich travelers to keep their money if they meant to be mean and that the hurt to the view is not as important as the sorrow he feels on being ignored. He only wishes for some money so that he may experience the luxuries portrayed by the movies and other media, which the political parties are said to be refusing him. Frost goes on to say that even though these people have benefactors, who plan to relocate them in villages where they can have easy access to the cinema and the store, they are actually selfish and only help these "pitiful kin" to indirectly advantage themselves. The altruists wish to make these villagers completely dependent on them for all their benefits and comforts, thus robbing them of the ability to think for themselves and be independent. In that sense roadside stand symbolizes wealth or money by which the poor dream of becoming rich. It is also a symbol of the diminishing past. The open windows of the farmer's house seem to wait all day just to hear the sound of a car stopping to make a purchase. However they are always disappointed, as vehicles only stop to enquire the price, to ask their way ahead, to reverse or ask for a gallon of gas. Thus Roadside Stand is symbolic of the vain hope of poor people to become rich.

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## THE HOUSE OF MY CHILDHOOD

Dilip Chitre

### Introduction

Dilip Purushottam Chitre (1938-2009) was born in Baroda, brought up and educated in Mumbai. His parents were editors and agnostics. He started writing at the age of fourteen. He was one of the foremost Indian writers and critics to emerge in the post-independence India. Apart from being a very important bilingual writer, writing in Marathi and English, he was also a painter, translator, fiction writer and film maker. After spending four years in Ethiopia he went to America. His collected poems were published in the 1990s in three volumes. He has also edited *An Anthology of Marathi poetry* and has prolifically translated prose and poetry. His most famous translation is of the celebrated 17<sup>th</sup> century Marathi Bhakthi poet Tukaram. His work "Amkilance lide" was published in 1972, and it was followed by "traveling in cage" in 1980. He traveled widely in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America as well as in the interiors of India. After a long bout with cancer, Dilip Chitre died in Pune on 10 December 2009. Dilip Chitre's poetry has a distinct style and he uses beguilingly simplistic words. His writing is sparse and his imagery immense. Even the titles of his collection fill the mind with pictures.

In the poem, 'The House of My Childhood' the poet Dilip Chitre narrates how the house on the hill top where he lived during his childhood, changed after the demise of his grandmother. The house remained empty and forsaken with all the furniture removed. The only things of the part that continued to remain there were the brass statues of her deities and a grinding stone. He wonders why the bird stopped their cries. As he continued to look at the house he felt his grandmother's voice coming from the branch of a tree. Although the house was now deserted, the poet could not resist the urge to go around it and explore all the rooms.

This poem describes the emotion and feeling towards the house of the poet where he used to live in his childhood. The poem tells its reader that no matter how old you become you always remember the things of your childhood.

### Exercises

#### I. Answer the following questions in a word or a phrase:

1. What is the figure of speech in the expression 'colourless cracks'?

The figure of speech in the expression 'colourless cracks' is alliteration.

2. Identify the figure of speech in the expression 'elderly infant'?

The figure of speech in the expression 'elderly infant' is oxymoron.

3. Identify the images in the poem that suggested desolation.

The images in the poem that suggest desolation are 'grey hills', 'colourless cracks', 'bare branch', 'empty house'.

#### II. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each:

1. What are the exceptions the furniture that the speaker talks about?

The exceptions of furniture that the speaker talks about are grandmother's grindstone and the brass figurines of her gods.

2. *'Words distribute their silence*

*Among intricately clustered glyphs'*- Explain

The quoted line says about the emptiness and bare atmosphere. It means that words are sharing their silence to the detailed group of a pictograph or sculptured symbol, because there is no one to talk, hear or share their emotions.

3. What is the significance of the colour grey in the expression 'grey hills'?

The color grey in the expression 'grey hills' signifies dull, emptiness and desolation.

4. Why do you think are the cracks 'colourless'?

The poet sees the cracks 'colorless' because he sees no one in the house and every where is empty, so the poet brought the image of colorless cracks.

5. Why does the poet invoke the seasons of spring and summer?

The poet invokes the seasons of spring and summer because they were gone leaving the leaving an elderly infant to explore the rooms of age.

6. Discuss the significance of the word 'toddle' in the poem.

Toddle means move with short unsteady steps like a young child. The significance of the word 'toddle' in the poem, it shows the innocence search for the lost childhood memories of the poet, which he lost many years ago.

**III. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words or each:**

1. Autobiographical elements in the poem.

The poem "The House Of My Childhood" is an autobiographical poem, which is nostalgic in nature. The poem is set in the background of his ancestral home, where the speaker spent his childhood days and he is trying to recollect the past memories imprinted on his mind. He describes about his feelings toward the house as well as affection towards his grandmother. The deep attachment towards the perishing belongings is also shows the poet's feeling towards his childhood house. The house of the childhood is left indelible beautiful and vivid memories in the mind of the poet, but after seasons passed the changes that had made his memories a 'colorless crack'. Now he is standing in front of the empty house, where neither a furniture to receive him nor birds to call him only things remain is grandmother's grindstone and her brass gods. He moves like a child, who toddled many years ago, but there is nothing only the 'Words distribute their silence among intricately clustered glyphs'.

2. How do the images of 'grindstone' and 'brass figurines' conjure up the world of the grandmother?

The images of 'grindstone' and 'brass figurines' implore the rural house-hold activities of

the grandmother in her days. The two images show that the grandmother is a traditional lady, who worked hard and loved to make various dishes for her children and grand children. That's why the grinding stone is common image in the house. The brass figurines show that the grandmother is also a religious lady, who worshiped regularly to please her deities. And the brass metal gives the idea that she is very proud to have her deities in brass because she doesn't want to disfigure it. Things changed after her death, the new generation doesn't bother about the the two things. The stone and brass, which will not decay, are the only things that remain there.

3. How does the poet look at the passage of time?

The poet looks at the passage of time as the one who took away all his childhood memories. He came to the house on the hill top, where he lived and enjoyed during his childhood days. Time had changed a lot to his childhood house after the demise of his grandmother. The house remained empty and deserted without any furniture. The only things of the past that continue to remain there were the brass figurines and a grinding stone. As he continued to look at the house he felt his grandmother's voice coming from the bare branch of a tree. Although the house was now deserted, the poet could not resist the urge to go around it so he 'toddled' around the house. And he complains that the summer and spring went by leaving the elderly infant to explore the rooms of age.

**IV. Answer the following questions in not more than 300 words each:**

1. Discuss the theme of the poem.

In the poem 'The House of My Childhood' the poet Dilip Chitre narrates how his childhood house have changed after the demise of his grandmother. The house remained empty without furniture. The only things of the part that continued to remain there was the brass statues of deities and a grinding stone. As he continued to look at the house the felt his grandmother's voice coming from the branch of a tree. Although the house was now deserted, the poet could not resist the urge to go around it and explore all the rooms.

**Theme**

Nostalgic- From the beginning to the end the poet clearly brought the theme of nostalgia. He misses the entire happiness of his childhood. He 'toddles' around the house and remembers the same walk, when played with his fellow- beings. Now the house is empty without any furniture. The shivering voice of his grandmother came from a bare branch, where no birds to sing.

Emptiness – The entire house is empty and silent. No living things are present and the house is about to decay. The poet stands alone in front of the grey, colorless house. He toddled around the house but only saw his grandmother's grindstone and brass figurines.

Old versus modern life – the poem brought the theme of rural house-hold activities of the olden days. The grindstone shows that they worked hard and loved to make various dishes and snacks for their children and grand children. That's why the grinding stone is common image in the house.

But the modern life style had outdated the grindstone so it left there in the deserted house.

Spiritual or religious - The brass figurines shows that they worshiped regularly to please their deities. So the deities were kept in their house very preciously. The brass metal gives the idea that they don't want to disfigure it. They are indispensable to spirituality but modern generation is less spiritual. That is why nobody took the brass figurines to their new venue.

The passage of time - The poet looks at time as the one who took away all his childhood memories. Even time had taken away the summer and spring with him leaving the elderly infant to toddle around the house to find the lost ages.

2. What picture of the grandmother do you get from the poem?

In the poem 'The House of My Childhood' the poet Dilip Chitre narrates how his childhood house has changed after the demise of his grandmother. The house remained empty without furniture. The only things of the part that continued to remain there was the brass statues of deities and a grinding stone of his grandmother. As he continued to look at the house he felt his grandmother's voice coming from the branch of a tree. Although the house was now deserted, the poet could not resist the urge to go around it and explore all the rooms.

The picture of the grandmother we get from the poem is that she is a very traditional and religious lady. And one who loved her grand children very much. The poet is trying to recollect the past memories and in that the most unforgettable one is his grandmother. This shows his affection and deep attachment towards his grandmother. Still the poet remembers the voice of his grandmother. 'My grandmother's voice shivered on a bare branch' it caused some inner feelings in the mind of the poet. The grandmother worked hard and loved to make various dishes for her children and grand children. That's why the grinding stone is common image in the house. The brass figurines show that she worshiped regularly to please her deities for the well being for all. The brass metal gives the idea that she is very proud to have her deities in brass because she don't want to disfigure it. But things changed after her death, the new generation neglected the two things. Because they think that it is outdated one to use. The poem describes the emotion and feelings that was going through when the poet visits his childhood house.

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## Old Folks Laugh

Maya Angelou

### Introduction

Maya Angelou was born on April 4, 1928 as Marguerite Ann Johnson in St. Louis, Missouri, America. She has a career that spans a wide range of professions as an author, poet, historian, civil rights activist, producer, director, singer and dancer. She has written seven autobiographies and several volumes of poetry. She was a spokesperson for the blacks and the women. Two for her most loved poems are Phenomenal women and Still I rise, these poems depict an image of a universal women, who is a paragon of strength and pride. Angelou was strongly attracted to the notion of rising and hence the word “rise” is repeated ten times in the latter poem. She was the first black woman poet to read her poem (on the pulse of morning) at the inauguration of president Bill Clinton in 1993, which intensified her popularity. Angelou's most famous autobiography, 'I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings' (1969) describes a shattering movement in her life. As a civil rights activist Angelou worked with Martin Luther king and Malcolm X who inspired her greatly. Maya Angelou was nominated for the national booker award in 1970 , and for the Pulitzer price in 1971. she has also received innumerable awards and honor and over thirty honorary degrees. She firmly believed that the 'honorary duty of a human being is love'.

The poem describes about old people, who no longer practice simpering and feel free to laugh as they wish. They don't bother the people around them, their laugh is an act of liberation. Their only weakness are slow movements and inability to hold their head steadily. They teach how to laugh free and welcome death which will release them from all impediments. And finally their experience of the world has made peace with all that has occurred in their lives.

The poem is written in free verse. There is no fixed rhyme structure. There is considerable variation in the line length. Large part is written in short lines using run on lines (enjambment).

### Exercises

#### I. Answer the following questions:

1. What is the shake of the bellies of the old folks compared to?

The shake of the bellies of the old folks is compared to the sound of tambourines.

2. Name the most popular autobiography of Maya Angelou.

I know why the caged bird sings (1969) is the most popular autobiography of Maya Angelou.

