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MODERN AND POST-MODERN LITERATURE

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SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Modern and Post-Modern Literature

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UNIT I - A PRAYER FOR MY DAUGHTER: W.B. YEATS

Introduction

This poem projects the emotional significance of the poet, W.B. Yeats who magnifies the birth of his daughter into the great palace of fear and anxiety. He is totally afraid of his daughter as he is so emotionally attached with her. She is so tender as to take pity on her. He is not a normal father who takes immense pleasure, in the birth of the child irrespective of their gender. He is the father cum poet who visualizes her life not only as a father but also as a poet. His feeling over the fickle minded world worries his terribly. His innocence is revealed through this poem, which criticizes the war and inhumane attitude of human behavior.

He is completely shut with the thinking of war and people being greed. He could not accept the birth of his daughter as natural happenings. He is unhappy about his daughter's future.

Objectives

- Students would learn the sensible poetry
- This poets makes students to think critically
- It will lead students to write poetry on their own depending upon their experience
- Technical aspect of the poetry will be learnt by students
- They become familiar with the poetical devices used by the author
- They would come to know the sensational feeling between the father and daughter
- They are trained in such a way that they know how to give image to feelings

Motivation

Students are very fond of their parents, especially their father who runs the family successfully without hurting the members of the family. He is such a man who can lead a family with all his might. The reason behind his protecting the family is nothing but the care and love he has. Poetry is the form through which the poet communicates the inner feeling of a man. The blood is thicker than water is proven through this poetry as it symbolizes the love between father and the daughter.

Gist of the Poem: A Prayer for My Daughter

"A Prayer for My Daughter" is a manifestation of the poet's affection for his daughter. It is also about survival of the fittest. Surviving

the turmoil of the contemporary world is not that easy, where passions have been separated from reason. The setting of the poem is vague. The poetry is the extent of semi autobiographical. The tone of the poetry is hopeless, cautious, and menace as well as aphoristic in its style.

Literary Analysis:

The poem opens with the objective correlation of the crying infant with the howling storm outside. He uses the weather as the symbol of his feeling. The poem further implies the vulnerability and the innocence of the newborn baby, sleeping under the 'cradle-hood'. The author is so obsessed with the violent world outside, however protected she is. The cyclone is a metonymy for the Irish people's fight for their sovereignty, which was a doubtful political situation in Yeats's day. He challenges the outside world with "roof-leveling wind", out casting chaos, in the midst of which the poet has "walked and prayed for this young child an hour." He describes the situation around her as a "flooded stream." The poet symbolizes the sea thus: "Out of the murderous innocence of the sea." In spite of his apprehensions for his child in this perplexed world, he is hopeful for her.

Allusions in Poetry:

The poet draws some historical allusions to warn his daughter for being beautiful. He continues on to comment on his hopes for her beauty: "May she is granted beauty and yet not." His fluctuation is that beauty in women sometimes brings disasters. For example, some such people have a difficult time choosing the right person as a life partner, and neither can they "find a friend." The speaker lays emphasis on the need for feminine innocence. The poet advances his argument in the next stanzas by citing examples of beautiful women such as Helen of Troy, whose beauty was said to be the cause of the Trojan War. By the end, the poet wants his daughter to be courteous, as love cannot come unconditionally and freely. She must earn love with good efforts and kind-heartedness, and she cannot win it by merely physical beauty because "Hearts are not had as a gift but hearts are earned."

Theme of the Poem:

Summing up his theme, the poet wishes his daughter to possess such qualities that could help her face the future years confidently and independently. "A Prayer for my Daughter" is a poem by William Butler Yeats written in 1919 and published in 1921 as part of Yeats' collection Michael Roberts and the Dancer. It is written to Anne, his daughter with Georgia Hyde Lees, whom Yeats married after his last marriage proposal to Maud Gonne, was rejected in 1916. [1] Yeats wrote the poem while staying in a tower at Thorn Ball lee during the Anglo-Irish War, two days after Anne's birth on February 26, 1919.[2] The poem reflects Yeast's complicated views on Irish Nationalism, sexuality, and is considered an important work of Modernist poetry.

Structure of the Poem:

The poem contains ten stanzas of eight lines each: two rhymed couplets followed by a quatrain of enclosed rhyme. Many of the rhyme pairs use slant rhyme. The stanza may be seen as a variation on ottava rima, an eight-lined stanza used in other Yeats poems, such as Among School Children and Sailing to Byzantium.

Metrical analysis of the poem, according to Robert Einarsson, proves difficult because he believes Yeats adheres to "rhythmical motifs" rather than traditional use of syllables in his meter. In stanza two, Einarsson points out instances where the meter of the poem contains examples of amphibrach, pyrrhicretic, and spondaic feet. He argues that the complexity of Yeast's verse follows patterns of its "metremes", or rhymical motifs, rather than common metrical devices.

Critical Point of View:

The poem has drawn the attention of feminists, as it deals with his young daughter, asking the general approach to woman. As the poem reflects Yeast's expectations for his young daughter, feminist critiques of the poem have questioned the poet's general approach to women through the text's portrayal of women in society. In Yeast's Ghosts, Brenda Maddox suggests that the poem is "designed deliberately to offend women" and labels it as "offensive". Maddox argues that Yeats, in the poem, condemns his daughter to adhere to 19th-century ideals of womanhood, as he focuses on her need for a husband and a "Big House" with a private income.

Supportive Arguments:

Joyce Carol Oates suggests that Yeats used the poem to deprive his daughter of sensuality as he envisions a "crushingly conventional" view of womanhood, wishing her to become a "flourishing hidden tree" instead of allowing her the freedoms given to male children. This was after Yeats was rejected in marriage by Maud Gonne. In Oates' opinion, Yeats wishes his daughter to become like a "vegetable: immobile, unthinking, and placid." Marjorie Elizabeth Howe's, in Yeast's Nations, suggests that the crisis facing the Anglo-Irish community in "A Prayer for My Daughter" is that of female sexual choice. But, she also argues that to read the poem without the political context surrounding the Irish Revolution robs the text of a deeper meaning that goes beyond the relationship between Yeats and the female sex.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Write your answer in the space given below

b) Compare your answer with those given at the end of the unit.

(i) Why is W.B. Yeats so sad about the birth of his daughter?

(ii) What does the poet think about the aftermath of the world war?

Meaning of the Poem

"Prayer for My Daughter" is a beautiful personal poem by William Butler Yeats reflecting his gloomy mood and a fear of a disturbing future. The poem was composed in 1919 and appeared in 1921. It was written during the World War I, thus it reflects the post-war agitation that was prevalent during that time. Though the war ended but Ireland was still in disturbance. William Butler Yeats' daughter Annie was born that time and the poet was worried for her future. He is worried that his infant daughter has to face the challenges and hardships of the future and how best would she be able to fight them. The poet suggests some characteristics that she must undertake which can sustain her future and keep her safe and happy.

Objective Correlation:

A violent, dreadful storm is blazing outside. The poet says that the 'haystack and roof-leveling wind' is blowing directly from the Atlantic but is obstructed by just one naked hill and the woods of Gregory's estate. The poet then introduces her infant daughter who is sleeping in her cradle, well protected from the assaults of the dreadful storm that is raging outside. The poet keeps pacing the cradle up and down while praying for her daughter because a storm has been raging in his soul too. He is worried for his daughter's future and his mind is full of apprehension for the future of humanity.

The Poet as a Fear-stricken Father:

In the following stanza, the poet describes the condition of the place the poet dwells in. The poet can hear the shrill sound of the sea-wind that is hitting the tower and below the arches of the bridge which connects the castle with the main road and in the elms above the flooded river. The poet has been praying for over an hour and he is disturbed by the shrill sound of the sea-wind. He is haunted by fear. The poet imagines the future, in course of his excitement and fear; that the future years have come out of the sea and it is dancing to the crazy beat of the drums. Like every affectionate and caring father, the poet is anxious for his infant daughter.

Fair is Foul

Now the poet talks about what he is praying for his daughter. He says he is praying that his daughter may be granted beauty but not so much that it disturbs or distracts others. The poet says that women who are very beautiful forget their natural kindness and are unable to accept sincere love. Thus, they fail to have an appropriate life partner and hence they remain unsatisfied.

Mythical significance

Here the poet refers to the Greek mythological character, Helen. Helen was the beautiful daughter of Zeus and Leda. She eloped with Prince Paris of Troy which led to the destruction of Troy. Aphrodite also married Hephaestus and betrayed him later on. In the same manner, Maud Gonne too had rejected Yeats' proposal and had married a foolish man and was not happy with him. Yeats says that beautiful women are too proud and foolish and therefore they suffer and lead a miserable life.

Enforced Values

The poet prays for his daughter that she should have something more than just bewitching beauty. She should be courteous. The poet believes that hearts can be won by the virtue of courtesy; even those who are not beautiful can win hearts by their courtesy. Maud Gonne was very beautiful and Yeats was a fool to believe that she loved him too. Later on he realized his mistake and he ultimately understood that it was courtesy and not beauty that won his heart.

Symbols and comparisons

The poet pleads that the soul of his daughter should flourish and reach self-fulfillment like a flourishing tree. Like the linnets, her life should be clustered around happy and pure thoughts. These little creatures are symbols of innocence and happiness that make others happy too. So he wishes his daughter to be happy within as well as keep others happy too.

Source of Happiness

The poet then talks about his own mind and heart. He says that on looking into his own heart, he finds hatred which has come because of the experience of life and the sort of beauty he loved. He prays for his daughter to keep away from such evils and says that if the soul is free from any kind of hatred, nothing can ruin one's happiness and innocence.

Poem of Admonition

The poet feels that intellectual hatred is the worst kind of hatred. He considers it as a great flaw in someone's character. So he wants his daughter to shun any such kind of hatred or strong bitter feelings for anyone. He wants his daughter to avoid the weaknesses that Maud Gonne had. Maud Gonne's good upbringing and charming beauty proved useless when she chose a worthless person for a husband.

Poetic Retrospection

The poet says if his daughter is free from this intellectual hatred, she will be a happy soul. She will have inner peace within herself. She will be able to keep herself and others happy even when she is going through hardships and misfortunes.

Stylistic Approach

The poem is composed of ten stanzas each having eight lines following the couplet pattern. The poem is simple but the poet has enhanced it with imagery. The violence of nature is symbolic of the violence of man. The poet uses many examples of the great mythological beauties like Helen, Aphrodite who represent his lover, Maud Gonne. Images of tree and storm are used to represent ideas like tradition, custom, innocence etc.
"Prayer for My Daughter" is remarkable for Yeats' dexterous manipulation of symbols and images.

Explication

Yeast's "A Prayer for my Daughter" presents the image of a child who sleeps soundly through a thunderous storm. The child referred to here is Anne Butler Yeats, who was born a month after Yeats penned "The Second Coming." The prescribed poem is placed after "The Second Coming" in the collection.

Significance of Image

The storm born on the Atlantic Ocean is emblematic of the larger violence of the Irish War of Independence. The external unrest is a concretization of the poet's internal trauma. The image of the child sleeping innocently by the haystack evocatively signifies the image of Christ. In Yeast's "The Second Coming", the coarse fiend replaces the divine image of Christ. Apart from the wood around Lady Gregory's estate, nothing seems to bar the intensity of the storm.

The impact of Nature in the poem

The poet is in a state of trance owing to contemplation. He senses the rising sea-wind scream:

"And heard the sea-wind scream upon the tower,

And under the arches of the bridge, and scream

In the elms above the flooded stream;"

The sea-wind traverses all the realms and makes its presence felt. It is evocative of "the frenzied drum"–the impulsive frenzy that would dictate the future years. The vision for the future here is apocalyptic. The action of beating a drum signifies the call for battle. The impending revolution of the future years comes as a response to the beating of the drum. Compare 'the

murderous innocence of the sea' to the 'blood-dimmed tide' in Yeats's "The Second Coming."

Figures of speech used the poem

Also, connect the phrase 'murderous innocence' to 'Terrible Beauty' in "Easter 1916". The figure of speech utilized in "murderous innocence" is an oxymoron. The phrase implies that the revolution is destructive, yet it harbors no ill-will towards anybody.

Let God Grant Her Beauty

Here the daughter stands as a symbol of his country-Ireland, when he says 'Let God grant her beauty.' Nevertheless, Yeats is wary of the evil eye that would be cast on this magnificence. Yeats reiterates that she should not break a stranger's heart; thereby evolving into another Maud Gonne. Further, she must not be conceited as she beholds her reflection. Her beauty should not limit itself to being skin deep.

Glorification of his ethnicity

Similarly, the glory of his country Ireland should not be superficial; it should exude warmth from within. A woman must be guided by emotion, and not by reason/principle (that Yeats simplifies as 'right'). The word 'right' may also connote her Mr. Right.

The Symbol of the Flourishing Tree

The poet wishes that his daughter be like a flourishing tree far from the public eye. Yeats hopes that her thoughts will be like the linnet, and that her songs radiate magnanimity. Her thoughts shall not instigate fights and create conflicts. He expects her not to get involved in quarrels except for the sake of jest. Like a green laurel tree, she would remain rooted in one place, but her goodness would branch out all around. The color 'green' emblematizes the quality of being evergreen and fruitful.