3. Complete the line:

When old folks laugh, they consider the promise of dear painless death, and generously forgive life for happening to them.

4. The laps of the old folks are filled with memories

5. What do you mean by "hollers?"

Hollers means loud shouts made without any inhibitions.

**II. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each:**

1. What does the poet mean when she uses the word "simpering?"

Simpering means a silly smile that contains no emotion

2. Why are the old folks able to forgive life?

Old folks are able to forgive life because their experience of the world makes the difficult thing bearable for them.

3. What is "the best and worst of remembering?"

The best and worst of remembering is looking back at one's life.

4. Why does the poet use run-on lines for the poem?

The poet uses run-on lines for the poem because the poem is all about the old folks laugh, their laughing seems to be spontaneous, uncontrollable and free that is it has the quality of run-on.

5. Explain briefly the comparison made about the bellies.

When the old folks laugh their entire body shakes, bellies go up and down or from side to side like tambourines jiggle. Tambourine is a musical instrument, which is played by shaking or hitting on it, so the poet compared the old folks' bellies with tambourine.

**III. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words or each:**

1. What images of aging do you see in the poem?

In the poem there are many images of aging seen, first of all when the old people laugh their bellies jiggle like tambourines and don't care for manners so they laugh loudly because they are not worried about the opinions of people. Another thing is that when they laugh there is saliva glistening on the corners of the mouth and their head wobble and necks brittle which is a clear indication of aging. Being experienced ways of the world they have learned to laugh at the good as well as the bad experience or memories. They laugh loud because they know that their suffering is soon coming to an end. These are the physical and mental features of the old people described in the poem.

3. Comment on the subject of death discussed in the concluding lines of the poem.

The final stanza offers an explanation to – why old people laugh. The poem suggests that they laugh because laughing makes the difficult things in life bearable, such as the idea of death.

Man's life is a fight to escape from the catch of death. In order to survive, life itself becomes a struggle. And man neither gets to enjoy all his life, nor accept the pain of the inevitable death. However according to poet laughter is what enables the old folks to accept death which the poetess refers to as 'dear painless death.' They laugh because their experience of the world made them to forgive life for the hardship it has caused.

3. Why does the poet calls death “dear and painless?”

The old people have thought over the certainty of the death. Death is considered as the enemy of man. Old age is often a difficult time to live. The poet has already told the physical condition of them, which suggests the nearness of old people's death. Death is important to them, with it comes their relief from frailty. 'Dear' also shows us that they have accepted their fate and are thus at peace. And they want dear death to take them to a painless world. They have forgiven everything and everyone that has never ever brought them is grief or hardship. 'Generously' suggests that their forgiveness was undeserved and that they the life was for the most part, merely an inconvenience to them.

4. Discuss the laughter as a metaphor for freedom.

Maya Angelou has used laughter as a metaphor for freedom in her poem 'old folks laugh'. She says that when old people laugh they laugh spontaneously, uncontrolled and freely, because they experience freedom and laugh loudly as they want. But when young people laugh they have to care about the facial appearance and curves and make-ups. Sometime they simper as though they laugh. But the old people don't bother about public. They laugh as they wish and show us an act of liberation. They laugh the way they want and not the way others want. This is what we say freedom to express our will wherever or whenever we want, so Maya Angelou shows even the old peoples laughter is the metaphor for freedom.

#### **IV. Answer the following questions in not more than 300 words each:**

1. 'Old folks laugh' is a celebration of old age. Consider how the poet uses the imagery and diction to convey this.

Surely, the poem old folks laugh is a celebration of old age. The poet has used images and diction to convey that celebration mood. The poem starts by saying that younger generation are spending their content of acting smile by holding their lips carefully this and that way. They are struggling to make their laughter to fit the needs of others. Just to ensure that they are doing the right thing in the right way. Actually they want to laugh loud but they think what others will think. And they are worried to celebrate the fun.

Now we can go through the same situation among old folks, here the mood is very different. The old folks no longer practice simpering and feel free to laugh as they wish. They don't

bother about the people around them. They laugh sincerely and loud. Even when they laugh their entire body shakes, bellies goes up and down or from side to side like 'tambourines' jiggles. It is an act of liberation. When they laugh it is spontaneous, uncontrolled and freely. They laugh the way they want and not the way others want.

The imagery in the line 'The hollers rise up and spill over any way they want' and 'When old folks laugh, they free the world' really it is the celebration of the old age. Here their laugh is compared to a liquid being poured into a container and then spilling over the edges of the container and even their laugh will free the world that means it will even affect those who are around him. Their only weaknesses are slow movements and inability to hold their head steadily. But they teach us how to laugh free. Then in their laugh they consider the promise of dear painless death and welcomes death which will release them from all impediments. Finally their experience of the world has made peace with all that has occurred in their lives. The dimension of laugh is entirely different from younger folks. Maya Angelou 'Old folks laugh' is really a celebration of old age.

2. Would you agree that laughter is a dynamic mechanism or a survival apparatus adopted by the old folks?

Definitely when old folks laugh they adopt a survival apparatus or a dynamic mechanism. Young folks can enjoy the way they like because they are physically healthy to beat anything. But in old age all this is not possible because their body will not surrender what the mind wishes. Slow or limited movements, inability to hold their head steadily, lose of eyesight, etc. are some of the physical problems they face. So their laughter is a dynamic mechanism or a survival apparatus to keep them go through the journey of life.

Maya Angelou says that when old people laugh they laugh spontaneously, uncontrolled and freely, because they experience freedom and laugh loudly as they want. But when young people laugh they have to care about the facial appearance and curves and make-ups. Sometimes they simper as though they laugh. But the old people don't bother about public. They laugh as they wish and show us an act of liberation. The way they want and not the way others want. This is what we say freedom to express our will wherever or whenever we want. Death is 'dear' to them, it shows us that they have accepted their fate and are thus at peace. And they want dear death to take them to a painless world. They have forgiven everything and everyone that has never ever brought them is grief or hardship. So their laughter is honest and sincere and it is a survival apparatus to them to reach their final destination. The poem has triumphed over the rigidities of life. Their physical movements are slow and old age problems are unending. But their laughter has a run-on quality to survive from inabilities.

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## ONCE UPON A TIME

Gabriel Okara

Okara's poetry is based on a series of contrasts in which symbols are neatly balanced against each other. The need to reconcile the experiences preoccupies his verse, and a typical poem has a circular movement from everyday reality to a moment of joy and back to reality again. 'Once upon a time' comments on the hypocrisy of human nature and deceptiveness of expression. The poet makes us realize the significance of innocence and truthful childhood expressions. Okara might certainly have the influence of the Western culture upon the traditional African society at the back of his mind while composing the poem.

'Once upon a time' is addressed to a son by a father. The father in the poem talks about the changing behaviour of the new generation. He recalls his childhood days, compares it with the new and shockingly realizes how the people have lost genuineness and truthfulness in their behaviour. The father says that their generation was different, they used to laugh with his heart and with his eyes. Now they just grin and their eyes remain emotionless. They have become very mechanical. People have learnt to wear very many faces like dresses. They change faces taking one off and exchanging it for something more suitable like home face, office face and street face. They are a series of masks and are not sincere at all. He says to his son that people used to shake their hand with their hearts but it does not happen now. Now people shake hands with cruel intensions. While shaking hands they use the free hands to search the empty pockets.

This changed modern world has taught him to behave like them. He too learnt to roam about with the matching smile. He learnt to say "Good bye" which means "good-riddance" He has also learnt to say "glad to meet you without being glad". He does all these things with regrets. He wants to relearn what he used to do in his past. He asks his son to teach the sweet innocent smile of a child. He wants to laugh with his heart like when he was a child. He wishes that he could once again be as natural, honest, and innocent as when he was a child.

### Answer the following questions:

1. What effect does the poet create by using the phrase 'once upon a time'?

Ans: By using the phrase 'Once upon a time' the poet indicates that he is talking about something that happened a long time ago, something far-fetched. The phrase 'Once upon a time' also makes the beginning of the poem sound like the poet is telling his son a story.

2. What does the expression 'feel at home' mean? Does the poet 'feel at home' in the situation he describes in this stanza?

Ans: The expression 'feel at home' means to feel comfortable. No, the poet is not comfortable with his situation. He learns that he would not be a very welcome guest if he becomes a frequent visitor, even though he is told to 'feel at home' and to 'come again'.

3. The father and son in the poem represent two different periods of time. Elaborate.

Ans: The father, being an adult, represents the modern period in which people are false and insincere and artificial. The son, a child, represents the good old days when people were more natural, innocent, honest and childlike.

4. What does the father wish for in stanza 6?

Ans: The father wishes he could once again be what he used to be. He wishes to be his true self again.

5. What has the poet forgotten and what is his desire?

Ans: The poet has forgotten his true, natural self. He wants to relearn what he used to do in his past

Paragraph Questions:

1. Comment on the theme of the poem.

Ans: The theme of the poem is the quest of the modern man to seek one's true identity and the earnest desire to express his or her feelings genuinely. Okara vehemently attacks the hypocritical society that masquerades as a civilized society and satirizes the salutations viz. "Feel at home", "Goodbye", "Glad to meet you" by commenting them to be phoney. Once upon a time, the people were sincere and caring in their dealings. But, in the present world, the people have lost the innocence and openness that still gleams on his young son. He wants to regain that innocence. The child in the poem is a symbol of innocence, purity, enthusiasm, happiness, and honesty that is lacking in society. The poem does carry an undertone of cultural conflict when it juxtaposes the traditional African culture with the "civilized" western culture.

2. Discuss on the ending of the poem.

Ans: The ending of the poem proclaims the superiority of the innocence over experience. The persona wants to "unlearn all these muting things" that he has gained in his journey of life. He wants to get rid of his false laugh which "shows only my teeth like a snake's bare fangs" by relearning to "laugh and smile" like the child. This want to return to the beginning of the poem shows how the poet is desperate to not let him end this way yet it is at the end of the poem that he wants to return to the start. This circular structure imitates how people spend all their innocence wanting to be experienced and spend all the experience trying to be innocent.

3. "Once Upon A Time" displays the pain of growing up, and the loss of innocence.  
Comment

Ans: The first five stanzas revolve around innocence and discuss how people change over time. For example the phrase "their left hands search my empty pockets," give an essence of being paranoid as the author cannot trust the people who surround him. "Laugh with their teeth", ice block cold eyes, shake hands without hearts and so on depicts the imposturous nature of the present day society. No man is sincere. The persona mourns over the loss of his innocence, saying that he wants to forget all the ways which he has learnt to silence his emotions. The poet turns to his son to regain the child-like innocence.

Essay:

1. Discuss how Experience has replaced Innocence in the poem?

Ans: By juxtaposing the past and present, through his poem "Once upon a time" Gabriel Okara exposes the feigned sincerity that is exhibited by the modern day people. The writer gets nostalgic about a time when people were sincere and genuine towards one another. But in the present time, the people have changed too much. The poem begins on a line of "Once upon a time, son"

thus lending a fairy tale style to the poem. It implies that what is about to be told to his son is so far-fetched that one may not believe it.

Moreover, the poet makes a comparative study on “hearts” and “faces”. Innocence was evident when “they used to shake hands with their hearts” but nowadays, from the school of experience, one has learned to “laugh with their teeth and shake hands without hearts”. While shaking hands, they use the free hand to search the empty pockets for monetary benefits. Their eyes have become “ice-block-cold” and they “search beyond my shadow”. Meanwhile, the persona has learned to wear many faces like dresses, and uses them adroitly as per the occasion demands. Such a manipulative world is the one in which the persona is living in. Experience has trained one to be dishonest to one’s self. He/She has now learned to give an insincere “Goodbye” or “It’s been nice to meet you” without offending the listener.

Fed up with this spurious world, the poet mourns over the loss of the innocence. He intends to erase all the ways by which he was able to conceal his emotions. “Unlearn all these muting things”, his wish to get rid of his ‘false laugh’ and ‘many faces’ because he believes that letting go of these he will regain his innocence. Throughout the whole poem, the persona is teaching the son how to learn from mistakes. The end line “Once upon a time when I was like you” tangentially states that the world of experience will soon overpower the realm of innocence.

2. “Once Upon a Time” as a commentary on the hypocrisies of the society.

Ans: “Once Upon a Time” comments on the hypocritical society that we live in today . Logical reasoning take precedence over emotions and relationships are formed with prudent aims in mind instead of affection and geniality. It is a false façade that everyone hides behind and as a reason we are alone and isolated despite being surrounded by people on all sides. There is a price on relationships and an end date; as soon as the purpose behind it is over. There is neither place nor desire for empathy in the world of today.

In Okara’s poem, the persona is having a conversation with his/her child, recollecting the times when people used to be open and expressive with their emotions and with laughter that reached their eyes. But now, they are aloof and distant with fake smiles. Overt displays of emotion are considered to be suspicious and looked down upon. People form friendships and relationships for personal benefits only, leading to a cold world without any depth of feeling.

Okara describes how the “ice block cold eyes” of people now lack emotion, emphasising the harsh intrusiveness of such eyes scrutinizing the persona, looking for ways to exploit their ‘friendship.’ He has learned to pretend to feel whatever is expected of him at different events. He changes the “faces” just like the costume he wears according to the occasion, each with their expected plethora of facial expressions and tones .But there is no real meaning behind it. He detests looking at himself in the mirror, for all he sees when he smiles is his teeth bared like a snake’s bare fangs - revolting and dripping with poison.

In the last stanza, the father pleads with the child to teach how to express true emotions and return back to a time when he was young and carefree, and not aware of what apathy was required from him for him to survive.

3. Does the poem end on a positive note or depressing note? Why do you think so? Substantiate your answer.

Ans: Subjective answer

4. Does the poem inspire you or leave you cold? Justify your answer.

Ans: Subjective answer.

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## THE TIMES THEY are A-CHANGING

Bob Dylan

### Introduction

Bob Dylan, the first American song lyricist to win the Nobel prize in 2016, was born as Robert Allen Zimmerman in a Jewish family on May 24th, 1941 in Minnesota. He is popular as a rock singer, song writer, musician author and painter. He has been an influential figure in American popular music and culture for more than five decades.

He started his career by performing folk and country songs, taking the name "Bob Dylan". Together Through Life (2009), 'Tempest' (2012), 'Shadows in the Night' (2015), 'Fallen Angels' are some of his famous studio albums. He has also received Grammy, Academy and Golden Globe awards.

Bob Dylan's is the new voice in contemporary literature, where redefining boundaries of sub genres in literature are blurred away. Song, lyrics and poetry merge together in Bob Dylan's works.

The poem came out in 1963 during the hippie movement/ civil rights movement in America. "The Times They are A-Changing" is known to be a rallying call for the early 1960's. The poem demands the common people to get united and question the flaws of government. Bob Dylan also gives an optimistic assurance to those people who stood up through the line "For the times they are A-Changing."

### Exercises

#### I. Choose the right answer from the following:

1. To whom does the poet say "Don't stand in the doorway/Don't block up the hall

- a. Writers and Critics      b. Senators and Congress men
- c. Mothers and Fathers      d. None of these

A: b

2. What is the figure of speech found in the line "Or you'll sink like a stone?"

A: Simile.

3. Which is the refrain that recurs in the poem?

A: "For the times they are A- changing."

4. In which year was Bob Dylan awarded the Nobel prize for literature?

- a. 2010   b. 2015   c. 2016   d. 2012

A: c

#### II. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two.

1. What does the expression "the waters around you have grown" mean?

The poet calls the people's attention to the injustices around them and asks if they do not see

what is happening.

2. Explain "you better start swimmin' or you'll sink like a stone."

The poet asks the people to react to the injustices around them, or else one will perish.

3. What does the poet ask the writers and critics?

To keep their eyes wide open to the changes around, so that they could write about it. If they miss there won't be a second chance.

4. What is the battle implied in "There's a battle outside and it is ragin'?"

Youngsters have already started their protest and they are strongly revolting against corruption.

5. What does the line "the first one now will later be last" imply.

Those who are in power now will be pushed down as powerless because no one can stay long on a throne of deceit.

6. Explain "Your old road is rapidly agin'"

The olden days of the previous generation are gone and the present times are new and should be approached with newer thoughts.

7. What is the context of the song "The Times They are A- Changing"?

During the American civil rights movement in the 1960s, Bob Dylan wrote the song as an anthem of change for the time.

8. Why does Bob Dylan say that the present now will later be past?

Change is inevitable and is the only constant. Change happens during every time so this present can change any moment.

### **III. Answer the following questions in a paragraph of about 100 words each:**

1. Why are the people asked to gather round?

The poet is calling the people to unite to face the flaws of the government. He asks them to admit that if they do not react against it they will perish. The government is for the people, so they should observe its working and raise voice against injustices like poverty and racism and think about an upcoming change

2. Comment on Bob Dylan's use of language.

Bob Dylan's use of language is often challenging and complex. The poem has short concise verses. He comments on current life and times with wit, insight and astonishing imagery. He was also influenced by Beat generation poets, whose style were to make use of free-style, non-rhyming and highly vivid word play. He wrote with freedom, without the traditional constraints.

3. Generational conflict in "The times they are A-changing".

In the fourth stanza of his poem Bob Dylan's asks "Mothers and Fathers- Throughout the land" to not criticize what they do not understand. The generation of their sons and daughters are beyond their command now. Youngsters can make a change in the society. So when they do gather for a change, the older generation shouldn't stop them. Bob Dylan doesn't force everybody to stand up against the injustices in society. If anybody can't accept or understand let them move away from the way of the ongoers of protest.

**IV. Answer the following questions in not more than 300 words each:**

1. Consider Bob Dylan's "The Times -They are A –Changing” as a song of protest.

The poem was performed in 1963 during political and military upheaval. The song is a call for youngsters to come together and bring a needed change. It is often viewed as a reflection of the generation gap and of the political divide marking American culture in the 1960's.

Music can convey meaning and values. Bob Dylan influenced from Woody Guthrie the legendary folk singer of the 1930s and the beat generation promoted a hippie culture in his songs modelled on traditional folk songs. His album *The Times They are A-Changing*, firmly established him as the new voice of the 60's protest movement

Like traditional folk ballads Bob Dylan starts his song telling people to gather around. There has also been critical discussion, if the song is really a protest song. It is just a wakeup call to make people realize that the world has moved on. It is about perception. The poet just asks people to accept the truth rather overthrowing the power overnight. There is the conflict with power, war, poverty and racism. Dylan asks all people to come around and accept certain truths happening around them. He also asks to react against it or like a sinking stone one is pushed down. In the second stanza Dylan is calling writers and journalists, and asking them to keep an attentive eyes.

In the third stanza, Dylan addresses the senators and those involved in government affairs. Bob Dylan is telling them to hear the call from those who want change and do not block. Next he addresses mothers and fathers and tells them not to criticize what they do not know. Bob Dylan says there is need for fighting for freedom. He also reminds that sons and daughters and beyond parents' age. Those who are standing up for their freedom and for civil rights are now the minority, but soon they will be the ones ruling and making change. The song is timeless especially because of the meaning portrayed. Good intention breeds good results.

2. How does Bob Dylan present the generational war that happened in the America of the 1960s in the context of counter culture?

After the end of World War II, there were a series of change in culture in America. There

was the Vietnam War and civil rights to be won. It was a decade of turmoil that saw one President (John. F. Kennedy) shot. So many historic moments occurred within a close proximity of time. All these historical happenings lead to a counterculture in America. As change progressed throughout the 1960s so did the music scene. Bob Dylan began music directly targeting the changes taking place around them. The youth of the country were lashing out against values and goals of their parents and cultivated a hippie culture. It essentially started off as a rebellion at home and against their parents. Bob Dylan's lines could best be placed in this context

“And don't criticize

What you can't understand

Your sons and your daughters

Are beyond your command”

America was trying to get up from the “crisis” of post World War II and Great Depression of the 1930s. There was a decay of social order in 1960s. The decade was also labeled the ‘swinging sixties’ because of the fall or relaxation of social taboos especially relating to racism and sexism that occurred during this time. There was an extreme deviation from the norm. Bob Dylan wrote this song in 1964 at a time when all of these upheavals were going on and it stirred the then society to bring a “change”. The song instantly clicked with the youth of America. Youth were no longer to be held in the constraints of family do's and don'ts. There was a need of social reform against the injustices in society. Bob Dylan not only addresses the youth but also all writers, critics, senators and congressmen.

In a wealthy nation like America “The order is/ Rapidly fadin” Bob Dylan is optimistic about the future.

“The slow one now

Will later be fast”

Bob Dylan challenged the accepted beliefs of American Society, focusing on the feelings of individuals rather than entire social groups and many young people looked up to him for their ideas concerning social ideas. His lyrics came out with a deep message for the audience to think about. He encouraged his audience to move in a direction for change.

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**SECTION TWO: SHORT STORIES**
**APPOINTMENT IN SAMARRA**
**W. Somerset Maugham**
**Appointment in Samarra.**
**Somerset Maugham.**

In the short story *the Appointment in Samarra* a man fears that Death has come for him. He confronts Death at the market place in Bagdad. He is terrified and runs for his life to Samarra with an impression that he could change his fate in the “city of happiness and delight”.

Death is the main character, as well as the narrator of this story, yet the author provides us with no real description of her other than calling her a woman. Death narrates this tale in a way that leads us to believe that she is almost an omniscient being in the way that she is able to describe the dialogue between the servant and his master, but an omniscient narrator is incapable of being surprised himself or herself and we find this not to be the case in this story. The author’s intention is to make Death appear mysterious, and familiar to the reader at the same time. Death is provided with human qualities, like the ability to be surprised. We feel like a person could even trick Death. Death was very easily recognizable. The servant immediately knew that the woman “jostled” was Death. The Merchant went to the market place and questions Death. This gesture shows that not only did the merchant care for the life of his servant, but it also shows that he had a certain curiosity about Death and her intentions. The act of confronting Death also shows that the merchant did not fear Death since he believed that Death posed no threat to him because she came explicitly for his servant.