Admonition of the Poet:

The poet also refers to stability in a relationship here through the idea of constancy. Yeats taunts at Maud Gonne who had with Lucien Millevoye –two illegitimate children, and later went on to marry John McBride. The speaker wants Anne to be constant to one man, unlike Maud Gonne.

Joyce Carol Oates questions the stance of the poem that aims at depriving Yeats's daughter of sensuality just because Yeats' marriage proposal to Maud Gonne was rejected. Oates also states that Yeats presents a "crushingly conventional" view of womanhood. He wishes her to become a "flourishing hidden tree" instead of allowing her the freedoms given to male children. Yeats, in Oates's opinion, wishes that his daughter become a "vegetable: immobile, unthinking, and placid."

Yeats asserts that his mind has dried up of late. His love for Maud Gonne had failed him and left him in state of desperation and depression.

Over the years, however, he has finally reached a stage where he comprehends that negativity will not result in any sort of productivity:

"If there's no hatred in a mind

Assault and battery of the wind

Can never tear the linnet from the leaf"

Poem meant for Gentle Folk

He wants his daughter's bridegroom to usher her to a house, 'house' being a symbol of domestic well-being. Custom and ceremony will lend their life constancy. Yeats was an upholder of the standards of refinement. He abhorred the vulgarity and coarseness of the masses, and the plebeian mind-set of the socialists.

Let's Sum Up

Excess beauty has always been unfavorable. He exemplifies the same with several references to Greek mythology. Helen was a woman of incomparable and exquisite beauty. Married to the Greek warrior Menelaus, her beauty made her so vain that she found life with Menelaus to be unsatisfactory. The impulsive Helen eloped with her lover who was the Trojan prince. It paved the way for a destructive and prolonged war. Therefore, Helen's beauty proved to be detrimental not only to her but to many others.

The queen Aphrodite, the Goddess of love and beauty had no father and led a dissipated life. Driven by instinct, she got married to the lame god, Hephaestus. Her hasty decision led her astray; resulting in her having an illicit affair with another God. According to the poet, fine women, are blessed with the 'Horn of Plenty'. The 'Horn of Plenty' or 'Cornucopia' according to mythology is the horn of a goat that is depicted as – overflowing with flowers, fruit and corn. It thereby symbolizes fertility, prosperity and procreation. Keats portrays the Horn of Plenty as being capable of nurturing and enforcing virtues.

The poet ascertains that it is not shallow superficial beauty that wins hearts and gifts. For, this sort of appreciation may waver with the decline of beauty. What is of consequence is the love that is gained through courtesy, consideration and compassion. Yeats does not endorse love earned through ambition or revolution, as with Maud Gonne.

There is an autobiographical strain here alluding to his love for Maud Gonne. It was futile as she turned a blind eye to him; Yeats squandered away the years in hopelessness. He was a fool to think that she reciprocated his love. Yeats eventually came to his senses and married Georgie Hyde-Lees who endowed him with "a glad kindness" always.

Conclusion

In the final stanza of "Prayer for My Daughter", the poet prays that her daughter gets married to a good, aristocratic and decent family. He

prays that she would get a husband from such a family who would take her to a house where the aristocratic traditions are followed. He wants his daughter to live a life on high, spiritual values. Arrogance and hatred should not be entertained there. He believes that in the atmosphere of custom and ceremony, real beauty and innocence can take place.

Unit – End Exercises

- Trace the figures of speech in the poem
- Find out the literary devices used by the poet
- Comprehend the rhyme scheme of the poem

Answers to Check Your Progress

1) The linnet and leaf being fragile, the condition of being so is used to indicate sensitivity. If a person harbours no odium, even the wildest of storms cannot hamper his spirit. Intellectual hatred is the worst, according to Yeats, as it is not personal/individual to be resolved easily. He hopes that his daughter's opinions are accursed. Maud Gonne, one of the loveliest women, was born to a high and refined family. Revolutionary thoughts dominated her nature and turned her into a mere wind bag. All the goodness of a woman was sacrificed for propaganda and half-truths.

2) Yeats's "A Prayer for my Daughter" underlines that if a heart is pure of all detestation, the soul is reinstated to its original form in all its virtue.It ultimately learns that at last it is "self-delighting, /Self-appeasing, self-affrighting." Its will is then identified with that of heavens in all its purity and transparency. Thereby, Anne can lead a spot-free life of bliss. In such a situation, no external scowls or opinions can deter her from leading a life of everlasting happiness.

Suggested Reading:

Oates, Joyce Carol. "At Least I Have Made a Woman of Her: Images of Women in Twentieth-Century Literature." The Georgia Review (1983) pp. 7-30

UNIT II - SECOND COMING

Introduction:

The Second Coming is a disturbing poem with memorable lines that have been used by modern writers, rock bands and others as titles for their work. It's a highly visual two stanza creation, ending in a long, deep question.

Objectives:

William Butler Yeats wrote his visionary poem, *The Second Coming,* in January 1919 when he was 44 years old. Already established as a poet, theatre director, politician and esoteric philosopher, this poem further enhanced his reputation as a leading cultural figure of the time. In a 1936 letter to a friend, Yeats said that the poem was *'written some 16 or 17 years ago and foretold what is happening*', that is, Yeats poetically predicted the rise of a rough beast that manifested as chaos and upheaval in the form of Nazism and Fascism, bringing Europe to its knees.

Motivation:

Yeats had lived through tough times - World War 1 had seen unprecedented slaughter; several Irish Nationalists had been executed in the struggle for freedom; the Russian revolution had caused upheaval - and *The Second Coming* seemed to tap into the zeitgeist. '*My horror at the cruelty of governments grows greater'* he told a friend. His poem seems to suggest that world affairs and spirituality undergo transformation from time to time. Humankind has to experience darkness before the light can stream in again through the cracks.

Gist of the Poem:

Things might fall apart, systems collapse and spiritual refreshment can only be achieved through the second coming: a Christian concept involving the return of Jesus Christ on Earth.

- Except that this second coming would be no holy birth of an infant Christ in a lowly manger, no Saviour.
- Something far sinister is in prospect; an antithetical creature, sphinx-like in nature, a *rough beast,* slouching its way, about to be born en route to a symbolic Bethlehem.
- This could manifest as war, huge social and political change, climate change and environmental disaster.

Themes

Society

Political Power

War

Anarchy

Religious Concepts

Symbolism

Generational Differences

Prediction

Global Issues

Analysis of the Second Coming

A 22 line poem, two stanzas, in free verse, with loose iambic pentameter (mostly five stresses and ten syllables per line but there are variations), *The Second Coming* is one of the more successful non rhyming poems Yeats wrote.

As you read through, note the change in rhythm and texture as the narrative alters. For the whole of the first stanza and some of the second, the speaker is objectively describing events. It's as if there's a running commentary on something profound happening inside the speaker's mind.

Only at lines 12/13 is the speaker's mask taken off:

When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi

*Troubles **my** sight:*

And again at line 18:

*The darkness drops again; but now **I** know*

Images used:

Only when the vast image is seen (through the mind's eye?) does the speaker come alive, to put two and two together. The cycles that underpin spiritual existence have come round again: a creature somewhat like a sphinx is on the move, disturbing the desert birds as it slouches towards a symbolic Bethlehem.

Dramatic verbs:

The first stanza is full of dramatic verbs: *turning, widening, fall apart, loosed, drowned,* giving the impression of a system out of control. Note the first word is repeated to accentuate the idea of the falcon's action as it flies away from the falconer. Later on it will evolve into a very different creature.

Because of the dire situation established in the first stanza, some kind of fateful release is triggered. The result is the emergence of a sphinx-like

figure from the World Soul, the Vital Spirit. It's on its way to the spiritual headquarters to be born. Just like the Christ child was 2000 years ago.]

Figures of Speech used:

Enjambment, alliteration and **assonance** all play their part in these second stanza lines:

*The darkness drops again; but **now** I **know***

*That **twenty centuries** of stony sleep*

Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,

The Rough Beast:

The final two lines are popular and well known. The *rough beast* about to be born after twenty centuries could take the form of a government, a tyrant, a regime - according to the cosmic and spiritual laws it would have to counteract the effects of religion, Christianity. A new civilization will be born, one that will reject what previous generations celebrated, and celebrate what previous generations rejected.

The Diction employed:

gyre - a vortex or spiral or cone shaped geometrical figure, pronounced with hard or soft g , Spiritus mundi - latin, World Spirit or Soul or World Wisdom, or Anima mundi, Great Memory.

vexed - troubled, annoyed, angered.

Further Analysis of the Second Coming

With strong involvement in political, cultural and spiritual matters, William Butler Yeats the poet was in a unique position to write a poem as far reaching as *The Second Coming.* The poem is full of exotic and unusual imagery. The first two lines for instance take the reader off into the air on the strong wings of a falcon, far away from the hand of the falconer. Control is already being lost.

Symbols Utilized:

Gyre means spiral or vortex, a geometrical figure and symbol fundamental to the cyclical view of history that Yeats held to. As the falcon sweeps higher and higher this vortex or cone shape widens and weakens the hold on reality. Not only is the bird representing a cycle of civilization, it is a symbol for Nature in its sharpest, cleanest sense. Humankind is losing touch with Nature and has to bear the consequences.

Trend Setter of the World:

In today's world, that means the effects of such things as climate change and global warming. As this trend continues there is an inevitable collapse of systems and society. Again, Yeats delivers a vivid picture of the consequences, repeating the word *loosed* in tsunami-like imagery, as humanity descends into moral confusion.

The Cyclic Nature of Things:

The Second Coming relies heavily on certain words being repeated, perhaps to emphasize the cyclic nature of things. So the Second Coming dominates the start of the second stanza. The speaker exclaims excitedly and the reader has to prepare for what follows: the genesis of a spiritual creature, taken to be a sphinx, which now begins its unstoppable journey towards the historic town of Bethlehem.

There are clear biblical echoes:

From the Revelation of St John to the nativity story of Jesus, the former a disturbing vision of the Apocalypse, the latter a birth that gave hope to a sinful world. In broad terms, the cosmic clock is ticking, alignments are being made.

Apocalyptic Impact:

Surely, the speaker asserts, the world is near a revelation; "Surely the Second Coming is at hand." No sooner does he think of "the Second Coming," then he is troubled by "a vast image of the Spiritus Mundi, or the collective spirit of mankind: somewhere in the desert, a giant sphinx ("A shape with lion body and the head of a man, / A gaze as blank and pitiless as the sun") is moving, while the shadows of desert birds reel about it. The darkness drops again over the speaker's sight, but he knows that the sphinx's twenty centuries of "stony sleep" have been made a nightmare by the motions of "a rocking cradle." And what "rough beast," he wonders, "its hour come round at last, / Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?"

Form:

"The Second Coming" is written in a very rough iambic pentameter, but the meter is so loose, and the exceptions so frequent, that it actually seems closer to free verse with frequent heavy stresses. The rhymes are likewise haphazard; apart from the two couplets with which the poem opens, there are only coincidental rhymes in the poem, such as "man" and "sun."

Commentary:

Because of its stunning, violent imagery and terrifying ritualistic language, "The Second Coming" is one of Yeats's most famous and most anthologized poems; it is also one of the most thematically obscure and difficult to understand. (It is safe to say that very few people who love this

poem could paraphrase its meaning to satisfaction.) Structurally, the poem is quite simple—the first stanza describes the conditions present in the world (things falling apart, anarchy, etc.), and the second surmises from those conditions that a monstrous Second Coming is about to take place, not of the Jesus we first knew, but of a new messiah, a "rough beast," the slouching sphinx rousing itself in the desert and lumbering toward Bethlehem. This brief exposition, though intriguingly blasphemous, is not terribly complicated; but the question of what it should signify to a reader is another story entirely.

Sense of Responsibility:

Yeats spent years crafting an elaborate, mystical theory of the universe that he described in his book "A Vision". This theory issued in part from Yeats's lifelong fascination with the occult and mystical, and in part from the sense of responsibility Yeats felt to order his experience within a structured belief system. The system is extremely complicated and not of any lasting importance—except for the effect that it had on his poetry, which is of extraordinary lasting importance. The theory of history Yeats articulated in A Vision centers on a diagram made of two conical spirals, one inside the other, so that the widest part of one of the spirals rings around the narrowest part of the other spiral, and vice versa. Yeats believed that this image (he called the spirals "gyres") captured the contrary motions inherent within the historical process, and he divided each gyre into specific regions that represented particular kinds of historical periods (and could also represent the psychological phases of an individual's development).