Death has been symbolized in several ways throughout years – sometimes as a suitor, sometimes as an angel. There is never a true form to its unknown façade and no description or illustration can match up to the true fear and terror of the real thing. The only certain thing in life is that it will end one day. Death is inevitable, and no matter how rich you are, how strong you are, whether you are good or evil, you would die. The servant in the story flees to Samarra, fails to realize that Death is unavoidable. Death is as much an aspect of nature as life. It comes as naturally as night comes to day.

**Answer the following Questions**

4. First novel of Somerset Maugham.

Liza of Lambeth

5. City of Samarra stands on the bank of---

River Tigris

6. Surra ManRa’a means ---

A delight for all who see.

7. Maugham included the story *Appointment in Samarra* at the end of his play--



Sheppey

8. *Appointment in Samarra* was included in the collection of --- stories by Idris Shah Sufi stories.
9. The speaker in the story *Appointment in Samarra*.  
Death
10. Death appears in the guise of a---in *Appointment in Samarra*  
Woman.

**II. Answer the questions in a paragraph not more 100 words.****1. Comment on the language of this tale.**

Somerset Maugham is known for his clear unadorned style and a shrewd understanding of human nature. In “Appointment in Samarra”, Maugham has used a language that is very comprehensible, yet has an eerie element in the description of the events. The narrator is the death itself and the servant and the master uses a language that aggrandizes the fear of death. Sentences run into each other, piling up like blocks that are about to come tumbling down. Maugham chooses urgent words: trembling, jostled, threatening. When the reader as well as the servant and the master are relieved of the fact that the death will not get its catch, Maugham springs a surprise through irony. Minimal words are being used by the author to lend a creepy atmosphere to the story and it also lends mystery to the world of fate where little is known.

**2. Discuss how the story expounds fatalism.**

Ans: Fatalism is the attitude of mind which accepts that whatever has to happen are bound to happen and there is nothing one can do to change them. In "Appointment in Samarra" the servant in the story jostles with a woman in Bagdad (who is Death) and requests his master to lend him a horse so that he can escape from death by riding to Samarra. But Fate has the last laugh when the master is informed by the woman that death awaits him only when he is in Samarra, and not in Bagdad. In this story, the servant has a false belief about where death is seeking him out but the inevitable happens when he rides on to Samarra.

**3. Why do you think death is gendered in this tale?**

Ans: Death is gendered as a woman in the story because women were not portrayed in a positive light in Bagdad during those ages, just as the same way death is not looked at as something positive. In Greek mythology, the Fates are depicted as blind women. Moreover, the enigmatic nature of a woman personifies the supernatural appearance of Death. Had it been a male figure for death it would have been more intimidating- which Maugham did not intend. Therefore, gender differences changes how the reader interprets Death as an individual.

**Answer the following question in not more than 300 words each:****1. How does Maugham bring out the idea of fatalism in this tale?**

Ans: *Que Sera Sera* is a term usually associated with fatalism which means “Whatever will be, will be”. There is no denying the fact that nothing can stop the Fate from its course. The idea of fate is that events on a time line follow a predetermined sequence based on unalterable cause-and-effect relations. In W. Somerset Maugham’s rendition of “Appointment in Samarra” the overwhelming concept is the inevitable fate of death.

The story begins with Death speaking to the reader about a merchant and his servant in Bagdad. After having ordered by the merchant to buy some provisions, the servant returns “white and trembling”. The servant narrates to his master that he was jostled by a woman and then came to realise that it was Death personified, for she made a “threatening gesture”. He thinks that the only way to escape from her is to gallop away to Samarra. So, he lends a horse from his master and rides away. After this, Maugham writes of the merchant going to the marketplace to confront Death about the encounter with his servant. The act of confronting Death shows that the merchant did not fear Death since he believed that Death posed no threat to him because she was here explicitly for his servant. When the merchant asked Death why she made a threatening gesture towards the servant, she replied “That was not a threatening gesture... for I have an appointment with him tonight in Samarra”.

This is ironic because the very place where the servant was trying to cheat death was the very place where he will come to terms with her. This is the part of the story where one can really come to understand the true concept of the narrative; nobody can escape the inevitable fate.

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## A SHOCKING ACCIDENT

Graham Greene

### Introduction

Graham Greene (1904-1991) was born in England and educated at Balliol college. His first published work was **Babbling April (1925)**, a volume of poetry. His first novel **The Man within** was written in 1929

The shocking accident was originally published in magazine Punchin 1957. It then reappeared in Greenes 1967 collection *May We Borrow Your Husband and other Comedies of the Sexual Life*. The story was adapted into a short comedy film by James Scott in 1982.

### Exercises

#### I Answer the following questions

1. Jerome's father was a \_\_\_\_\_  
A: writer.
2. Jerome's friends at the public school found the death of his father \_\_\_\_\_.  
A: funny
3. Jerome is worried that Sally would \_\_\_\_\_  
A: laugh at the news of his fathers death
4. Jerome's father always carried a water filter with him because  
A: It was less expensive, he could save money, he was a careful man

#### II Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each:

1 When Jerome hears of his father's accident from his house master, how does he imagine his father has died?

Jerome imagined that his father died due to gun shot in a police encounter.

2. How did Jerome's father die?

Jerome's father died when a pig fell on him as he was walking along a street in Naples.

3. "He shook a little with emotion." What "emotion" do you think is Mr. Wordsworth shaking with?

Mr Wordsworth struggles to tell Jerome about the death of his father as it was funny. Mr Wordsworth shook with laughter.

4. Why do you think that the story has been titled as A Shocking Accident?

The story has been titled as A Shocking Accident because the accident which caused Jeromes father's death was due to a pig which fell on him. It is ironic because no one expected that a pig that fell from a third floor would kill a man.

5. What bothers Jerome about his aunt?

Jerome's aunt is a woman of "a great old age" who has "no sense of humour" and who cannot help but exaggerate and dramatize the event of her brother's death. Jerome was

worried that his aunt would narrate the story of his father's death to Sally which would provoke laughter in her.

6. Do you think Sally is an ideal companion for Jerome. Why?

Sally is Jerome's fiancée. She is an ideal companion to Jerome as she is the only one who sympathized with Jerome on his father's death when his aunt narrated the events dramatically. Her reaction made Jerome appease his fear forever

## **II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words each**

1. What are the two versions of his father's death that Jerome narrates? Why does he do so?

The first version of narration led gently up to the accident, so that by the time it was described the listener was so well prepared that the death came really as an anti climax. The first method involves describing about Naples and how a Neapolitan man feels like home there as a Turin feels in London as the river runs in a same way in both the cities. Next he would describe the things that people generally keep on the balconies with a casual reference to pigs and chickens. He would tell about the condition of pigs, without exercise getting fat day by day, with reference to the dilapidated buildings. As his father was on the way to the hydrographic museum one of those pigs fell from the balcony through the third floor upon his father breaking his neck. Jerome considered this version a masterly attempt to make an interesting subject boring. The other method was to briefly say that his father was killed by a pig.

2. Discuss the element of black humour in this story?

Black humour is a form of humour that disregards human sufferings like pain or death. The laughter arises from skepticism. "A Shocking Accident" has 'black humour' as it deals with death in a humorous way. In the story, Jerome's father gets killed in an accident, but this seems to be funny to the people. He decides to hide the truth about the real cause of the accident as he feels insulted and absurd about the way people would make of it.

3. Explain the symbolism of the pig in the story.

In the story pig symbolizes death as it caused the death of Jerome's father, it also symbolizes agony and pain as Jerome imagines a heroic death for his father but it turned out to be different and the description of his father's death made him an object of ridicule. After the disclosure Jerome was known as Pig at his school. The pig is also a symbol of laziness as it is due to its overweight that the balcony collapsed and led to the death of Jerome's father.

## **IV Answer the following questions in not more than 300 words each**

1. Describe Jerome's inner conflicts about his father's death and his attempts to overcome them?

Jerome felt that the circumstances of his father's death were comic only when he disclosed it to a friend and then he realized how it affected others. His aunt's dramatic description of events leading to the death of her brother made him miserable. So he began to rehearse the method of recounting his father's death so as to reduce the comic element to its small dimensions. The first version of narration led gently up to the accident, so that by the time it was described the listener was so well prepared that the death came really as an anti climax. The first method involves

describing about Naples and how a Neapolitan man feels like home there as a Turin feels in London as the river runs in a same way in both the cities. Next he would describe the things that people generally keep on the balconies with a casual reference to pigs and chickens. He would tell about the condition of pigs, without exercise getting fat day by day, with reference to the dilapidated buildings. As his father was on the way to the hydrographic museum one of those pigs fell from the balcony through the third floor upon his father breaking his neck. Jerome considered this version a masterly attempt to make an interesting subject boring. The other method was to briefly say that his father was killed by a pig. When he fell in love with Sally he tried several times to tell her but was uncertain whether his love for her would survive if Sally was so insensitive as to laugh when she heard the story of his father's death. Later when his aunt described the events she reacted in a different way sympathizing with Jerome. Her reaction made him appease his fear forever.

1. Explain how the story conveys the idea that life is absurd.

The theme is illustrated by the absurd death of Jerome's father, who was walking down the streets of Naples when he was killed by a pig falling from a balcony. When Jerome is given the news, he initially assumes that his father was shot in the heart. When Sally is given the news, she immediately assumes that the "street accident" involves a car crash. Although people expect him to have died in a conventional or dramatic way the way he died only provoked laughter in people. Even though his view of the circumstances of his father's death does not change, he still develops as a character because, in the end, he finds a way to come to terms with his father's death. Because his father travels around the world, Jerome imagines that he is a sort of spy, a "member of the British Secret Service", and he creates an aura of mystery around the man. In fact, when he is given the news that his father has died, Jerome simply imagines his father being shot dramatically "through the heart". As he has no apparent outer reaction to his father's death, he comes across as cold and unfeeling, much to the surprise of his teachers: As years go by, Jerome begins to realize that his idealistic portrait of his father was farfetched and that the man was simply a mediocre writer: "By the age of sixteen Jerome was well aware that the portrait looked more like the author of *Sunshine and Shade* and *Ramblers in the Balearics* than an agent of the Secret Service. Jerome's aunt is a woman of "a great old age" who has "no sense of humour" and who cannot help but exaggerate and dramatise the event of her brother's death. He indeed rehearses ways to narrate the events of his father's death as he could bear the ridicule of the people. Even when he fell in love he didn't dare to tell the events to Sally fearing her reaction but it is her sympathetic reaction "how horrible, it makes you think doesn't it? happening like that out of a clear sky" made him appease his fear. The story was written a decade after world war Europe and the rest of the world had by then witnessed a lot of death and attendant suffering. The social atmosphere then, had endangered views about life being absurd and that it was nearly impossible to seek either value or meaning in life. The absurdity of life is brought about through the 'unnatural' death of Jerome's father. Being a writer who travels a lot Jerome expected his father's death in a honourable way but even a serious matter like death creates a fit of laughter in people because nobody would expect that he would die due to a pig that fell on him. This shows that life itself is absurd and death would come to anyone in an unexpected way.

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## LAMB TO THE SLAUGHTER

Roald Dahl

### Introduction

Roald Dahl(1916-1919) was a British novelist, short story writer and poet. His first published work *A Piece of Cake*, in the Saturday evening post was an account of the incident when he was at the Royal Air force.

### Exercises

1. Why does Mrs Maloney go to the store to purchase groceries?

She needs an alibi to prove that she was not at home

- 2 .What was Mr Maloney?

Mr Maloney was a detective

- 3 .What was Mrs Maloney's intention in getting the lamb from the freezer?

She thinks that if she goes back to her business then things would turn normal

- 4.Who is Jack Noonan?

Jack Noonan is a policeman

### II. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each

1. What might be the probable reasons for Patrick to leave his wife?

The probable reasons are Patrick might have fallen in love with another woman or may be blackmailed or might be chased by enemies.

- 2 . Pick out the evidence from the story to show that Patrick is uneasy about revealing to his wife that he is leaving her?

Patrick was uneasy as he did an unusual thing. He lifted his glass and drained it in one swallow although there was still half of it. Whenever Mrs Maloney asked about the fetching the food or slippers he just told her to sit down. Before he disclosed about his intention to leave her, he kept his head down and was nervous. He knew very well that it would be a shock for her .He told her that he thought about it a good deal and has decided to tell her right away.

- 3 .“It wasn't till then that she began to get frightened "what finally frightened Mrs Maloney?

When Mrs Maloney offered to cook something for Patrick and got up to go to kitchen, he asked her to sit down. When she repeatedly insisted that she would get something for him, he asked her to sit down at least for a minute. This showed that he wanted to tell something to her .It was then that she began to get frightened.

- 4 .How did Mary react to Patrick's news?

When Mary heard the news her first instinct was not to believe any of it, to reject it all. It occurred to her that perhaps he hadn't even spoken, that she herself had imagined the whole thing. She thought that if she went about her business and acted as though she hadn't been listening then she might find none of it had ever happened.

5 .Do you think that the murder of Mr Maloney is a planned murder? Why? Why not?

No, murder of Mr Maloney cannot be considered as a planned murder. It was due to a sudden fit of the moment that she killed him. When he told her that he was going out, she might have got the hint that he was leaving her. The thought of killing her husband might not have occurred to her until she took the lamb. Mary simply walked up behind him and without any pause strikes him with the leg of the lamb.

6 .How do you know that police have not ruled Mrs Maloney as a probable suspect?

The police have not ruled Mrs Maloney out as a probable suspect because one of the policemen says to Jack Noonan that the murder weapon is right there on the premises right under their noses.

7 .“It would be a favour to me if you eat it up.” How would it be a favour to Mary?

It would be a favour because by eating the lamb they are actually destroying the evidence of the murder and Mrs Maloney would be saved.

8 .Who according to you are/is the lamb/s is the story? Who or what is being slaughtered?

In this story, the figure of the lamb takes on two roles: as both a victim and a source of violence or sacrifice. Both Mary and her husband Patrick take on the roles of figurative lambs as they sacrifice each other. However, while Patrick sacrifices Mary's role as his wife by leaving the marriage, Mary sacrifices Patrick's life, killing him with a frozen leg of lamb. By eating the lamb the policemen are slaughtering the evidence of the murder.

## **II Answer the following questions in a paragraph**

1. Do you think Mary really loved her husband? Support your answer by quoting from the text.

Mary loved her husband because she would patiently wait for his return after work glancing at the clock every now and then. She used to kiss him as he came in. she enjoyed the company of her husband after the long hours of loneliness in the house. She loved to luxuriate in the presence of him and felt his presence as a sunbather feels the sun. She loved the way he sat in the chair. The way he came in a door and his mouth, eyes and every movements and keeps calm until he finishes the drink .She is very kind and considerate and tries to satisfy his needs in all the possible way. She repeatedly insists that she would prepare food for him as she cannot bear the thought of letting

him hungry. When she returned back from the grocers and sees the dead body of her husband, she couldn't control her tears. It was not pretention .This shows that her love was genuine.

2 The author does not reveal what Patrick's reasons were, for leaving his wife. Why do you think the author does so?

The author doesn't reveal the reasons for Patrick's leaving of his wife because he allows the readers to use their imagination thereby participating in the story.

1. Explain the significance of the title "Lamb to the Slaughter"

Lamb to a slaughter is a phrase from the Bible which means in an unconcerned manner. The allusion refers to the helplessness of the innocent lambs that are being led to the slaughter. The lambs are oblivious of the imminent catastrophe that awaits them, lambs are also supposed to be helpless. In this story, the figure of the lamb takes on two roles: as both a victim and a source of violence or sacrifice. Both Mary and her husband Patrick take on the roles of figurative lambs as they sacrifice each other. However, while Patrick sacrifices Mary's role as his wife by leaving the marriage, Mary sacrifices Patrick's life, killing him with a frozen leg of lamb. The transformation of the lamb from an object of sacrifice to a tool of violence signals Mary's transformation from submissive housewife to violent killer, and resonates in the double meaning and black humor of the story's title: whereas the Maloneys are both lambs to be slaughtered figuratively or literally, the lamb, or rather the frozen leg of lamb, is also used as an instrument of slaughter. Once the policemen are called to investigate Patrick's murder, then, the lamb comes to represent both a sacrifice for the detectives (as food) and a weapon against them (as that sacrifice as food entails the destruction of evidence).

**IV Answer the following questions in an essay of about 300 words**

1. Does Mary Maloney deserve our sympathy? Why/why not?

Subjective answer

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## IT USED TO BE GREEN ONCE

Patricia Grace

### Introduction

Patricia Grace, born on August 17, 1937, whose real name is Patricia Frances Gunson, is a New Zealand writer who is a towering figure in the rise of Maori fiction. Her works depict the true Maori culture and diversity. Through her writings she showed the world what it is to mean to be a Maori.

She is born to a Maori father and a European mother and identified herself as a Maori. Her first book is *Waiariki* published in 1975. Her stories are written in English, though some Maori words are left without translation. She has named her characters in original Maori and not 'Pakeha' (European white settler) names.

Patricia Grace's story "It used to be Green Once" is taken from her collection *The Dream Sleepers and Other Stories*. Her Mum is the main character. It is an ordinary story about the everyday lives of the Maori people. The narrator tells about some memory she and her siblings had with their Mum. Colloquial language and Maori identities are preserved in the story.

### Summary

The Maori short story 'It used to be Green Once' talks about the author's childhood experience with her mother. She introduces the mother figure as a funny and interesting character whose actions used to shame the narrator and her siblings when they were children. She shamed the children by putting red darns on their clothes, by stitching togs for the children from old swimming togs. The kids never wanted to wear them because they were too big for their size. She also used to give them rotten apples and pears, after digging out the rotten bit, to school. That made the kids embarrassed. They didn't have school bags and shoes for school. The story is how their mum's car which had no brakes and a squeaky horn shamed them the most. She would drive past the neighbours honking. People would yell the items they wanted and on the way back after shopping she would throw their items of grocery (as the car had no brakes)

Then one day their dad won a lottery and everything around them changed. Mom got a new car, a shiny green Chevrolet. The children too got all they wanted. They started to feel they were no more ordinary. Mum and Dad didn't change at all. After the new car she took all her friends and relatives for shopping. Sometimes she even forgot her new car had brakes. It was always jam packed that some of them sat squashed between others and the shopping items. The boot was always open because of the things in there. It was never kept closed. Some would hold their bags and shovel handles out to the sides or to the roof. Now one looking closer at the car can find it used to green once as there are some patches of green here and there.

### Exercises

#### I. Answer the following questions

1. How many children did Mum and Dad have?  
fourteen
2. How did the fruits become "holey?"  
The rotten parts were dug out

3. Why did the children ask the driver to stop the bus when they saw Mum approaching?

Mum's car had no brakes.

4. "but then one day something happened that changed everything." What happened?

Dad won fifty thousand dollars in a lottery.

## II. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each

1. Why did Peti hate swimming at school?

Mum made togs from old swimming togs. The togs Mum made were thirty eight chest and Peti was only ten.

2. Why did Uncle Raz give Dad his car?

Uncle Raz couldn't fix the car anymore, and he had been fined.

3. Why did Mum toot the horns of the car on Wednesday mornings, when she was out on the road?

She wanted to tell all her mates and relations along the way so that if they wanted anything they'd have to run out and call it aloud to Mum.

4. Which was the only accident that Mum ever had in her car?

One day when she threw a side of mutton out to Uncle Peta, it knocked him over and broke his leg.

5. How is Mr. Hadley, the *Pakeha* teacher, presented in the story.

Mr. Hadley looks neat and the children loved to walk with him. Unlike the children Mr. Hadley got into Mum's moving car whenever she offered a lift.

6. How could Dad buy a new car?

Dad won a lottery of fifty thousand dollars.

7. List a few things that Mum did to shame her children.

Mum did red darns on their clothes, made togs for children from old togs, dug out the rotten bit from apples and pears and made them carry it to school. They were more shamed by the old car which had no brakes and top.

## III. Answer the following questions in a paragraph.

1. What picture of the mother do you get at the end of the story?

Mum was kind and helpful to all in the neighborhood though she was strict and tuff with the children. She used to yell at the children when they refused to wear the tog to school. The children never won an argument with her. We also get to know that Mum was sensitive and she loved her old car.

2. How did the winning of the lottery affect the parents and children?

Mum got a big shiny green Chevrolet and Dad got a new cowshed with everything modernized and water gushing everywhere. The children got new clothes, shoes, bags and togs. The children started taking posh lunches to school. Sandwiches cut in triangle, bottles of cordial, crisp apples and pears and yellow bananas. All kids started acting like they were somebody instead of ordinary like before. They would nag mum to take them for a picture. They got flash

bread spreads and a piano too. Mum and Dad remained the same ordinary people unless that she got a new car, some new dresses and a new pair of galoshes to put over her slippers and dad got a new milking shed and a tractor.

3. Discuss the symbolism of the car in the story.

The new car in the story is a green one. It is perceived to be a sort of upgrade, and initially makes the children feel as though, with their better car they are now better people. This as we find out is not the case and the car being a possession does not change the nature of the family. The way in which the car is covered with bits and pieces and squished with too many people inside it, can be seen as symbolic of the land which we use and develop to satisfy our own needs as a society.

4. Why did the children hate Wednesdays?

Wednesday was Mum's day for shopping. The children did not want to meet Mum in her old damaged car on their way to school or back. They tried to be sick on Wednesdays but Mum would yell and get them out of bed and pull down their pyjamas and set their bums on cold lino.

5. How does the story convey Maori consciousness?

'It Used to be Green Once' gives an insight to Maori culture. It is about a large family living in a small town in New Zealand. The story shows how important are family, relatives and friends more than any material possession. The Mother figure in the story is very helpful to all people in the community. The story tells us how relationship matter over money.