Critical Views:

"The Second Coming" was intended by Yeats to describe the current historical moment (the poem appeared in 1921) in terms of these gyres. Yeats believed that the world was on the threshold of an apocalyptic revelation, as history reached the end of the outer gyre (to speak roughly) and began moving along the inner gyre. In his definitive edition of Yeats's poems, Richard J. Finneran quotes Yeats's own notes:

The Revelation:

The end of an age, which always receives the revelation of the character of the next age, is represented by the coming of one gyre to its place of greatest expansion and of the other to its place of greatest contraction... The revelation [that] approaches will... take its character from the contrary movement of the interior gyre. In other words, the world's trajectory along the gyre of science, democracy, and heterogeneity is now coming apart, like the frantically widening flight-path of the falcon that has lost contact with the falconer; the next age will take its character not from the gyre of science, democracy, and speed, but from the contrary inner gyre—which, presumably, opposes mysticism, primal power, and slowness to the science and democracy of the outer gyre. The "rough beast"

slouching toward Bethlehem is the symbol of this new age; the speaker's vision of the rising sphinx is his vision of the character of the new world.

Lets Sum Up:

The speaker describes a nightmarish scene: the falcon, turning in a widening "gyre" (spiral), cannot hear the falconer; "Things fall apart; the center cannot hold"; anarchy is loosed upon the world; "The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere / The ceremony of innocence is drowned." The best people, the speaker says, lack all conviction, but the worst "are full of passionate intensity."This seems quite silly as philosophy or prophecy (particularly in light of the fact that it has not come true as yet). But as poetry, and understood more broadly than as a simple reiteration of the mystic theory of A Vision, "The Second Coming" is a magnificent statement about the contrary forces at work in history, and about the conflict between the modern world and the ancient world. The poem may not have the thematic relevance of Yeats's best work, and may not be a poem with which many people can personally identify; but the aesthetic experience of its passionate language is powerful enough to ensure its value and its importance in Yeats's work as a whole

Unit End Exercises:

a) How does "The Second Coming" reflect the historical context of the time in which it was written?

b) How (and why) does "The Second Coming" use mythology and ancient themes to express the onset of modernity?

Answers to Check Your Progress:

a) "The Second Coming" was written just after World War I, and it was also a reaction to the Irish War of Independence and the Bolshevik Revolution. These were ideological conflicts that questioned the very fabric of civilization. The Bolshevik Revolution was a rebellion, led by Lenin, which dismantled the Tsarist autocracy and led to the rise of the Soviet Union. This revolution followed World War I, another conflict that disrupted established national boundaries and international order. The poem was also written when Ireland was being torn apart by civil war. Yeats wrote passionately and frequently about conflict, especially conflict in Ireland, and was particularly fearful of mob rule, of the sort that elected totalitarian governments in Russia and Italy.

b) Throughout his career, Yeats continued to write about the rise and fall of civilizations, lamenting both the inconsistency and disorder of the time period in which he lived and also the bitterness and disillusionment that haunted so many people during this time. This war of ideals—jadedness and love, fear and hope—rose out of a tumultuous time in history, and inspired the tension, confusion, and emotional intensity that characterizes "The Second Coming".

Suggested Reading:

Albright, Daniel (1997), Quantum Poetics: Yeats's figures as reflections in Water (PDF), Cambridge University Press, p. 35.

Childs, Peter (2007). Modernism. The New Critical Idiom (2nd ed.). Routledge. p. 39. ISBN 978-0-41541546-0.

Haughey, Jim (2002). The First World War in Irish Poetry. Bucknell University Press. p. 161. ISBN 978-1-61148151-8.

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UNIT III – "JOURNEY OF THE MAGI"

Introduction:

It opens with a quote about a journey, and it's a cold and difficult one. From the title of the poem, we can guess that this is the journey of the Three Kings (or Three Wise Men, or Magi) to the birthplace of Jesus. After the opening quote, the poem elaborates on the difficulties of travel, including grumpy camels, wishing for home (home being warm, palatial, and full of girls and servants), fires going out, unfriendly and expensive towns, and a distinct lack of places to sleep. The speaker notes that the Magi preferred to just travel all night for these reasons, and that through their travels, a little voice in their heads kept suggesting that maybe this whole thing was all for nothing.

Objective:

Then, the narrator goes on to tell of the Magi's arrival in Bethlehem, a place he describes as "a temperate valley". They still can't find any info about where they were supposed to go from the villagers, however, so they eventually have to find the stable in which they were to witness the birth of the baby Jesus. The trio arrives just in time.

Motivation:

The last part of the poem is more blatantly the Magus reminiscing about the story ("all this was a long time ago, I remember", and in his recollection he seems to be doubtful about whether or not the birth was a good or a bad thing, replacing as it would his own religion and culture. In fact, at the end of the poem he seems to regard it as a bad thing indeed, with the Magus wishing for his own death alongside the death of his peoples' old religion and ways.

The significance of the title:

The title of the poem refers to a "journey." This word means an act of traveling from one place to another, but also, in a metaphorical sense, the long and often difficult process of personal change and development. "Journey of the Magi" begins with a quotation from a Christmas sermon, which establishes the initial choral voice of the poem: the Persian kings who crossed the desert in winter to honor the birth of the baby Jesus. In the quotation, the magi, speaking in a plural "we," describe how the journey was difficult for them physically, emotionally, and spiritually. This quotation leads into a longer description of the difficulties of the journey.

Dramatic Beat:

The second stanza begins with a new dramatic beat: The dark night of the soul has passed, and it is now the dawn of a new day, literally and spiritually. The Magi descend into the fertile Judean valley. This stanza is full of Biblical allusions. The Magi find the manger where Jesus was born.

The Magical Power of Magus:

The third stanza switches to the voice of a singular Magus, who is reminiscing about the journey. (In retrospect, this could mean that the entire poem was written from a first-person perspective, but there was no way to know that before this point). He evaluates the experience, deciding that he "would do it again," but then wonders at the paradox that the birth of Jesus was also a death. This death refers to both the death of Christ and the death of the old religious order, including the magical power of the Magus. He ends the poem wishing for another death, which represents both suicidal despair and an anticipation of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, ushering in a new Christian era.

Analysis

The "journey" of the title describes the literal and mythic journey of the Magi across the desert to bring gifts to Jesus, the Christian messiah. It also describes the Magi's internal journey from pagan to Christian. The Magus acts as a persona for Eliot, who went through his own conversion from agnostic to Anglican. From his point of view as a faithful Christian, the journey also represents the drastic change that the world undergoes at the birth of Jesus Christ.

Biblical Intervention:

The first five lines of the poem are in quotation marks. That's because they are quoting the Nativity Sermon by Lancelot Andrews, the Bishop of Winchester. He was a prominent clergyman and scholar who oversaw the translation of the King James Bible. The original text was from the Christmas sermon he preached to the Jacobean court in 1622: "A cold coming they had of it at this time of the year, just the worst time of the year to take a journey, and specially a long journey. Eliot wrote an essay titled "Lancelot Andrews" (Selected Essays, 1934), in which he praised Andrews' leadership in the Church of England and harmonious blend of intellect and emotion.

The Voice of the Poem:

The voice is a choral "we" of the three Magi who are recalling the journey to Bethlehem they undertook to witness the birth of Jesus. The Magi would have been crossing the desert from Persia to Judea. The Magi could not be quoting Lancelot Andrews, because they would have made the journey in the first year of the Christian calendar—much before Andrews lived. With the first "And," the voice of the poem enters into the imaginative persona established by the sermon and builds upon it. So there is a poetic consciousness that is beyond the Magi, an anachronistic voice that is also on a Christian journey.

Hardships Underwent:

The journey is a hard one, especially for kings who are used to the luxurious life of "summer palaces" and "silken girls bringing sherbet." They travel a long ways in wintertime through snow on the backs of

uncooperative camels, with unhappy handlers. Both the Magi and their servants are going through withdrawals from a sensuous life of earthly comforts. They are cold and homeless and alien to the communities they pass through. In this way their journey parallels that of Mary and Joseph, who are famously denied a room at the inn, so Jesus is born in a manger. Spiritually, they are being tried, and stripped of everything familiar. They go through a dark night of the soul, literally and figuratively, with the voices of doubt discouraging them.

Unpleasant Circumstances:

In the second stanza, the men enter a "temperate valley," and a shift occurs. The word “temperate” holds two meanings here: the valley is both mild and restrained. This is in contrast to the worlds described in the first stanza—both the precarious and decadent summer palaces, and the extremely cold winter in the desert. There is a supernatural and symbolic seasonal shift to spring: the valley is a fertile place, represented by water and the smell of vegetation.

The Biblical Allusion:

The running stream and water-mill also give movement to a landscape that was frozen in the last stanza. This is also a Biblical allusion: In John 4:10-14, Jesus called himself the Living Water. The stream powers a mill “beating the darkness,” alluding to Jesus’ claim in John 8:12 to be the Light of the World. The “three trees low on the sky” have been interpreted variously by scholars to refer to the crucifixion of Christ with the two thieves on crosses to either side of him, or the Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This is an example of both symbolism and foreshadowing. The “white horse” refers to the one in Zechariah 6:5, who announce the coming of Jesus. The Magi arrive at a tavern with “vine-leaves over the lintel,” a Biblical allusion to both the story of Passover from Exodus 12 and the notion of Christ as the “True Vine” (John 15:1, 5). The word “lintel” is rooted in the Latin word lumen, which means threshold. They are on the threshold before both the entry to Bethlehem, and the moment before Christ is born, which for the Christian faithful will change the world entirely.

Figures of Speech used:

The "hands" and "feet" in the next two lines are synecdoche’s, referring to people who are gambling and kicking wineskins to call for alcohol, by the parts of their bodies that are used in these debased actions. They are also biblical allusions to the bartering for Christ (Matthew 26:14-16) and Jesus’ parable of the new wine (Matthew 9:17). The faith of the Magi continues to be tested, as they receive no information, and “arrive not a moment too soon,” which could mean that they were at the end of their tether or that they arrive just before or after Christ was born. Then there’s the peculiar phrase “Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.” This could be interpreted as the haughty, snarky view of kings looking down upon the stable in which Christ was born. But some scholars have

also seen in it a reference to Article 31 of the Anglican Articles, in which Christ's sacrifice "satisfies" the debt of all mankind's sins.

Conflict between life and death:

He starts to think through the answer to his question with "There was a Birth, certainly, we had evidence and no doubt." This is a rational critical consciousness, assessing the historical fact of Jesus' birth. He relates this to his past experience with birth and death, and says that he "had thought they were different." Indeed, birth and death are usually figured as opposites. So, we are entering the realm of paradox here, as he relays his emotional experience of Christ's birth: "this Birth was/Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death." This experience has changed his view of the fundamental meaning of life and death, and made them synonymous. It reflects the painful paradox at the heart of Christianity: Christ was born to die.

Metaphoric Death:

Notice the capitalizations of Birth and Death in these lines: this is granting deference to Christ that conveys the Magus' and the poet's faith. The second "death" in this line is not capitalized, as it refers to the Magi's death. This is significant because it sets up a contrast: Christ's "Death" is more important than the Magi's "death." This must refer to a metaphoric death, since the Magus speaks while he is still living. (Indeed, it is a simile). In imagining how the birth and death of Christ relates to the metaphoric death of the Magi, it's significant to note that the word Magi also meant Sorcerers; the word comes from the same root as magic. So the birth of Christianity is also the death of the old ways of Magicians. The Magi lost their magic, their power, their relevance, and experienced a type of social death.

The Meaning of Life:

The Magus then returns to his story, to tell a coda of the return to their kingdoms. Remember, these were the sensual palaces they left behind to make the journey. But he has changed, and is "no longer at ease." In Christian theology, "dispensation" means a divinely ordained system prevailing at a particular period of history. The phrase "the old dispensation" means that the divine system, the meaning of life, has changed. He then finds his own people to be "alien" as they "clutch" false idols.

The trace of Anticlimax:

The Magus is existentially exhausted and ultimately suicidal, as he ends with "I should be glad of another death"—meaning his own. In this deeply anticlimactic ending, the poem imagines the advent of Christianity as a calamity for the old world. He may also wish for death because he no longer has use for earthly pleasures, and looks forward to the kingdom of heaven. Another possible interpretation of the last line is that the Magus is speaking during the time period when Christ has been born, but has not yet

died. The Magus would then be wishing for Christ's death, and thus for his resurrection and the salvation of mankind. It's important to notice that these two possible meanings of the last line of "Journey of the Magi" are not mutually exclusive: the context of the poem is the point of view of someone with a new faith that makes his old position and world obsolete. He is waiting for his own death, along with the death and of Christ, who will be born again to redeem the world and usher in a new dispensation, a world in which the Magi themselves have no place.

Symbols, Allegory and Motifs employed:

The journey of the Magi across the desert is an allegory for conversion to Christianity.

Weather (motif)

The cold winter weather is a symbol of the hardship of doubt. The summer weather at the palaces represents sensuous decadence. The Magi experience a supernatural symbolic seasonal shift to spring as they descend into the valley. The temperate weather in the valley represents the mild, restrained nature of faith.

Sherbet (symbol)

The sweet dessert is a symbol for sensuous pleasure, and by extension Paganism.