**IV. Answer the following questions in not more than 300 words each.**

1. Discuss the humour in the story.

Patricia Grace has beautifully depicted the nuances of an ordinary Maori family living in a small town in New Zealand, in her short story 'It Used to be Green Once.' She has used humour a tool to depict Maori values. The story is about simple ordinary people living together in a community. The reader identifies and could relate at once with the introduction to 'Mum', but as the story moves on one finds the characters have something special in being Maori.

The mother had to sustain a family from whatever less they had. The children who are too little to understand were shamed by certain acts of the mother like cutting up old swimming togs and making two. Dad used to get rotten pears and apples for cheap. Mum would dig out the rotten bit and give them to the children, to take for lunch, which they called "holey fruits." The children didn't mind this until one day Reweti yelled to them "who shot your pears.?" Grace portrays all these innocent bits with her boisterous way of story-telling.

There is Mum's car which is the centre of laughter in the story. It is compared to a dinghy to which people throw themselves over the sides, because it had no brakes. The horns of the car were like a flock of ducks coming for feed. Even after the family won the lottery Mum never changed. She was still the busy jolly person. On Wednesdays she would change into her purple dress made from a Japanese bedspread. She also wears her brimmed blue sunhat and slippers for shopping.

The way Grace describes the full packed green Chevrolet and the boot of the car always left hanging open because of things heavily dumped are all humorous depiction of everyday life.

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## SECTION THREE: PROSE

### BORES

#### E.V Lucas

#### Introduction

Edward Verral Lucas is a best known essayist and journalist. Although he was talented, he could not pursue university education due to financial troubles. He belonged to the Quaker family. So he was asked to write the biography of the Quaker poet, Bernard Barton. The success of this book brought him money and fame. He became famous as the writer of entertaining essays, novels and nonfiction. He wrote about incidents, people and places in a humorous way. His humour is kind and humane. He was associated with the newspaper The Globe, The literary journal the academy and the humour magazine Punch. He is recognized as the editor of Charles Lamb's works and his biographer.

#### I Answer the following questions in a word or phrase

1. Why are bores as a rule always bores?

Bores as a rule are bores always because egotism is the bores foundation stone

2. What according to E.V Lucas is the foundation stone of bores?

According to E.V Lucas egotism is the foundation stone of bores

3. How do bores manage to get an audience?

Bores get an audience because of the ineradicable kindness of human nature

4. Punch is a \_\_\_\_ magazine

humorous

5. What is the best armour plate against bores?

The best armour plate against bores is to avoid them.

1. E.V Lucas states that as if a rule, bores are always bores because:

- One and the only thing they make sure is that, they have a listener
- They have a fixed idea to impart
- They believe that what interests him and involves himself must interest others as well
- They always feed on weakness and benignancy of human nature

2. The reason why the bores always find a listener is:

- That they have so much to say
- That they actually exploit benignancy of human nature
- That they are all crafty man
- That they are armed with simplicity and frankness
- That they are all humorous people

3. Which specimen of bores is described by author's friend as: 'the man who spreads birdlime all over you'?

- A bore who keeps a reasonable way off
- The one who starts with a funny story, and doesn't stop even if you tell him you have heard it
- The buttonholing bore

- d) A bore who takes advantage of your weakness
4. What will happen if a famous humorous weekly ceases its publication?
- a) Their will be a decrease in bore topic
  - b) The children of bores will be deprived of the opportunity to praise themselves
  - c) Punch magazine will be in lack of materials for its publication
  - d) Bores will face a total evasion

(Answers ,1.c, 2.b, 3.c, 4.a,)

## **II Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each**

1. Why does Lucas say that everybody is a bore at some time?

Lucas says that everybody is a bore at sometime because everybody has a fixed idea to impart, and the fixed ideas of the few are the boredom of many.

2. Why is Lucas' peer described as eccentric?

Lucas' peer is described as eccentric because he had the habit of thinking loud and his thoughts were often at variance with words.

3. Why according to Lucas are bores happy?

Bores are happy because they have so much to tell and come so well out of it and they can always find listeners.

4. Why do bores always find an audience?

Bores always find an audience because of the ineradicable kindness of human nature.

5. What was the compact made by Lucas' acquaintance with the page boy to escape from bores?

The compact made by the Lucas acquaintance with the page boy was that whenever he was attacked by a certain bore in the club, the duty of the page boy was to hasten up and say he is wanted on the telephone.

6. What is the greatest asset of a bore?

The greatest asset of a bore is his simplicity that disarms.

7. According to Lucas who are seldom bores?

According to Lucas astute ,crafty men and very busy men are seldom bores

8. Who is a buttonholing bore?

A buttonholing bore is one who comes too close to you .He is one who spreads birdlime all over you.

9. What will happen if weekly humorous paper ceases publication?

If weekly humorous paper ceases publication, there would automatically be a decrease in bore topics.

## **III Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words**

1. How do bores thrive on the weakness and benignancy of human nature?

A bore is not conscious of his boorishness. He thinks himself as the most companionable. Everybody is a bore because there are occasions when one has to impart a fixed idea. The fixed ideas of the few are the boredom of many. Egotism is the foundation stone of bores. He thinks

what interests him must interest others also. Bore is happy because they always get listeners and it is because of the kindness of human nature.

## 2. Why does Lucas describe Bore as happy man and world's axle trees?

Egotism is the foundation stone of a bore. He thinks what interests him must interest others also. Something new is always happening in which he is the central figure. He talks about himself - his house, garden, wife, children, car, handicap, his health, ancestry, the strange way in which people tell him their secrets and seek his advice, his humorous way with waiters, his immunity from influenza, his travels, the instinct that always takes him to good restaurants, his clothes, his dentist, his freedom from old customs, his ideas about the best church, what he likes in art, and his triumph over tax-men. He thinks the world depends on him. Hence he is called a happy man and world's axle tree.

## 3. The style of E.V Lucas in Bore

The style of E.V Lucas in bore is easy going and anecdotal. His language is very simple and conversational. He uses simple words to convey deep meanings. There is repetition to emphasize a point. Humour is the main element in his writing. He describes with humour about a friend of his having a compact with a page boy to call him away if he is forcefully engaged by a bore. There is humour in the eccentric peer who thinks aloud to the dissatisfaction of many. He humorously tells about the peer who hates a person, curses him, but invites him for dinner.

## 4. Types of bores discussed in Lucas' essay Bore

Of all the bores the worst is the one who comes very close to you. By coming too close to you he will be spreading his saliva on you. A bore who keeps a reasonable distance is manageable. But when they lean on you things become really bad. The worst thing is when they come too close to you and tell you a funny story that is not funny at all. It is humiliating to pretend laughing. But we do it because of our kind human nature. Then there is a bore who starts telling you a funny story. You say you have heard it. Still he will continue. Then there is a bore who says nothing but tells that his unfailing sense of humour saved him. Then there is the man who says live and let live. The author's father was like that. In fact we are all bores in one way or the other. The difference is in the degree.

### **III Answer each of the following questions in not more than 300 words each**

#### 1. Write an essay on EV Lucas as an observer of life in the light of Bore?

Everybody in this world is a bore in one way or other. But nobody is ready to admit to be

a bore. In fact, even the greatest bore thinks himself to be the most pleasant man. One who wants to write something about the bores must have the feeling of superiority and self confidence. .

Everybody has some fixed ideas to give. It is clear that the fixed ideas of a few are the boredom to the many. Even the pleasant persons have some odd personal experiences. Secondly, egotism is the foundation stone of a bore. A bore believes that his personal experiences must be invaluable and very interesting for everyone. All the time he is involved in some experiences. All these he wants to force upon the ears of others, thus creating boredom. Bores have much to talk about. But they are lucky and happy because they find easily people who are ready to hear them. Even the greatest bores are always sure of an audience. Not only have we to bear the boredom of the bores, we become cowardly also before them. We need courage in saying 'no' to them. Either we have to hear them or run away stealthily at the very sight of them. Once a person had to adopt a cowardly device of avoiding a bore. Bores are free and frank. They are never cunning. Simplicity is their greatest quality. Busy men or cunning people can seldom be bores. Hence bores should not be made conscious that we want to avoid their company. Bores are of different types. One of the types is called the button holing bore. Such bores stick to us and never leave us. They are the most harmful. Such bores go on telling a story without any end. They go on saying this is a funny story. Some bores force their story upon your ears even though you have already heard it, You can't get rid of such bores also. Some bores say that they have the greatest sense of humor. In fact, they are the greatest bores. They go on saying that they believe in letting others live freely. Everybody wants to get rid of bores. But it is not easy to do so. A man had the habit of thinking loudly. So on meeting a bore he spoke aloud his feeling of hatred for him. The bore heard it. So this habit saved him the company of that bore. That alone is the way of getting rid of bores. In the present system the bores will always go on increasing. But the boring topics can decrease. That is possible if the humorous magazine named Punch stops its publication.

2 Write an essay on the language, style and humour of E.V Lucas based on bores.

Major points - The style of E.V Lucas in bores is simple and straight forward. He discusses about bores in a very humorous way. His words are packed with meaning. He makes witty observation about one of the universal human traits-imposing too much of ourselves on others. A bore is a person who arouses boredom. The long conversation need not make a person necessarily a bore. It is the irrelevance of the subject, total disregard for context, non consideration of the listeners interest that makes a person bore. Bores thrive on our own human nature, kindness and a tendency to listen to others. The style is witty and conversational with no malice even against bores.

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## **NIGHT WALKERS AND MYSTERY MONGERS: SENSE AND NONSENSE AT THE EDGE OF SCIENCE**

**Carl Sagan**

### **Introduction**

Carl Edward Sagan was born on November 9, 1934 in Brooklyn, New York. Sagan was an American astronomer, cosmologist, astrophysicist, astrobiologist, author, science popularizer, and science communicator in astronomy and other natural sciences he published more than 600 scientific papers and articles and was author, co-author and editor of more than 20 books. His popular science books are 'The Dragons of Eden' (1977), 'Broca's Brain' (1979) and 'Pale Blue Dot' (1994). His science fiction novel 'Contact' (1985) formed the basis for a 1977 film of the same name. He spent most of his career as professor of astronomy at Cornell University. His works received numerous awards and honors. Sagan died of pneumonia at the age of 62 on December 20, 1996.

### **Key Notes**

- \* The impostures of the oracle-monger - Alexander of Abonutichus and M Lamar Keene
- \* From Alexander's time to our own – people had made money and name by pretending to arcane or occult knowledge.
- \* skeptical observation and discussion are suppressed, the truth is hidden.
- \* Science has emerged in the popular mind as the primary means of penetrating the secrets of the universe.
- \* the edge of border of science or 'borderline belief'
- \* Instances of ESP cited by Sagan – precognitive dreams
- \* Sagan make a distinguish between those who promote borderline belief systems and those who accept them
- \* The invitation from the office of the president in 1977 that NASA received is to undertake a serious investigation of UFO reports. It was declined because no one has ever turned up even a small fragment of an alien spacecraft that has passed any such physical test and there seem to be nothing left to study.
- \* Many of us possess hidden talents that need only be tapped to make us more powerful than we are.
- \* The need for professional scientist to make a choice in their research goals.
- \* The emergence of science as the primary means of penetrating the secrets of the universe and as self correcting character.
- \* Critical and skeptical examination is the method used in every day practical matters as well as in science
- \* The best antidote for pseudo-science, Sagan believes is science

### **Exercises**

#### **I .Answer the following questions :**



1. \_\_\_\_\_ was a trustee of the Universal Spiritualist Association

A: M. Lamar Keene

2. Harry Houdini was an American \_\_\_\_\_.

A: stage magician and stunt performer

3. The hereditary information was pass from generation to generation is encoded in a single long molecule called\_\_\_\_\_.