River (symbol)

The water is a symbol of the grace offered by the birth of Jesus. It brings fertility to the valley, represented by the smell of vegetation. The running stream and water-mill gives movement to a landscape that was frozen in the last stanza. This is also a Biblical allusion, a symbol of Jesus: in John 4:10-14, Jesus called himself the Living Water. The stream powers a mill "beating the darkness," alluding to Jesus' claim in John 8:12 to be the Light of the World.

Three trees (symbol)

The "three trees low on the sky" have been interpreted variously by scholars to symbolize the crucifixion of Christ with the two thieves on crosses to either side of him, or the Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

White Horse (symbol)

The "white horse" refers to the one in Zechariah 6:5, who announces the coming of Jesus.

Vine leaves (symbol)

A symbol of Christ as the "True Vine" (John 15:1, 5)

Lintel (symbol)

The lintel represents the threshold of conversion.

Dicing (symbol)

The men gambling allude to Judas' betrayal of Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-16) and to the dicing of Roman soldiers for Christ's clothing after he was killed.

Wine-skins (symbol)

Christianity will be the new religion to fill new wine-skins. The kicking of the empty old wine-skins in the passage represents the change of the old dispensation to the new.

Let Us Sum Up:

The last part of the poem is more blatantly the Magus reminiscing about the story ("all this was a long time ago, I remember"), and in his recollection he seems to be doubtful about whether or not the birth was a good or a bad thing, replacing as it would his own religion and culture. In fact, at the end of the poem he seems to regard it as a bad thing indeed, with the Magus wishing for his own death alongside the death of his peoples' old religion and ways.

Unit End Exercises:

Does the quote from a 17th-century sermon at the beginning change the way you read the poem? How so?

How does Eliot portray the coming of Christianity in this poem?

Why do you think he chooses to do so from the point of view of the Magi?

What kind of effect does this have on the Christian message of the poem, if there is one?

Since there isn't much detail about the Magi in the Bible, what kind of effect does their doubtful, fearful, miserable characterization here have on the overall message of the poem?

What is all that symbolism doing there in the middle passage? How does the piling on of symbols change the nature of the poem, and, strangely, its speaker? How does the "doubling up" of speakers in this poem—both the Magus and Eliot—affect the story that's being told?

Why do you think this poem is so often read as a conversion narrative? What do you think this poem can tell us, if anything, about how Eliot felt about his own conversion?

Answers to Check Your Progress:

The title of the poem refers to a "journey." This word means an act of traveling from one place to another, but also, in a metaphorical sense, the long and often difficult process of personal change and development.

"Journey of the Magi" begins with a quotation from a Christmas sermon, which establishes the initial choral voice of the poem: the Persian

kings who crossed the desert in winter to honor the birth of the baby Jesus. In the quotation, the magi, speaking in a plural "we," describe how the journey was difficult for them physically, emotionally, and spiritually. This quotation leads into a longer description of the difficulties of the journey.

The second stanza begins with a new dramatic beat: The dark night of the soul has passed, and it is now the dawn of a new day, literally and spiritually. The Magi descend into the fertile Judean valley. This stanza is full of Biblical allusions. The Magi find the manger where Jesus was born.

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UNIT IV – "THE UNKNOWN CITIZEN"

Introduction:

The poem begins with an ironic epigraph, "To JS/07 M 378 / This Marble

Monument / Is Erected by the State." The Bureau of Statistics and all other reports show that he will complied with his duties to "the Greater Community." He worked in a factory and paid his union dues. He had no odd views. The Social Psychology investigators found him to be normal, as did the Press: he was popular, "liked a drink," bought the daily paper, and had the "normal" reactions to advertisements. He was fully insured. The Health-card report shows he was in the hospital only once, and left cured.

Objectives:

The Producers Research and High-Grade Living investigators also showed he was normal and "had everything necessary to the Modern Man"—radio, car, etcetera. The Public Opinion researchers found "he held the proper opinions for the time of year," supporting peace in peacetime but serving when there was war. He was married and had the appropriate number of five children, according to the Eugenicist. He never interfered with the public schools. It is absurd to ask whether he was free or happy, for if anything had been wrong, "we should certainly have heard."

Analysis:

"The Unknown Citizen" (1940) is one of Auden's most famous poems. Often anthologized and read by students in high school and college, it is renowned for its wit and irony in complaining about the stultifying and anonymous qualities of bureaucratic, semi-socialist Western societies. Its structure is that of a satiric elegy, as though the boring, unknown citizen was so utterly unremarkable that the state honored him with a poetic monument about how little trouble he caused for anyone. It resembles the "Unknown Soldier" memorials that nations erect to honor the soldiers who fought and died for their countries and whose names have been lost to posterity; Britain's is located in Westminster Abbey and the United States' is located in Arlington, Virginia. This one, in an unnamed location, lists the unknown man as simply "JS/07 M 378."

The Rhyme Scheme of the Poem:

The rhyme scheme changes a few times throughout the poem. Most frequently the reader notices rhyming couplets. These sometimes use the same number of syllables, but they are not heroic couplets—no, they are not in iambic pentameter—they are often 11 or 13 syllables long, or of differing lengths. These patterns increase the dry humor of the poem.

Author's Perception:

Auden's "Unknown Citizen" is not anonymous like the Unknown Soldier, for the bureaucracy knows a great deal about him. The named agencies give the sense, as early as 1940, that a powerful Big Brother kind of bureaucracy watches over its citizens and collects data on them and keeps it throughout one's life. This feeling makes the poem eerie and prescient; one often thinks of the dystopian, totalitarian states found in the writings of George Orwell and Aldous Huxley or the data-driven surveillance state of today. In Auden's context, one might think of the state-focused governments of Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini.

Being a common man:

The Big Brother perspective begins from the very outset of the poem, with its evocation of a Bureau of Statistics. The man has had every aspect of his life catalogued. He served his community, he held a job, he paid union dues, he did not hold radical views, he reacted normally to advertisements, he had insurance, he possessed the right material goods, he had proper opinions about current events, and he married and had the right amount of children. It does not appear on paper that he did anything wrong or out of place. In fact, "he was a saint" from the state's perspective, having "served the Greater Community." The words used to describe him—"normal," "right," "sensible," "proper," "popular"—indicate that he is considered the ideal citizen. He is praised as "unknown" because there was nothing interesting to know. Consider, in comparison, the completely normalized protagonist Emmet in The Lego Movie.

Rhetoric Questions asked:

At the end of the poem, the closing couplet asks, "Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd: / Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard." With these last lines comes the deeper meaning of the poem, the irony that despite the entire bureaucratic data gathering, some aspect of the individual might not have been captured. It becomes clear that the citizen is also "unknown" because in this statistical gathering of data, the man's individuality and identity are lost. This bureaucratic society, focused on its official view of the common good, assesses a person using external, easily-catalogued characteristics rather than respect for one's uniqueness, one's particular thoughts, feelings, hopes, fears, and goals.

The Speaker of the Poem:

Interestingly, and ironically, the speaker himself is also unknown. The professionals in the poem— "his employers," "our Social Psychology workers," "our researchers into Public Opinion," "our Eugenicist"— are just as anonymous and devoid of personality. While a person might be persuaded that he is free or happy, the evidence of his life shows that he is just one more cog in the faceless, nameless bureaucratic machine. We learn that the words we are about to read are written on a statue or monument dedicated to "The Unknown Citizen." The poem consists of several

different kinds of people and organizations weighing in on the character of our dear "Citizen."

Faultless Follower of Rules:

First, the not-so-friendly-sounding "Bureau of Statistics" says that "no official complaint" was ever made against him. More than that, the guy was a veritable saint, whose good deeds included serving in the army and not getting fired. He belonged to a union and paid his dues, and he liked to have a drink from time to time. His list of stirring accomplishments goes on: he bought a newspaper and had normal reactions to advertisements. He went to the hospital once – we don't know what for – and bought a few expensive appliances. He would go with the flow and held the same opinions as everyone else regarding peace and war. He had five kids, and we're sure they were just lovely. In fact, the only thing the government doesn't know about the guy is whether he was "free" and "happy," two utterly insignificant, trivial little details. He couldn't have been unhappy, though, because otherwise the government would have heard.

Epigraph

(To JS/07 M 378 This Marble Monument? Is Erected by the State)

The epigraph lets us in on a secret: we're reading a dramatic poem. It's all an act. The poem is pretending to be an official celebration of a dead person: the Unknown Citizen. The words are inscribed on a "marble monument" that was paid for by the State, or government. Which government? We don't know. But referring to "the State" makes it sound very ominous, like George Orwell's "Big Brother" from 1984. Marble isn't cheap, and most people can't afford to use it as a building material. The government, however, has seemingly infinite financial resources to work with, because it takes money from everyone. As for "JS/07 M 378," we think Auden is just having fun by stringing a bunch of letters and numbers together in some incomprehensible way.

Marble Monument:

It seems that "JS/07 M 378" is how the Unknown Citizen is identified, and the monument is dedicated "To" him. Referring to people in this way is, obviously, very cold and impersonal, but it can also be convenient, so bureaucrats do it all the time. To give a chilling but relevant bit of context, at the time this poem was written, the Nazis were already starting to identify Jewish prisoners with numbered tattoos, though this is not something that Auden would have known. But, in retrospect, this grisly parallel makes the "marble monument" seem that much more sinister. By the way, the monument is clearly a parody of the Tomb(s) of the Unknown Soldier, found in many different nations and dedicated to soldiers who died anonymously in battle. One of the most famous of such tombs lies underneath the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, which is a marble monument. You can read more about the Unknown Soldier in "What's up with the Title?"

The impersonal Poetry:

The poem begins by describing a person referred to as, simply, "He." We take this to be "The Unknown Citizen," which makes sense, because his name isn't known. For simplicity's sake, we're going to refer to him as "The UC." (UC is impersonal, but slightly less impersonal than JS/07 M 378".) The Bureau of Statistics has found that "no official complaint" has been made against our guy, the UC. Now, this is a strange way to start a poem of celebration. It's a total backhanded compliment. It's like if you asked someone what they thought of your new haircut and they replied, "Well, it's not hideous." Um, thanks…?

Parody used in the Poem:

But here's a question: what on earth is the Bureau of Statistics, and why is it investigating the UC? There isn't any Bureau of Statistics in any country that we know of, but most "bureaus," or government offices, deal with statistics every day. The Bureau of Statistics seems to be a parody of such "bureaucracies," which are large, complicated organizations that produce a lot of red tape and official paperwork. If the Bureau of Statistics has information about the UC, then it probably has information about everyone, because, in a certain sense, the UC represents everyone. He's the average Joe.

Being a Human:

The fact that there was no "official" complaint against the UC doesn't tell us much. Were there "unofficial" complaints? We don't know, and from the poem's perspective, it doesn't seem to matter. Auden subtly pushes back on the anonymity of the UC in one interesting way, however. The first word of the second line is "One," which produces a minor joke if you stop reading there: The UC was found to be…One, as in he was found to be a single person: an individual. This is funny, because an individual is exactly what the idea of an "Unknown Citizen" is not.

Significant Poetic Lines:

And all the reports on his conduct agree

That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a saint,

For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.

Get out your highlighters and reading glasses: we're still poring through the paperwork of the lovable Bureau of Statistics. Now we have in front of us the "reports on his conduct." Let's see: ah, yes, it appears the man was a saint. But not a saint likes St. Francis or Mother Teresa: those are "old-fashioned" saints, who performed miracles and helped feed the hungry and clothe the poor. No, the UC is a "modern" saint, which means that he always served the "Greater Community." This community could include the poor and the hungry, but somehow we think that's not what the speaker has in mind. And the words "Greater Community" are capitalized as if it were a proper name, though it's not.

As in the first two lines, these lines raise more questions than they answer. Who issued these "reports"? His friends? Lovers? Co-workers? Some guy in an office somewhere? We don't have an answer.

Rhyme Scheme of the Poem:

First, the syntax (the order of the words) is weird because line 6 begins with the phrase "except for the war," which we would normally expect to come at the end of a sentence. Secondly, the poem unexpectedly shifts from an ABABA rhyme scheme to a rhyming couplet (retired/fired). This is such a simple and obvious rhyme that it makes the UC's life sound even more awkward and boring.

Lets Sum Up:

Except for the War till the day he retired

He worked in a factory and never got fired,

The UC had one of the most boring jobs in the world: factory work. (We're assuming he didn't work in Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory) Notice how the poem says very few truly nice things about the UC. Everything is phrased in the negative. Instead of, "he was great at his job and everybody loved him," we get, "he never got fired." It's another backhanded compliment. We should probably assume that he didn't work in the factory during the war because he was fighting as a soldier. Formally, these lines sound slightly different than what came before, maybe even a little "off." The formal structure of these two lines differs from the two preceding lines in two ways. Finally, these lines are the first to really suggest a particular nation or culture, and the giveaway is "Fudge Motors, Inc." For one thing, most car manufacturers were located in America in the 1930s. For another, the name of the company sounds a whole lot like Detroit-based "Ford Motors, Inc." the first and largest auto company in the world at the time. And, yes, "Fudge" is a very silly name, as we're sure Auden was aware.

Unit End Exercises:

Read the following Lines 8-11 and answer the following questions:

But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.

Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,

For his Union reports that he paid his dues,

(Our report on his Union shows it was sound)

1) What is the name of the company he worked?
2) Was he odd in his views?
3) Who reported that he paid his dues dully?
4) Was he a perfect employee?

Answers to Check Your Progress:

a) Finally, we get a positive accomplishment. The UC "satisfied his employers."

Wait a minute, that doesn't sound so impressive after all. "Satisfied" is a lot more neutral than, say, "thrilled" or "wowed."

b) But right after this lukewarm praise, we get more negative praise – for not being something.

c) The UC was not a "scab" and he didn't have unusual opinions around the workplace. (A "scab," by the way, isn't just the thing your mother told you not to pick off your scraped elbow. It's also the word used to describe people who would replace workers who were on strike.)

d) Unions aren't nearly as powerful as they used to be, but back in the 1930s, they had the power to cripple major companies through labor strikes – assuming there was no one with whom to replace the workers.

e) Although companies were happy to find "scabs," no one really respected the replacements because they were not team players and only looked out for themselves.

f) The fact that the UC wasn't a scab is really just another example of his normalcy.

g) He was a good union member and "paid his dues." More importantly, the union itself was normal, or "sound."

h) The biggest accusation made about unions during this time was that they were secretly socialist or even communist organizations. The speaker confirms that the UC's union is neither of those things.

i) In this poem, it seems that everyone is investigating everyone else. Behind all the reassuring clichés, there is a lot of suspicion and paranoia on the part of the State.

Suggested Reading:

Auden, W. H. (1942). "The Unknown Citizen". Another Time. Random House. Archived from the original on January 16, 2013. Retrieved February 28, 2013.

Haffenden, John. "W.H. Auden." Routledge, 1983.

Shmoop Editorial Team (11 November 2008). "Home Poetry, The Unknown Citizen Introduction". Shmoop University, Inc. Archived from the original on November 9, 2013. Retrieved November 8, 2013.

Hewett, Ronald. "A Choice of Poets." London: Harrap, 1968.

UNIT V - DEATH OF A NATURALIST

Introduction:

It is a collection of poems written by Seamus Heaney, who received the 1995 Nobel Prize in Literature. The collection was Heaney's first major published volume, and includes ideas that he had presented at meetings of The Belfast Group. Death of a Naturalist won the Cholmondeley Award, the Gregory Award, the Somerset Maugham Award, and the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize.

Objectives:

The work consists of 34 short poems and is largely concerned with childhood experiences and the formulation of adult identities, family relationships, and rural life. The collection begins with one of Heaney's best-known poems, "Digging", and includes the acclaimed "Death of a Naturalist" and "Mid-Term Break".

Seamus Heaney as a Naturalist:

Death of a Naturalist is a blank verse poem that focuses on the loss of childhood innocence. Heaney looks back to a time when he was a boy initially enthralled by the local flax-dam, an area of boggy water in his native County Derry, Northern Ireland. The first person speaker concentrates on the resident frog population and the frog life-cycle.

But as the poem progresses the speaker's viewpoint alters - the once fascinating frogs become a threat, the language changes radically to reflect this and begins to create tension within the poem.

The conflict in the poem:

The two stanzas are highly contrasting. The first is full of positive delight as the boy observes and is fascinated by the frogs and frogspawn of the flax-dam. The second brings fear and loathing as the male frogs invade with their coarse croaking and belligerent menace. There is a parallel between the life cycle of the frog and the development of the boy - here is an innocent child changing into a young adolescent, a world of delight and innocence transformed into one that threatens and disgusts.

The linguistic approach of the poetry:

Heaney's language is typically rich in what have become known as clusters of sound - alliteration and assonance juxtaposed, the varied vowel and consonant sounds carrying different rhythms, the rise and fall, the mix of hard and soft.

For example:

Right down the dam gross bellied frogs were cocked

On sods; their loose necks pulsed like sails. Some hopped:

The slap and plop were obscene threats.

Lets Sum Up:

Death of a Naturalist takes the reader into this textured world of phonetics, sounds that are born in a landscape in which the young Heaney lived and loved. The life cycle of a frog is something many of us are familiar with - the poem captures this process as it impinges on the psyche of the young speaker. At first it is a wonder, something to marvel at. Later on, with the child grown, the frogs take on a different persona. Life has changed irrevocably. The mindset of the boy has altered, he runs away in fear, instinct kicking in.

Unit End Exercises:

a) Judging by the events and information in the poem, approximately how old do you think the speaker is? How did you come to your estimate?

b) What do you think attracts the speaker to collecting the frogspawn in the first place (besides being part of his homework)?

c) Why do you think Heaney uses some of these soft, pleasant words like "delicately," "best," and "warm" to describe what seems like a pretty gross scene (frogspawn in a rotting flax dam)? When in the poem do you notice that Heaney no longer uses the gentler descriptive words among the nasty ones to describe the frogs? And why do you think he makes this shift?

d) In end of the poem, what do you think the speaker is really scared of? Deep down, he can't possibly think that frogs are going to take him down, but he is sincerely afraid. Why?

e) Even though his hobby didn't harm the tadpoles at all, do you think the speaker feels guilty for taking the frogspawn? If so, why?

Answers to Check Your Progress:

a) On the mountain live nine muses, each of whom represent a poetic inspiration. In Heaney's Helicon is a well which indicates that his inspiration comes from within the earth rather than above it.

b) This theme resonates across his work in the poem "Digging" or in the later Bog Poems. He also states that he rhymes "to see myself", echoing the common theme found in the poem "Digging" that he uses poetry to understand the depths of the well and his reflection within it.

c) Throughout the poem, Heaney walks the reader through each stage of his life up until the point he wrote Personal Helicon.

d) He expresses to the reader how he loses sight of the outside inspirations he sought after as a child, and instead looks to himself.

e) This can be seen when he states, "To stare, big-eyed Narcissus into some spring is beneath all adult dignity".

f) In this quote he parallels himself to Narcissus, a hunter in Greek Mythology who is cursed to fall in love with his own reflection by the goddess Nemesis after he shuns Echo, an Oread nymph.

g) The reader can see that for a short time after his college experience, Heaney relies on only himself for inspiration. Eventually he realizes his mistake, and unlike Narcissus, is able to bring himself back to reality.

Suggested Reading:

- Allen, Michael, Ed. *Seamus Heaney*. Basingstoke : Macmillan, 1997.
- Cañadas, Ivan. "Working Nation(s): Seamus Heaney's 'Digging' and the Work Ethic in Post-Colonial and Minority Writing." *EESE: Erfurt Electronic Studies in English* (2010).[5]
- Corcoran, Neil. *The Poetry of Seamus Heaney: a Critical Study*. London: Faber, 1998.
- Foster, John Wilson. *The Achievement of Seamus Heaney*. Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1995.
- Garratt, Robert F., Ed., *Critical Essays on Seamus Heaney*. New York: G.K. Hall, 1995.
- Heaney, Seamus. *New Selected Poems, 1966-1987*. London & Boston: Faber and Faber, 1990.

UNIT VI - A DOLL'S HOUSE

Introduction:

In 2006, the centennial of Ibsen's death, A Doll's House held the distinction of being the world's most performed play that year. UNESCO has inscribed Ibsen's autographed manuscripts of A Doll's House on the Memory of the World Register in 2001, in recognition of their historical value. The title of the play is most commonly translated as A Doll's House, though some scholars use A Doll House. John Simon says that A Doll's House is "the British term for what call a 'dollhouse'". Egil Törnqvist says of the alternative title: "Rather than being superior to the traditional rendering, it simply sounds more idiomatic to Americans."

Objectives:

Students get familiar with the play A Doll's House (Bokmål: Et dukkehjem; also translated as A Doll House) which is a three-act play written by Norway's Henrik Ibsen. It premiered at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 21 December 1879, having been published earlier that month. The play is set in a Norwegian town circa 1879. Students get to know the different ethnicity n of the world around them. The play is significant for the way it deals with the fate of a married woman, who at the time in Norway lacked reasonable opportunities for self-fulfillment in a male-dominated world. It aroused a great sensation at the time, and caused a "storm of outraged controversy" that went beyond the theatre to the world newspapers and society.

List of Characters:

Characters Nora

Torvald Helmer

Krogstad

Mrs. Linde

Dr. Rank

Children

Anne-Marie

Helene

•**Nora Helmer** – wife of Torvald, mother of three, is living out the ideal of the 19th-century wife, but leaves her family at the end of the play.

•**Torvald Helmer** – Nora's husband, a newly promoted bank manager, professes to be enamoured of his wife but their marriage stifles her.

•**Dr Rank** – a rich family friend. He is terminally ill, and it is implied that his "tuberculosis of the spine" originates from a venereal disease contracted by his father.

•**Kristine Linda** – Nora's old school friend, widowed, is seeking employment (sometimes spelled Christine in English translations). She was in a relationship with Krogstad prior to the plays setting.

•**Nils Krogstad** – an employee at Torvald's bank, single father, he is pushed to desperation. A supposed scoundrel, he is revealed to be a long-lost lover of Christine.

•**The Children** – Nora and Torvald's children: Ivar, Bobby and Emmy (in order of age).

•**Anne Marie** – Nora's former nanny, who gave up her own daughter to "strangers" when she became, as she says, the only mother Nora knew. She now cares for Nora's children.

•**Helen** – the Helmers' maid

•**The Porter** – delivers a Christmas tree to the Helmer household at the beginning of the play.

Synopsis-Act One

The play opens at Christmas time as Nora Helmer enters her home carrying many packages. Nora's husband Torvald is working in his study when she arrives. He playfully rebukes her for spending so much money on Christmas gifts, calling her his "little squirrel." He teases her about how the previous year she had spent weeks making gifts and ornaments by hand because money was scarce. This year Torvald is due a promotion at the bank where he works, so Nora feels that they can let themselves go a little. The maid announces two visitors: Mrs. Kristine Linde, an old friend of Nora's, who has come seeking employment; and Dr. Rank, a close friend of the family, who is let into the study. Kristine has had a difficult few years, ever since her husband died leaving her with no money or children. Nora says that things have not been easy for them either: Torvald became sick, and they had to travel to Italy

Intelligence Kristine:

Kristine explains that when her mother was ill she had to take care of her brothers, but now that they are grown she feels her life is "unspeakably empty." Nora promises to talk to Torvald about finding her a job. Kristine gently tells Nora that she is like a child. Nora is offended, so she teases the idea that she got money from "some admirer," so they could travel to Italy to improve Torvald's health. She told Torvald that her father gave her the money, but in fact she managed to illegally borrow it without his knowledge because women couldn't do anything economical like signing checks without their husband. Over the years, she has been secretly working and saving up to pay it off.

Krogstad: Morally diseased:

Krogstad, a lower-level employee at Torvald's bank, arrives and goes into the study. Nora is clearly uneasy when she sees him. Dr. Rank leaves the study and mentions that he feels wretched, though like everyone he wants to go on living. In contrast to his physical illness, he says that the man in the study, Krogstad, is "morally diseased."

A Fortunate Moment:

After the meeting with Krogstad, Torvald comes out of the study. Nora asks him if he can give Kristine a position at the bank and Torvald is very positive, saying that this is a fortunate moment, as a position has just become available. Torvald, Kristine, and Dr. Rank leave the house, leaving Nora alone. The nanny returns with the children and Nora plays with them for a while until Krogstad creeps through the ajar door, into the living room, and surprises her. Krogstad tells Nora that Torvald intends to fire him at the bank and asks her to intercede with Torvald to allow him to keep his job. She refuses, and Krogstad threatens to blackmail her about the loan she took out for the trip to Italy; he knows that she obtained this loan by forging her father's signature after his death. Krogstad leaves and when Torvald returns, Nora tries to convince him not to fire Krogstad. Torvald refuses to hear her pleas, explaining that Krogstad is a liar and a hypocrite and that he committed a terrible crime: he forged someone's name. Torvald feels physically ill in the presence of a man "poisoning his own children with lies and dissimulation."

Act Two:

Christine arrives to help Nora repair a dress for a costume function that she and Torvald plan to attend the next day. Torvald returns from the bank, and Nora pleads with him to reinstate Krogstad, claiming she is worried Krogstad will publish libelous articles about Torvald and ruin his career. Torvald dismisses her fears and explains that, although Krogstad is a good worker and seems to have turned his life around, he must be fired because he is too familial around Torvald in front of other bank personnel. Torvald then retires to his study to work.

Extra Marital Affair:

Dr. Rank, the family friend, arrives. Nora asks him for a favor, but Rank responds by revealing that he has entered the terminal stage of tuberculosis of the spine and that he has always been secretly in love with her. Nora tries to deny the first revelation and make light of it but is more disturbed by his declaration of love. She then clumsily attempts to tell him that she is not in love with him, but that she loves him dearly as a friend.

Conflict between husband and wife:

Desperate after being fired by Torvald, Krogstad arrives at the house. Nora convinces Dr. Rank to go into Torvald's study so he will not see Krogstad. When Krogstad confronts Nora, he declares that he no longer cares about the remaining balance of Nora's loan, but that he will instead

preserve the associated bond to blackmail Torvald into not only keeping him employed but also promoting him. Nora explains that she has done her best to persuade her husband, but he refuses to change his mind. Krogstad informs Nora that he has written a letter detailing her crime (forging her father's signature of surety on the bond) and put it in Torvald's mailbox, which is locked.

Difficult Situation:

Nora tells Kristine of her difficult situation. She gives her Krogstad's card with his address, and asks her to try to convince him to relent. Torvald enters and tries to retrieve his mail, but Nora distracts him by begging him to help her with the dance she has been rehearsing for the costume party, feigning anxiety about performing. She dances so badly and acts so childishly that Torvald agrees to spend the whole evening coaching her. When the others go to dinner, Nora stays behind for a few minutes and contemplates killing herself to save her husband from the shame of the revelation of her crime and to preempt any gallant gesture on his part to save her reputation.

Act Three:

Kristine tells Krogstad that she only married her husband because she had no other means to support her sick mother and young siblings and that she has returned to offer him her love again. She believes that he would not have stooped to unethical behavior if he had not been devastated by her abandonment and been in dire financial straits. Krogstad changes his mind and offers to take back his letter from Torvald. However, Kristine decides that Torvald should know the truth for the sake of his and Nora's marriage.

Cause of their Separation:

After literally dragging Nora home from the party, Torvald goes to check his mail but is interrupted by Dr. Rank, who has followed them. Dr. Rank chats for a while, conveying obliquely to Nora that this is a final goodbye, as he has determined that his death is near. Dr. Rank leaves, and Torvald retrieves his letters. As he reads them, Nora steels herself to take her life. Torvald confronts her with Krogstad's letter. Enraged, he declares that he is now completely in Krogstad's power; he must yield to Krogstad's demands and keep quiet about the whole affair. He berates Nora, calling her a dishonest and immoral woman and telling her that she is unfit to raise their children. He says that from now on their marriage will be only a matter of appearances.

Letter Written to Nora:

A maid enters, delivering a letter to Nora. The letter is from Krogstad, yet Torvald demands to read the letter and takes it from Nora. Torvald exults that he is saved, as Krogstad has returned the incriminating bond, which Torvald immediately burns along with Krogstad's letters. He takes back his harsh words to his wife and tells her that he forgives her.

Nora realizes that her husband is not the strong and gallant man she thought he was, and that he truly loves himself more than he does Nora.

Loss of Reputation:

Torvald explains that when a man has forgiven his wife, it makes him love her all the more since it reminds him that she is totally dependent on him, like a child. He dismisses the fact that Nora had to make the agonizing choice between her conscience and his health, and ignores her years of secret efforts to free them from the ensuing obligations and the danger of loss of reputation. He preserves his peace of mind by thinking of the incident as a mere mistake that she made owing to her foolishness, one of her most endearing feminine traits. We must come to a final settlement. We have never exchanged one serious word about serious things.

The Confrontational Scene:

Nora tells Torvald that she is leaving him, and in a confrontational scene expresses her sense of betrayal and disillusionment. She says he has never loved her; they have become strangers to each other. She feels betrayed by his response to the scandal involving Krogstad, and she says she must get away to understand herself. She has lost her religion. She says that she has been treated like a doll to play with for her whole life, first by her father and then by him. Concerned for the family reputation, Torvald insists that she fulfill her duty as a wife and mother, but Nora says that she has duties to herself that are just as important, and that she cannot be a good mother or wife without learning to be more than a plaything. She reveals that she had expected that he would want to sacrifice his reputation for hers and that she had planned to kill herself to prevent him from doing so. She now realizes that Torvald is not at all the kind of person she had believed him to be and that their marriage has been based on mutual fantasies and misunderstandings.

Torvald as Narcissist:

Torvald is unable to comprehend Nora's point of view, since it contradicts all that he has been taught about the female mind throughout his life. Furthermore, he is so narcissistic that it is impossible for him to understand how he appears to her, as selfish, hypocritical, and more concerned with public reputation than with actual morality. Nora leaves her keys and wedding ring, and as Torvald breaks down and begins to cry, baffled by what has happened, Nora then leaves the house, slamming the door behind her. Whether or not she ever comes back is never made clear.

Alternative ending:

Ibsen's German agent felt that the original ending would not play well in German theatres. In addition, copyright laws of the time would not preserve Ibsen's original work. Therefore, for it to be considered acceptable, and prevent the translator from altering his work, Ibsen was forced to write an alternative ending for the German premiere. In this ending, Nora is led to her children after having argued with Torvald.

Seeing them, she collapses, and as the curtain is brought down, it is implied that she stays. Ibsen later called the ending a disgrace to the original play and referred to it as a "barbaric outrage". Virtually all productions today use the original ending, as do nearly all of the film versions of the play.

Illegal Loan:

Much that happened between Nora and Torvald happened to Laura and her husband, Victor. Similar to the events in the play, Laura signed an illegal loan to save her husband. She wanted the money to find a cure for her husband's A Doll's House questions the traditional roles of men and women in 19th-century marriage. To many 19th-century Europeans, this was scandalous. The covenant of marriage was considered holy, and to portray it as Ibsen did was controversial.[40] However, the Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw found Ibsen's willingness to examine society without prejudice exhilarating.

Critical Reception:

The Swedish playwright August Strindberg criticised the play in his volume of essays and short stories Getting Married (1884). Strindberg questioned Nora's walking out and leaving her children behind with a man that she herself disapproved of so much that she would not remain with him. Strindberg also considers that Nora's involvement with an illegal financial fraud that involved Nora forging a signature, all done behind her husband's back, and then Nora's lying to her husband regarding Krogstad's blackmail, are serious crimes that should raise questions at the end of the play, when Nora is moralistically judging her husband. And Strindberg points out that Nora's complaint that she and Torvald "have never exchanged one serious word about serious things," is contradicted by the discussions that occur in act one and two.

Circumstances leading to the divorce:

The reasons Nora leaves her husband are complex, and various details are hinted at throughout the play. In the last scene, she tells her husband she has been "greatly wronged" by his disparaging and condescending treatment of her, and his attitude towards her in their marriage — as though she were his "doll wife" — and the children in turn have become her "dolls," leading her to doubt her own qualifications to raise her children. She is troubled by her husband's behavior in regard to the scandal of the loaned money. She does not love her husband, she feels they are strangers, she feels completely confused, and suggests that her issues are shared by many women. George Bernard Shaw suggests that she left to begin "a journey in search of self-respect and apprenticeship to life," and that her revolt is "the end of a chapter of human history."

Ibsen's views about women:

Ibsen was inspired by the belief that "a woman cannot be herself in modern society," since it is "an exclusively male society, with laws made by men and with prosecutors and judges who assess feminine conduct from

a masculine standpoint." Its ideas can also be seen as having a wider application: Michael Meyer argued that the play's theme is not women's rights, but rather "the need of every individual to find out the kind of person he or she really is and to strive to become that person." In a speech given to the Norwegian Association for Women's Rights in 1898, Ibsen insisted that he "must disclaim the honor of having consciously worked for the women's rights movement," since he wrote "without any conscious thought of making propaganda," his task having been "the description of humanity."

In general, Torvald disapproves of any kind of change in Nora's constant, obedient demeanor because he needs to control her behavior. When Nora begins to dance the tarantella wildly in Act Two, he is unsettled. In Act One, Nora says that it would humiliate Torvald if he knew he was secretly in debt to her for his life, indicating that Torvald wants the power in his marriage to be one-sided rather than mutual.

Depending on independent:

By the end of Act Three, both Nora and Mrs. Linde have entered new phases in their lives. Nora has chosen to abandon her children and her husband because she wants independence from her roles as mother and wife. In contrast, Mrs. Linde has chosen to abandon her independence to marry Krogstad and take care of his family. She likes having people depend on her, and independence does not seem to fulfill her. Despite their apparent opposition, both Nora's and Mrs. Linde's decisions allow them to fulfill their respective personal desires. They have both chosen their own fates, freely and without male influence. Ibsen seems to feel that the nature of their choices is not as important as the fact that both women make the choices themselves.

Seeking a Job:

Since then she is secretly saving to pay off her debt. Also, Halmer became a bank manager and thus their economic conditions got better. Linda tells Nora that she came in search of a job. Nora assures to help her. Krogstad (an employee at Torvald's bank) appears and goes straight to Halmer. His appearance makes Nora uneasy. A little later Halmer comes out and when Nora tells him about Mrs Linde, he at once agrees to give her a job at his bank. All leave and Nora remains alone.

Unexpected turn:

Just then Krogstad comes and tells Nora that her husband is about to fire him from the job and asks her to pursue her husband to let him retain his job or else he will disclose her crime (forgery) to him. Saying this he leaves. When Halmer returns back, Nora pleads him not to fire Krogstad from his job but Halmer tells about his hypocrisy and lies and remains unmoved to his decision.

Seeking financial help:

The next day Nora being quite worried again pleads her husband not to dismiss Krogstad adding that he will defame him, but fails to convince Halmer. Dr Rank comes and as Nora is about to ask for some financial help, he confesses his love for her as he is about to die of Tuberculosis. Nora is stunned. She gives up the idea of asking for money from him.

Rejected Plea:

A little later Krogstad comes. Nora asks Dr. rank to go to Halmer's study room. Nora tells Krogstad that she tried her best to persuade her husband but he did not change his mind. At this Krogstad says that he will write a letter to Halmer telling about the forgery. Nora begs him not to do so but he puts the letter in the Halmer's mailbox.

Critical situation:

Nora tells Linde about the critical situation. Linde reveals that she was in love with Krogstad before her marriage and even today they love each other. She assures to help Nora by persuading Krogstad. When Halmer tries to open his mailbox, Nora uses her charms to prevent him from opening it saying that he should keep business aside till the next night party. Halmer agrees. Nora feels guilty and even thinks of committing suicide to save her husband from the shame of the revelation of her crime.

Fortune seeker Linda:

The next night, Linde and Krogstad meet. Linde tells him that she had to marry a rich man who could support her and her family. She also tells that she is a widow now and also free from family obligation. She expresses her desire to live with him.

Krogstad is quite pleased. He decides to take back his letter but Linde says that Halmer should know the truth for the sake of marriage. Nora and Halmer return back. Dr Rank who secretly followed them finding Nora alone bids final goodbye as his death is near.

Wife's forgery:

Halmer reads Krogstad letter and is quite outraged over his wife's forgery. He abuses Nora. Just then maid comes with another letter of Krogstad. Halmer reads the letter and is overjoyed to learn that Krogstad has had a change of heart and has returned the bond. He at once forgives his wife.

Nora as a doll:

However, Nora realises that her husband never loved her and she was just a doll whom he played with. She decides to end up living in Halmer's house and in spite of his pleas she goes out 'slamming the door behind her'.

Lets Sum Up:

A Doll's House is a 3-act problem play written when a revolution was going on in Europe. The play is a landmark in the development of a new genre-realism, which depicts life appropriately, thus going against, idealism and utopian thoughts of the preceding ages. The play deals with the fate of a married woman, who lacked opportunities for self-fulfilment in a male dominated-world at that time.

Henrik Ibsen describes the story of a married woman who considered her life to be quite satisfied with her husband in their "doll house" of which she is the doll. However, with the development of the play, she is insulted by her husband for a forgery that she did for his sake, even after knowing the truth.

When the matter is solved, her husband tried to calm her down, but she becomes aware of her status in the "doll's house" and at once leaves it. Thus she is the modern woman who fights against the gender discrimination.

As the play opens, Nora enters her home along with a number of gifts as it is Christmas Eve. Her husband (manager at a bank) who is reading books, chides Nora for spending lavishly on these things as the last year they were out of money because she spent too much. However, as Halmer is about to get a promotion, Nora doesn't find anything wrong in spending money.

The maid comes and announces that Mrs Linde (A widow who is an old school friend of Nora) and Dr Rank (a rich family friend who is secretly in love with Nora) have come. While Halmer goes away, Nora attends Mrs Linde and both ladies start telling about their lives to each other.

Linde tells about her unhappy life. Her husband died without leaving fortune or children for her. She further tells Nora that her mother got ill and she had to take care of her brothers as well. This is why she appears to be older than Nora who seems to be quite young and innocent.

Nora says that her life was equally difficult. Since one last year, they had a hard time as her husband got ill and she had to take him to Italy for his recovery. The expenses of treatment were quite high and she had to borrow money from Krogstad by forging her father's signatures without telling him and even her husband.

Unit End Exercises:

1) Compare Torvald's and Nora's attitudes toward money.
2) Why does Torvald constantly reprimand Nora for her wastefulness and foolishness while simultaneously supporting her behavior? What insight does this contradiction give us into Torvald and Nora's relationship?
3) Compare and contrast Mrs. Linde and Nora at the end of the play.