A: DNA

4. What is meant by 'borderline belief'?

Beliefs that are at the edge or border of science are called borderline beliefs.

5. Many of the belief systems at the edge or fringe of science are not subject to crisp experimentation

6. What is the literal meaning of prejudice?

Prejudice means pre - judgment

7. What is 'post-judice'?

It is an opinion or judgment formed after careful examination of the proposed fact through the evidence

8. When skeptical observation and discussion are suppressed, the truth is hidden.

**II. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each:**

1. How did Alexander of Abonutichus deal with the written questions in sealed envelope?

When Alexander of Abonutichus was alone he would lift off the seal read the message, remake the envelope and attach the response. This is how he deals with the written questions in sealed envelope.

2. In what form has science emerged in the popular mind?

Science has emerged in the popular mind as the primary means of penetrating the secrets of the universe.

3. What makes Sagan say “playing fast and loose” with the truth is a very serious matter?

Sagan says playing fast and loose with truth is a very serious matter because those who make uncritical observations lead us into error and deflect from us the major human goal of understanding how the world works.

4. What is meant by precognitive experience?

Precognitive experience is when a person has a compelling perception of an imminent disaster, the death of a loved one, or a communication from a long-lost friend, and the predicted event then occurs.

5. What can be the reasons for strange light in the sky, according to Sagan?

According to Sagan the reason for stage light in the sky can be an automobile headlight reflected off a high-altitude cloud or a flight of luminescent insects, or an unconventional aircraft, or a conventional aircraft with unconventional lighting patterns, such as a high-intensity search light used for meteorological observations.

6. What was the invitation from the office of the president in 1977 that NASA received and why did it decline it?

The invitation from the office of the president in 1977 that NASA received is to undertake a serious investigation of UFO reports. It was declined because no one has ever turned up even a small fragment of an alien spacecraft that has passed any such physical test and there seem to be nothing left to study.

7. Upon what does the success of science depend?

The success of science in both its intellectual excitement and its practical application that it depend upon the self correcting character of science.

8. What are the meteorites?

Pieces of rock or metal that has fallen to the earth's surface from outer space, these pieces are called meteorites

9. What method is used in everyday practical matters?

Critical and skeptical examination is the method used in every day practical matters for example while buying a car we would check every parts in detail because we don't want to be fooled.

10. What is the best anecdote for pseudo science?

The best anecdote for pseudo science is science.

**III. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words or each:**

1. The impostures of Alexander the oracle-monger.

In Night Walker's *And Mystery Mongers: sense and non-sense at the edge of science*, Carl Sagan started with Alexander of Abonutichus, who claimed that he could receive messages from a god named Glycon. He lived in second century during the reign of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. He was a handsome, clever and totally unfair. Sometimes he rushed into the market place naked except for a gold-spangled loincloth by shaking his long loose hair and climbed into a high altar and delivered a long speech, predicting the coming of a new and oracular god. Then he rushed to the construction of a temple the crowd followed him. There he discovered a goose egg in which he had already sealed-up with a baby snake. He announced that the snake is the new god. Then he returned to his house for a few days and then he would be seen entwined with a large serpent and convinced the crowd that the snake had grown impressively within days. Actually the serpent was a large and docile variety which he had got for this purpose. The snake was outfitted with a linen head for somewhat human face. He showed the snake in dim light because then no visitor could stay for long or inspect the serpent very carefully and named it Glycon. Then he claimed that the new god would answer any written questions which is delivered in a sealed envelopes. When all the crowds are gone with a neat plan he would peek into the sealed envelopes to find out what his clients where asking and attach a responses to them. The reputation of the oracular serpent spread wide. People came from nook and corner. If a rich people reveal some secrets means he blackmails them. The result was he got a lot of money and also earned a huge name.

2. Instances of extra sensory perception cited by Sagan.

Extra sensory perception, ESP is also called sixth sense, it includes claimed reception of information not gained through the recognized physical sensor but sensed with the mind. The scientific community rejects ESP due to the absence of an evidence, or lack of theory which would explain ESP, because it can't provide reliable positive results. Sagan shows example for ESP by saying about the precognitive experience which is a type of ESP. Many years ago he woke in the midnight. He had knowledge about the death of a close relative. Sagan was worried even to make a phone call to verify the truth of it. In fact the relative is alive. His fore-knowledge proved wrong. Suppose the relative died that night. It would be difficult to convince him that it was a coincidence. It is rare that a person dreams of a disaster and then immediately it happens. One can't write a letter about this type of experience to an institute of parapsychology because it did not materialize. If his dream had come true, such a letter would have been taken as evidence of pre-recognition. These precognitive dreams are typical of claims made on the boundary or edge of science.

3. How does Sagan distinguish between those who promote borderline belief systems and those who accept them?

Sagan makes a distinction between those who perpetrate and promote borderline belief and those who accept them the latter are often taken by the novelty of the systems and the feeling of insight and grandeur they provide. These are in fact scientific attitudes and scientific goals. It is easy to imagine extraterrestrial visitors who looked like human beings, flew space vehicles and even airplanes like our own, and thought our ancestors civilization. This does not strain our imaginative powers overly and is sufficiently similar to familiar western religious stories to seem comfortable. The search for Martian microbes of exotic biochemistry, or for interstellar radio messages from intelligent beings biologically very dissimilar, is more difficult to grasp and not as comforting. The former view is widely purveyed and available; the latter much less so. Yet Sagan thinks many of those excited by the idea of ancient astronauts are motivated by sincere scientific (and occasionally religious) feelings. There is a vast popular interest in the scientific questions but many people, shoddily thought out doctrines of border line science are the closest approximation. So the popularity of borderline science is rebuke to the school, press and commercial television make ineffective efforts at science education. Thus do disservice to science and scientists.

4. The need for professional scientist to make a choice in their research goals.

Professional scientists generally have to make a choice in their research goals. There are some objectives that would be very important if achieved but promise so small a likelihood of success that no one is willing to pursue them. There are other scientific objectives that are

perfectly tractable but of entirely trivial significance. Most scientists choose a middle course. As a result, very few scientists actually plunge into the borderline or pseudo-scientific beliefs. The chance of finding out something really interesting – except about human nature – seems small, and the amount of time required seems large. Sagan believes that scientists should spend more time in discussing these issues, but the fact that a given contention lacks vigorous scientific opposition in no way implies that scientists think it is reasonable.

**IV. Answer the following questions in not more than 300 words each:**

1. Bring out the instances of mongering as depicted by Carl Sagan.

In Night Walker's *And Mystery Mongers: sense and non-sense at the edge of science*, Carl Sagan started with Alexander of Abonutichus, who claimed that he could receive messages from a god named Glycon. He lived in second century during the reign of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. He was a handsome, clever and totally unfair. Sometimes he rushed into the market place naked except for a gold-spangled loincloth by shaking his long loose hair and climbed into a high altar and delivered a long speech, predicting the coming of a new and oracular god. Then he rushed to the construction of a temple the crowd followed him. There he discovered a goose egg in which he had already sealed-up with a baby snake. He announced that the snake is the new god. Then he returned to his house for a few days and then he would be seen entwined with a large serpent and convinced the crowd that the snake had grown impressively within days. Actually the serpent was a large and docile variety which he had got for this purpose. The snake was outfitted with a linen head for somewhat human face. He showed the snake in dim light because then no visitor could stay for long or inspect the serpent very carefully and named it Glycon. Then he claimed that the new god would answer any written questions which is delivered in a sealed envelopes. When all the crowds are gone with a neat plan he would peek into the sealed envelopes to find out what his clients were asking and attach a responses to them. The reputation of the oracular serpent spread wide. People came from nook and corner. If rich people reveal some secrets it means he blackmails them. The result was he got a lot of money and also earned a huge name.

M. Lamar Keene, another conman, spent 13 years as a spiritualist medium. He was pastor of the New Age Assembly Church in Tampa. A trustee of the Universal Spiritual Association and for many years a leading figure in the mainstream of the American Spiritualist Movement. He is a self- confessed fraud. He believes that all spirit readings, séances and mediumistic messages from the dead are deceptions, exploiting our love for the dead. Keene like Alexander, gave answers to the questions in sealed envelopes publicly from the pulpit. He viewed the contents with a concealed bright lamp or by smearing lighter fluid, which makes the envelop momentarily

transparent. He would find lost objects, present peoples with astounding revelations about their private lives, commune with the spirit – all using simple tricks. His self – confidence and the credulity of the people made the fraud successful. Keene also made a lot of money.

2. The emergence of science as the primary means of penetrating the secrets of the universe and as self correcting character.

Scientists are also human beings, when their passions are excited. they may abandon temporarily the ideals of their discipline. These ideals have proved very effectively. Finding out the way the world really works require a mix of results and brilliant creativity; requires skeptical scrutiny in every step. It is the tension between creativity and skepticism that has produced the stunning and unexpected findings in science.

The claims of borderlines science took comparison with hundreds of discoveries in real science, including the existence of two semi independent brains in each human skull, the reality of black holes, continental drift and collision, chimpanzee language, massive climate changes on mars and Venus, the antiquity of human species, the search for extraterrestrial life, the DNA, the evidence on the origin of nature and faith of universe, etc. are scientific matters.

The success of science depends on self correcting character. There must be a way of testing any valid idea. It must be positive to reproduce any valid experiment. The character and beliefs of the scientists are irrelevant, what matters is whether the evidence supports his contention. Sagan wants to see that these very effective scientific modes of thought are communicated by the schools and they are reflected in politics. Scientists change their mind when new evidence come but politicians argue and don't change their statement.

Many belief systems at the edge of science are not subject to clear experimentation. They are anecdotal, depending on eye witnesses who are often unreliable. On the basis of past experiences most of such systems will be invalid. But we can't reject completely everything. For example, the idea that large rocks can drop from the skies was considered absurd by eighteenth century scientist. Thomas Jefferson did not believe it then two Yankee scientist told that the same stones fell from the heaven but finally understood that they are meteorites. Prejudice means free judgment, the rejection of conjunction out of hand before examining the evidence. If we wish to find out the truth we must approach to the question with open minded, with a deep awareness of our own limitation and predisposition, finally we get post-judice – is certainly a prerequisite for knowledge.

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## SECTION FOUR: ONE-ACT PLAY

### SOMETHING UNSPOKEN

Tennessee Williams

#### Introduction

Tennessee Williams was an American playwright born on March 26, 1911, in Columbus, Mississippi. His real name was Thomas Lanier Williams and he changed his name to Tennessee when he moved to New Orleans in 1939. His famous works include *The Glass Menagerie* (1944) and *A Street Car Named Desire* (1947). The later is considered to be his masterpiece.