Answers to check your progress:

1) Torvald and Nora's first conversation establishes Torvald as the member of the household who makes and controls the money and Nora as the one who spends it. Torvald repeatedly teases Nora about her spending, and at one point Mrs. Linde points out that Nora was a big spender in her younger days. These initial comments paint Nora as a shallow woman who is overly concerned with -material delights. Yet Nora's generous tip to the porter in the play's opening scene shows that she is not a selfish woman. More important, once the secret of Nora's loan is made known to the audience, we see that Nora's interest in money stems more from her concern for her family's welfare than from petty desires. We realize that the excitement she has expressed over Torvald's new, well-paying job results from the fact that more spending money means she can finally pay off her debt to Krogstad.

2) While Torvald seems less enthralled by money because he doesn't talk about it except to chastise Nora for her spending, he is obsessed with having a beautiful home, including a beautiful wife. He considers these things important to his reputation, and keeping up this reputation requires money. Although Torvald accuses Nora of wasting money, Nora spends her money mostly on worthy causes, whereas Torvald uses his for selfish, shallow purposes.

3) Torvald perceives Nora as a foolish woman who is ignorant of the way society works, but he likes Nora's foolishness and ignorance because they render her helpless and therefore dependent on him. It soon becomes clear to us that Nora's dependence, not Torvald's love for Nora as a person, forms the foundation of Torvald's affection for her. In Act One, Torvald teases Nora about wasting money but then tries to please her by graciously giving her more. Similarly, he points out her faults but then says he doesn't want her to change a bit. He clearly enjoys keeping Nora in a position where she cannot function in the world without him, even if it means that she remains foolish.

Suggested Reading:

1) Krutch, Joseph Wood (1953). "Modernism" in Modern Drama, A Definition and an Estimate. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. p. 9. OCLC 176284.

2) b Walter, McFarlane, James; Jens, Arup (1998). Four Major Plays. Oxford University Press. ISBN 0192833871. OCLC 39674082.

3) "Henrik Ibsen's psychodramas still grip the world 100 years after his death". Pravda Report. 22 May 2006. Retrieved 30 May 2017.

4) "Henrik Ibsen: A Doll's House". UNESCO. Retrieved 30 May 2017.

UNIT VII - WAITING FOR GODOT

Introduction:

Two men, Vladimir and Estragon, meet near a tree. They converse on various topics and reveal that they are waiting there for a man named Godot. While they wait, two other men enter. Pozzo is on his way to the market to sell his slave, Lucky. He pauses for a while to converse with Vladimir and Estragon. Lucky entertains them by dancing and thinking, and Pozzo and Lucky leave.

Objectives:

After Pozzo and Lucky leave, a boy enters and tells Vladimir that he is a messenger from Godot. He tells Vladimir that Godot will not be coming tonight, but that he will surely come tomorrow. Vladimir asks him some questions about Godot and the boy departs. After his departure, Vladimir and Estragon decide to leave, but they do not move as the curtain falls.

Waiting Continues:

The next night, Vladimir and Estragon again meet near the tree to wait for Godot. Lucky and Pozzo enter again, but this time Pozzo is blind and Lucky is dumb. Pozzo does not remember meeting the two men the night before. They leave and Vladimir and Estragon continue to wait. Shortly after, the boy enters and once again tells Vladimir that Godot will not be coming. He insists that he did not speak to Vladimir yesterday. After he leaves, Estragon and Vladimir decide to leave, but again they do not move as the curtain falls, ending the play.

Vladimir

He is one of the two main characters of the play. Estragon calls him Didi, and the boy addresses him as Mr. Albert. He seems to be the more responsible and mature of the two main characters.

Estragon

The second of the two main characters. Vladimir calls him Gogo. He seems weak and helpless, always looking for Vladimir's protection. He also has a poor memory, as Vladimir has to remind him in the second act of the events that happened the previous night.

Pozzo

He passes by the spot where Vladimir and Estragon are waiting and provides a diversion. In the second act, he is blind and does not remember meeting Vladimir and Estragon the night before.

Lucky

Pozzo's slave, who carries Pozzo's bags and stool. In Act I, he entertains by dancing and thinking. However, in Act II, he is dumb.

Boy

He appears at the end of each act to inform Vladimir that Godot will not be coming that night. In the second act, he insists that he was not there the previous night.

Godot

The man for whom Vladimir and Estragon wait unendingly. Godot never appears in the play. His name and character are often thought to refer to God.

A Variety of Discussion taking place:

Waiting for Godot (/□□□do□/ GOD-oh[1]) is a play by Samuel Beckett, in which two characters, Vladimir (Didi) and Estragon (Gogo), wait for the arrival of someone named Godot who never arrives, and while waiting they engage in a variety of discussions and encounter three other characters.[2] Waiting for Godot is Beckett's translation of his own original French-language play, En attendant Godot, and is subtitled (in English only) "a tragicomedy in two acts".[3] The original French text was composed between 9 October 1948 and 29 January 1949.[4] The premiere, directed by Roger Blin, was on 5 January 1953 at the Théâtre de Babylone [fr], Paris. The English-language version premiered in London in 1955. In a poll conducted by the British Royal National Theatre in 1990, it was voted the "most significant English language play of the 20th century".

Plot: Act I

The play opens on an outdoor scene of two bedraggled companions: the philosophical Vladimir and the weary Estragon who, at the moment, cannot remove his boots from his aching feet, finally muttering, "Nothing to be done." Vladimir takes up the thought loftily, while Estragon vaguely recalls having been beaten the night before. Finally, his boots come off, while the pair ramble and bicker pointlessly. When Estragon suddenly decides to leave, Vladimir reminds him that they must stay and wait for an unspecified person called Godot—a segment of dialogue that repeats often. Unfortunately, the pair cannot agree on where or when they are expected to meet with this Godot. They only know to wait at a tree, and there is indeed a leafless one nearby.

Sharing the dreams:

Eventually, Estragon dozes off and Vladimir rouses him but then stops him before he can share his dreams—another recurring activity between the two men. Estragon wants to hear an old joke, which Vladimir cannot finish without going off to urinate, since every time he starts laughing, a kidney ailment flares up. Upon Vladimir's return, the increasingly jaded Estragon suggests that they hang themselves, but they abandon the idea when the logistics seem ineffective. They then speculate on the potential rewards of continuing to wait for Godot, but can come to no definite conclusions.[7] When Estragon declares his hunger, Vladimir

provides a carrot (among a collection of turnips), at which Estragon idly gnaws, loudly reiterating his boredom.

A terrible cry

A terrible cry heralds the entrance of Lucky, a silent, baggage-burdened slave with a rope tied around his neck, and Pozzo, his arrogant and imperious master, who holds the other end and stops now to rest. Pozzo barks abusive orders at Lucky, which are always quietly followed, while acting civilly though tersely towards the other two. Pozzo enjoys a selfish snack of chicken and wine, before casting the bones to the ground, which Estragon gleefully claims. Having been in a dumbfounded state of silence ever since the arrival of Pozzo and Lucky, Vladimir finally finds his voice to shout criticisms at Pozzo for his mistreatment of Lucky. Pozzo ignores this and explains his intention to sell Lucky, who begins to cry. Estragon takes pity and tries to wipe away Lucky's tears, but, as he approaches, Lucky violently kicks him in the shin. Pozzo then rambles nostalgically but vaguely about his relationship with Lucky over the years, before offering Vladimir and Estragon some compensation for their company. Estragon begins to beg for money when Pozzo instead suggests that Lucky can "dance" and "think" for their entertainment. Lucky's dance, "the Net", is clumsy and shuffling; Lucky's "thinking" is a long-winded and disjointed monologue—it is the first and only time that Lucky speaks.[nb 3] The monologue begins as a relatively coherent and academic lecture on theology but quickly dissolves into mindless verbosity, escalating in both volume and speed, that agonizes the others until Vladimir finally pulls off Lucky's hat, stopping him in mid-sentence. Pozzo then has Lucky pack up his bags, and they hastily leave.

Play of absurd:

Vladimir and Estragon, alone again, reflect on whether they met Pozzo and Lucky before. A boy then arrives, purporting to be a messenger sent from Godot to tell the pair that Godot will not be coming that evening "but surely tomorrow". During Vladimir's interrogation of the boy, he asks if he came the day before, making it apparent that the two men have been waiting for a long period and will likely continue. After the boy departs, the moon appears, and the two men verbally agree to leave and find shelter for the night, but they merely stand without moving.

Act II

It is daytime again and Vladimir begins singing a recursive round about the death of a dog, but twice forgets the lyrics as he sings. Again, Estragon claims to have been beaten last night, despite no apparent injury. Vladimir comments that the formerly bare tree now has leaves and tries to confirm his recollections of yesterday against Estragon's extremely vague, unreliable memory. Vladimir then triumphantly produces evidence of the previous day's events by showing Estragon the wound from when Lucky kicked him. Noticing Estragon's bare footedness, they also discover his previously forsaken boots nearby, which Estragon insists are not his,

although they fit him perfectly. With no carrots left, Vladimir is turned down in offering Estragon a turnip or a radish. He then sings Estragon to sleep with a lullaby before noticing further evidence to confirm his memory: Lucky's hat still lies on the ground. This leads to his waking Estragon and involving him in a frenetic hat-swapping scene. The two then wait again for Godot, while distracting themselves by playfully imitating Pozzo and Lucky, firing insults at each other and then making up, and attempting some fitness routines— all of which fail miserably and end quickly.

Motionless Heap:

Suddenly, Pozzo and Lucky reappear, but the rope is much shorter than during their last visit, and Lucky now guides Pozzo, rather than being controlled by him. As they arrive, Pozzo trips over Lucky and they together fall into a motionless heap. Estragon sees an opportunity to exact revenge on Lucky for kicking him earlier. The issue is debated lengthily until Pozzo shocks the pair by revealing that he is now blind and Lucky is now mute. Pozzo further claims to have lost all sense of time, and assures the others that he cannot remember meeting them before, but also does not expect to recall today's events tomorrow. His commanding arrogance from yesterday appears to have been replaced by humility and insight. His parting words—which Vladimir expands upon later—are ones of utter despair. Lucky and Pozzo depart; meanwhile Estragon has again fallen asleep.

The Circular nature of his experience:

Alone, Vladimir is encountered by (apparently) the same boy from yesterday, though Vladimir wonders whether he might be the other boy's brother. This time, Vladimir begins consciously realizing the circular nature of his experiences: he even predicts exactly what the boy will say, involving the same speech about Godot not arriving today but surely tomorrow. Vladimir seems to reach a moment of revelation before furiously chasing the boy away, demanding that he be recognized the next time they meet. Estragon awakes and pulls his boots off again. He and Vladimir consider hanging themselves once more, but when they test the strength of Estragon's belt (hoping to use it as a noose), it breaks and Estragon's trousers fall down. They resolve tomorrow to bring a more suitable piece of rope and, if Godot fails to arrive, to commit suicide at last. Again, they decide to clear out for the night, but again, they do not move.

Sir Ralph Richardson Comment:

Beckett refrained from elaborating on the characters beyond what he had written in the play. He once recalled that when Sir Ralph Richardson "wanted the low-down on Pozzo, his home address and curriculum vitae, and seemed to make the forthcoming of this and similar information the condition of his condescending to illustrate the part of Vladimir . I told him that all I knew about Pozzo was in the text, that if I had known more I would have put it in the text, and that was true also of the other characters."

The Hat-passing game:

There are no physical descriptions of either of the two characters; however, the text indicates that Vladimir is possibly the heaviest of the pair. The bowlers and other broadly comic aspects of their personas have reminded modern audiences of Laurel and Hardy, who occasionally played tramps in their films. "The hat-passing game in Waiting For Godot and Lucky's inability to think without his hat on are two obvious Beckett derivations from Laurel and Hardy – a substitution of form for essence, covering for reality", wrote Gerald Mast in The Comic Mind: Comedy and the Movies. Their "blather", which indicated Hiberno-English idioms, indicated that they are both Irish.

Religious and Philosophical matters:

Vladimir stands through most of the play whereas Estragon sits down numerous times and even dozes off. "Estragon is inert and Vladimir restless." Vladimir looks at the sky and muses on religious or philosophical matters. Estragon "belongs to the stone", preoccupied with mundane things, what he can get to eat and how to ease his physical aches and pains; he is direct, intuitive. He finds it hard to remember but can recall certain things when prompted, e.g., when Vladimir asks: "Do you remember the Gospels?" Estragon tells Vladimir about the coloured maps of the Holy Land and that he planned to honeymoon by the Dead Sea; it is his short-term memory that is poorest and points to the fact that he may, in fact, be suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Al Alvarez writes: "But perhaps Estragon's forgetfulness is the cement binding their relationship together. He continually forgets, Vladimir continually reminds him; between them they pass the time." They have been together for fifty years but when Pozzo asked–by–they do not reveal their actual ages. Vladimir's life is not without its discomforts too but he is the most resilient of the pair. "Vladimir's pain is primarily mental anguish, which would thus account for his voluntary exchange of his hat for Lucky's, thus signifying Vladimir's symbolic desire for another person's thoughts." These characterizations, for some, represented the act of thinking or mental state (Vladimir) and physical things or the body (Estragon). This is visually depicted in Vladimir's continuous attention to his hat and Estragon, his boots. While the two characters are temperamentally opposite, with their differing responses to a situation, they are both essential as demonstrated in the way Vladimir's metaphysical musings were balanced by Estragon's physical demands.