Two different one-act plays were performed in 1959 with the generic title of "Garden District", in that the first one was 'Something Unspoken' and the second one was 'Suddenly Last Summer'. 'Something Unspoken', which premiered Off-Broadway that year and the action takes place in Meridian, Louisiana. During the course of the play the two characters are developed with remarkable insight. It is a play with an underlying current of irony. Tennessee Williams has perfectly portrayed the plight of women through Miss Cornelia and Grace in the play.

#### Main Characters

Cornelia Scott: An elderly woman in her 60's and her desire to be named president of a society club called the daughters of the confederation.

Grace Lancaster: An elderly woman in her 40's, the secretary of Cornelia, who is with her for 15 years.

#### Summary

Miss Cornelia Scott is a wealthy Southern spinster in her 60s. She dresses elaborately, and owns pompous paraphernalia. She is a member of the Confederate Daughters club. Miss Grace Lancaster is her secretary, in her 40s, who has been living in the house for 15 years. There is a complex tension in their relationship. As the title signifies there is 'something unspoken' between the two.

Miss Cornelia is waiting to hear about the elections at the Confederate of Daughters. She has been a member for years. She wants to be Regent. Her fear of rejection is so much that she cannot submit to the indignities of campaigning-unless everyone says - "We must have Cornelia Scott as our leader." Then she feels she must resign from the organization. Tennessee Williams shows us how she yearns for love and recognition.

She gifts a bouquet of 15 roses as a gift for her secretary. One rose for every year of their togetherness. Cornelia asks if there is anything unspoken between them. Grace says a long silence between two individuals for 15 years creates a wall between them and it is impenetrable. She says she is not rich or imperial or bold like Cornelia. She herself can't even attempt to break that wall of silence and heavy air between the two. In her monologue she says Cornelia is the strong one of the two. Cornelia patiently listens to Grace. They both want love and companionship but something between them stops them from completely being true friends. When the phone rings Cornelia is shocked to hear that she is not elected as the Regent. She is getting ready to resign from the confederation. Grace is happy to receive the bouquet.

## Exercises

### I. Answer the following questions in a word or a phrase:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is the patriotic organization referred to in the play  
A: Daughters of Confederation
2. Whom did Cornelia call to gather information regarding the election?  
A: Miss Esmeralda Hawkins
3. Miss Cornelia has gifted Grace a \_\_\_\_\_ for expressing her affinity towards the latter who had been living with her for the last 15 years.  
A: Rose
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is the highbrow literary magazine referred to by Miss Cornelia in the play.  
A: Fortnightly Review of Current Letters
5. Who is the writer cousin of Miss Cornelia?  
A: The writer cousin of Miss Cornelia is Cecil Tutwiler Bates.
6. Who, according to Miss Cornelia, is the only dignified novelist the south has produced since Thomas Nelson page?  
A: The only dignified novelist the south has produced since Thomas Nelson page is Cecil Tutwiler Bates
7. “I think \_\_\_\_\_ is the shadow of Bach”. Says Miss Cornelia.  
A: Vivaldi
8. \_\_\_\_\_ is the disease with which Miss Cornelia is infected.  
A: Laryngitis

### II. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each.

1. What is a “coloured funeral?”  
A “coloured funeral” is the funeral of a black man.
2. What is the Confederate Daughters?  
It is an association of women descended from the Confederate veterans of the Civil war. Their objectives includes honoring the memory of those who scarified in the service of the confederate states, to protect and preserve the historical places of the confederate valour and to record the role of Southern women during the struggle of Independence.
3. What is “apostasy”?  
The term means renunciation and criticism of, or opposition to, a person's former religion. It can also be defined within the broader context of embracing an opinion contrary to one's previous belief.
4. What is the significance of “Fourth of July” referred to by Miss Cornelia?

The significance of "Fourth of July" referred to by Miss Cornelia is that, it is a federal holiday commemorating the Independence day of the USA, the adoption of the declaration of Independence on 4th July 1776.

5. Who is a "dark horse" and who is the "dark horse" mentioned in the play?

A person with great abilities unknown to others is known as dark horses. Cornelia Scott is the dark horse mentioned in the play.

6. Why doesn't Miss Cornelia attend the annual election meeting of the confederate daughters?

Miss Cornelia doesn't attend the annual election meeting of the confederate daughters because she wants to be nominated as the Regent of the confederate daughters and in that case she doesn't

7. "Music has charms to soothe the savage breast." Who says this and who is the English playwright who had made such a remark in his play?

Grace makes this comment and she is talking about William Congreve who has made the comment in his "The Mourning Bride."

8. ' You look like Emperor Tiberius', says Grace to Cornelia. Who is Emperor Tiberius.

Emperor Tiberius was the the second Emperor of Rome who ruled from 42 B.C to 37 A.D.

9. Who are ' Colonial Dames?'

The Colonial Dames of America is an American organization composed of women who are descended from an ancestor who lived in British America from 1607-1775, and was of service to the colonies by either holding public office, being in the military, or serving the colonies in some other way.

10. Why does Miss Grace say that the wall of silence between her and Miss Cornelia is impenetrable?

Miss Cornelia and Miss Grace are different in so many ways. Miss Cornelia is the imperial, rich boss whereas Miss Grace is the plain looking ordinary secretary.

11. How does Miss Cornelia react to the news that she is not elected as the Regent of the club?

She was frightened to lose anything less than the Regent post.

12. ' Nothing succeeds like mediocrity, does it?' When does Miss Cornelia Scott make this remark?

Miss Cornelia Scott makes this remark when Esmeralda informs her that Mrs. Hornsby is elected.

### **III. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words each**

1. Bring out the relevance of the title, 'Something unspoken'

Tennessee William's play 'Something Unspoken' , tells the story of an elderly woman Cornelia Scott, in her 60's and her desire to be named president of a society club called the daughters of the confederation. She is being accompanied by her secretary, Grace Lancaster, who is with her for 15 years. They have a complex codependent relationship. This tension between them is something unacknowledged. An incredible relationship is portrayed here with a great



insight into their inner emotion. The play didn't reveal what is going between them, but we know something is there, which is unspoken. The title, 'Something unspoken' is an apt for this play, where the tension between the characters shown through out the play, because they cannot end their silence and their acute awareness of the something that has remained unspoken. Which is actually lesbian desire, thing cannot be spoken to the society. At the same time the title itself speaks volumes.

2. Describe the lyrical quality of the play.

The play something unspoken is about the contrast between the two women's private lives, whose relationship creates a genuine bond of meaning between women that goes far beyond friendship. To show their deep relationship the dramatist gave much importance for the lyrical quality in the play. The language is lyrical because it can display the love between the characters in all sense. The language used in the play is simple, crisp and pleasing to ear, which have the lyrical quality. The character share the love for music and sometime music is used to prevent from addressing what has been unspoken. Grace upholds silence through musical sound and pretends to be relaxing to the sound of the music. Cornelia and Grace agree that the music has a soothing quality. Both have a good knowledge of music and they often discuss about it. The lyrical quality of the play is a technique used by the dramatist to present the inner emotions of the characters.

3. Comment on the intricacies of the relationship between Miss Cornelia and Miss Grace Lancaster.

Tennessee William's play 'Something Unspoken', tells the story of an elderly woman Cornelia Scott, in her 60's and her desire to be named the President of a society club called the daughters of the confederation. She is being accompanied by her secretary, Grace Lancaster, who is with her for 15 years. They have a complex codependent relationship. Even if Grace and Cornelia don't share a fully realized lesbian love, their relationship creates a genuine bond of meaning between women that goes far beyond friendship. The dramatist stages closeted female-female desire. The bond between the two women, which is the very center of the Play stands uncontested. The character of Cornelia struggles with the truth about her own homosexual desire. Their interaction in 'something unspoken' are characterized by the two fold struggle to break out of the silence that exist between them, but also to uphold it for long. Their wall of silence constitutes the boundary of their closets.

4. Snobbery as a mask concealing the wounded inner self of Miss Cornelia. Explain.

Though Cornelia says she is democratic, snobbery is too much in her blood. She does not want to accept anything below the position of Regent. She wants to gain it through nomination. She was not even ready to attend the meeting at the confederation. There is snobbery in her demeanor too. In the play her snobbery is her own self constructed attitude to fake her otherwise lonesome, loveless life. She wants to be accepted in society.

5. Explain the use of the symbol of roses in the play.

The gift of bouquet containing fifteen roses is a catalyst in the play for an emotional talk between Miss Cornelia and Grace Lancaster. It symbolizes an attempt to break the wall of heavy silence existing between Miss Cornelia and her secretary Miss Grace. She has gifted 15 roses

symbolizing 15 years of their togetherness. One rose for every year.

6. How did Grace differentiate her own grey hair from that of Cornelia?

Miss Cornelia and Grace Lancaster are very different. She says her grey is the color of a cobweb, something white getting grey, which means though both are grey, Cornelia is more imperial and dignified. She says she is very meek and ordinary and Cornelia shouldn't expect bold answers from her.

**IV. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.**

1. In *Something Unspoken*, Tennessee Williams deftly depicts Miss Cornelia's pretention to self-importance and pomposity, and her inability to establish any spontaneous and expressive relationship with others. Elucidate.

Tennessee Williams as in his major plays like *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* has incorporated themes like haunting loneliness and the isolated woman's plight into his one act play- 'Something Unspoken'. He is widely considered the greatest Southern playwright and one of the greatest playwrights in the history of American drama. The play is about a wealthy spinster in her 60s and her secretary Miss Grace Lancaster. Miss Cornelia Scott is wealthy Southern spinster and lives a pompous life. She is member of the Confederate Daughters and when the play begins she is waiting for the elections to be declared. She doesn't want anything below the post of Regent neither does she want to participate in any campaigns. She thinks that would degrade her status to any ordinary woman. She has opted out of attending the election in person, feeling that her absence will be notable and might strengthen her position. Thus she waits by the telephone. She couldn't even establish a good relationship with her secretary who has been with her for 15 years. She thought less talking is classy.

She is so self-possessed that she doesn't allow pilgrims into her garden. She thinks they might spoil it and pluck flowers. She wants to be the head of the confederation but nobody in the group loves her. Miss Grace tells her opinions but Miss Cornelia is not ready to listen to any of them. Her presenting of 15 roses to her secretary unmasks the soft side of Miss Cornelia. One rose for every year of their togetherness. According to Grace prolonged silence for years between two individuals creates a wall between them and that is impenetrable. May be her action of gifting is a way to break through the air of tension and heaviness. When Grace shares her thoughts in a lengthy monologue she doesn't interrupt or shows her snobbish side. This shows that she too yearns for love care and affection in a lonesome mansion. The balance of power between the women deteriorates, with Cornelia trying to verbalize the 'something unspoken' between them. Thus her Self pretentions and pomposity is a way for her to get others involved with her. She has revealed herself to be soft and approachable only to her secretary after a rigid, tensed relationship of 15 years. She proved it by gifting her roses and encouraging Grace to speak

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