The play's recurring theme:

The above characterizations, particularly which concerns their existential situation, is also demonstrated in one of the play's recurring theme, which is sleep. There are two instances when Estragon falls asleep in the play and had nightmares, which he wanted to tell Vladimir when he woke. The latter refuses to hear it since he could not tolerate the way the dreamer cannot escape or act during each episode. An interpretation noted the link between the two characters' experiences and the way they represent

them: the impotence in Estragon's nightmare and Vladimir's predicament of waiting as his companion sleeps. It is also said that sleep and impatience allow the spectators to distinguish between the two main characters, that sleep expresses Estragon's focus on his sensations while Vladimir's restlessness shows his focus on his thoughts. This particular aspect involving sleep is indicative of what some called a pattern of duality in the play. In the case of the protagonists, the duality involves the body and the mind, making the characters complementary.

Didi and Gogo

Throughout the play the couple refer to each other by the pet names "Didi" and "Gogo", although the boy addresses Vladimir as "Mister Albert". Beckett originally intended to call Estragon "Lévy" but when Pozzo questions him he gives his name as "Magrégor, André" and also responds to "Catulle" in French or "Catullus" in the first Faber edition. This became "Adam" in the American edition. Beckett's only explanation was that he was "fed up with Catullus".

Vivian Mercier's comment:

He described Waiting for Godot as a play which "has achieved a theoretical impossibility—a play in which nothing happens, that yet keeps audiences glued to their seats. What's more, since the second act is a subtly different reprise of the first, he has written a play in which nothing happens, twice." Mercier once questioned Beckett on the language used by the pair: "It seemed to me...he made Didi and Gogo sound as if they had earned PhDs. 'How do you know they hadn't?' was his reply." They clearly have known better times, a visit to the Eiffel Tower and grape-harvesting by the Rhône; it is about all either has to say about their pasts, save for Estragon's claim to have been a poet, an explanation Estragon provides to Vladimir for his destitution. In the first stage production, which Beckett oversaw, both are "more shabby-genteel than ragged...Vladimir at least is capable of being scandalized...on a matter of etiquette when Estragon begs for chicken bones or money."

Pozzo and Lucky

Although Beckett refused to be drawn on the backgrounds of the characters, this has not stopped actors looking for their own motivation. Jean Martin had a doctor friend called Marthe Gautier, who was working at the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital, and he said to her: "'Listen, Marthe, what could I find that would provide some kind of physiological explanation for a voice like the one written in the text?' [She] said: 'Well, it might be a good idea if you went to see the people who have Parkinson's disease.' So I asked her about the disease. She explained how it begins with a trembling, which gets more and more noticeable, until later the patient can no longer speak without the voice shaking. So I said, 'That sounds exactly what I need.'□"Sam and Roger were not entirely convinced by my interpretation but had no objections." When he explained to Beckett that he was playing Lucky as if he were suffering from Parkinson's, Beckett said, "'Yes, of

course.' He mentioned briefly that his mother had had Parkinson's, but quickly moved on to another subject."

Influenced relationship:

When Beckett was asked why Lucky was so named, he replied, "I suppose he is lucky to have no more expectations..."It has been contended that "Pozzo and Lucky are simply Didi and Gogo writ large", unbalanced as their relationship is. However, Pozzo's dominance is noted to be superficial; "upon closer inspection, it becomes evident that Lucky always possessed more influence in the relationship, for he danced, and more importantly, thought – not as a service, but in order to fill a vacant need of Pozzo: he committed all of these acts for Pozzo. As such, since the first appearance of the duo, the true slave had always been Pozzo." Pozzo credits Lucky with having given him all the culture, refinement, and ability to reason that he possesses. His rhetoric has been learned by rote. Pozzo's "party piece" on the sky is a clear example: as his memory crumbles, he finds himself unable to continue under his own steam.

Lucky, as a slave:

Little is learned about Pozzo besides the fact that he is on his way to the fair to sell his slave, Lucky. He presents himself very much as the Ascendancy landlord, bullying and conceited. His pipe is made by Kapp and Peterson, Dublin's best-known tobacconists (their slogan was "The thinking man's pipe") which he refers to as a "briar" but which Estragon calls a "dudeen" emphasizing the differences in their social standing. He confesses to a poor memory but it is more a result of an abiding self-absorption. "Pozzo is a character who has to overcompensate. That's why he overdoes things ... and his overcompensation has to do with a deep insecurity in him. These were things Beckett said, psychological terms he used."

Dog-like devotion:

Pozzo controls Lucky by means of an extremely long rope which he jerks and tugs if Lucky is the least bit slowly. Lucky is the absolutely subservient slave of Pozzo and he unquestioningly does his every bidding with "dog-like devotion". He struggles with a heavy suitcase without ever thinking of dropping it. Lucky speaks only once in the play and it is a result of Pozzo's order to "think" for Estragon and Vladimir. Pozzo and Lucky have been together for sixty years and, in that time, their relationship has deteriorated. Lucky has always been the intellectually superior but now, with age, he has become an object of contempt: his "think" is a caricature of intellectual thought and his "dance" is a sorry sight. Despite his horrid treatment at Pozzo's hand however, Lucky remains completely faithful to him. Even in the second act when Pozzo has inexplicably gone blind, and needs to be led by Lucky rather than driving him as he had done before, Lucky remains faithful and has not tried to run away; they are clearly bound together by more than a piece of rope in the same way that Didi and Gogo are tied to Godot". Beckett's advice to the American director Alan

Schneider was: is a hypo maniac and the only way to play him is to play him mad." "In his [English] translation ... Beckett struggled to retain the French atmosphere as much as possible, so that he delegated all the English names and places to Lucky, whose own name, he thought, suggested such a correlation."

The boy in Act I

A local lad assures Vladimir that this is the first time he has seen him. He says he was not there the previous day. He confirms he works for Mr. Godot as a goatherd. His brother, whom Godot beats, is a shepherd. Godot feeds both of them and allows them to sleep in his hayloft.

Confused Boy:

The boy in Act II also assures Vladimir that it was not he who called upon them the day before. He insists that this too is his first visit. When Vladimir asks what Godot does the boy tells him, "He does nothing, sir." We also learn he has a white beard—possibly, the boy is not certain. This boy also has a brother who it seems is sick but there is no clear evidence to suggest that his brother is the boy that came in Act I or the one who came the day before that. Whether the boy from Act I is the same boy from Act II or not, both boys are polite yet timid. In the first Act, the boy, despite arriving while Pozzo and Lucky are still about, does not announce himself until after Pozzo and Lucky leave, saying to Vladimir and Estragon that he waited for the other two to leave out of fear of the two men and of Pozzo's whip; the boy does not arrive early enough in Act II to see either Lucky or Pozzo. In both Acts, the boy seems hesitant to speak very much, saying mostly "Yes Sir" or "No Sir", and winds up exiting by running away.

Godot

The identity of Godot has been the subject of much debate. "When Colin Duckworth asked Beckett point-blank whether Pozzo was Godot, the author replied: 'No. It is just implied in the text, but it's not true.'□

Deirdre Bair says that though "Beckett will never discuss the implications of the title", she suggests two stories that both may have at least partially inspired it. The first is that because feet are a recurring theme in the play, Beckett has said the title was suggested to him by the slang French term for boot: "godillot, godasse". The second story, according to Bair, is that Beckett once encountered a group of spectators at the French Tour de France bicycle race, who told him "Nous attendons Godot" – they were waiting for a competitor whose name was Godot.[46]

"Beckett said to Peter Woodthorpe that he regretted calling the absent character 'Godot', because of all the theories involving God to which this had given rise."[47] "I also told [Ralph] Richardson that if by Godot I had meant God I would [have] said God, and not Godot. This seemed to disappoint him greatly."[48] That said, Beckett did once concede, "It would be fatuous of me to pretend that I am not aware of the meanings attached to

the word 'Godot', and the opinion of many that it means 'God'. But you must remember – I wrote the play in French, and if I did have that meaning in my mind, it was somewhere in my unconscious and I was not overtly aware of it."[49] (Note: the French word for 'God' is 'Dieu'.) However, "Beckett has often stressed the strong unconscious impulses that partly control his writing; he has even spoken of being 'in a trance' when he writes."[50] While Beckett stated he originally had no knowledge of Balzac's play Mercadet ou le faiseur, whose character Godeau has an identical-sounding name and is involved in a similar situation, it has been suggested he may have been instead influenced by The Lovable Cheat,[51] a minor adaptation of Mercadet starring Buster Keaton, whose works Beckett had admired[52] and who he later sought out for Film.

Unlike elsewhere in Beckett's work, no bicycle appears in this play, but Hugh Kenner in his essay "The Cartesian Centaur"[53] reports that Beckett once, when asked about the meaning of Godot, mentioned "a veteran racing cyclist, bald, a 'stayer', recurrent placeman in town-to-town and national championships, Christian name elusive, surname Godeau, pronounced, of course, no differently from Godot." Waiting for Godot is clearly not about track cycling, but it is said that Beckett himself did wait for French cyclist Roger Godeau [de] (1920–2000; a professional cyclist from 1943 to 1961), outside the velodrome in Roubaix.[54][55]

Of the two boys who work for Godot only one appears safe from beatings, "Beckett said, only half-jokingly, that one of Estragon's feet was saved".[56]

The name "Godot" is pronounced in Britain and Ireland with the emphasis on the first syllable, /□□□do□/ GOD-oh;[2] in North America it is usually pronounced with an emphasis on the second syllable, /□ə□do□/ gə-DOH. Beckett himself said the emphasis should be on the first syllable, and that the North American pronunciation is a mistake.[57] Georges Borchardt, Beckett's literary agent, and who represents Beckett's literary estate, has always pronounced "Godot" in the French manner, with equal emphasis on both syllables. Borchardt checked with Beckett's nephew, Edward, who told him his uncle pronounced it that way as well.[58]

Setting

There is only one scene throughout both acts. Two men are waiting on a country road by a tree. The men are of unspecified origin, though it is clear that they are not English by nationality since they refer to currency as francs, and tell derisive jokes about the English – and in English-language productions the pair are traditionally played with Irish accents. The script calls for Estragon to sit on a low mound but in practice—as in Beckett's own 1975 German production—this is usually a stone. In the first act the tree is bare. In the second, a few leaves have appeared despite the script specifying that it is the next day. The minimal description calls to mind "the idea of the lieu vague, a location which should not be particularised".[59]

Other clues about the location can be found in the dialogue. In Act I, Vladimir turns toward the auditorium and describes it as a bog. In Act II, Vladimir again motions to the auditorium and notes that there is "Not a soul in sight." When Estragon rushes toward the back of the stage in Act II, Vladimir scolds him, saying that "There's no way out there." Also in Act II, Vladimir comments that their surroundings look nothing like the Macon country, and Estragon states that he's lived his whole life "Here! In the Cackon country!"

Alan Schneider once suggested putting the play on in a round—Pozzo has often been commented on as a ringmaster[60]—but Beckett dissuaded him: "I don't in my ignorance agree with the round and feel Godot needs a very closed box." He even contemplated at one point having a "faint shadow of bars on stage floor" but, in the end, decided against this level of what he called "explicitation".[61] In his 1975 Schiller Theater production, there are times when Didi and Gogo appear to bounce off something "like birds trapped in the strands of [an invisible] net", in James Knowlson's description.

Interpretations

"Because the play is so stripped down, so elemental, it invites all kinds of social and political and religious interpretation", wrote Normand Berlin in a tribute to the play in Autumn 1999, "with Beckett himself placed in different schools of thought, different movements and 'ism's. The attempts to pin him down have not been successful, but the desire to do so is natural when we encounter a writer whose minimalist art reaches for bedrock reality. 'Less' forces us to look for 'more', and the need to talk about Godot and about Beckett has resulted in a steady outpouring of books and articles.[62][63]

Throughout Waiting for Godot, the audience may encounter religious, philosophical, classical, psychoanalytical and biographical – especially wartime – references. There are ritualistic aspects and elements taken directly from vaudeville[64] and there is a danger in making more of these than what they are: that is, merely structural conveniences, avatars into which the writer places his fictional characters. The play "exploits several archetypal forms and situations, all of which lend themselves to both comedy and pathos."[65] Beckett makes this point emphatically clear in the opening notes to Film: "No truth value attaches to the above, regarded as of merely structural and dramatic convenience."[66] He made another important remark to Lawrence Harvey, saying that his "work does not depend on experience – [it is] not a record of experience. Of course you use it."[67]

Beckett tired quickly of "the endless misunderstanding". As far back as 1955, he remarked, "Why people have to complicate a thing so simple I can't make out."[68] He was not forthcoming with anything more than cryptic clues, however: "Peter Woodthorpe [who played Estragon] remembered asking him one day in a taxi what the play was really about: 'It's all symbiosis, Peter; it's symbiosis,' answered Beckett."

Beckett directed the play for the Schiller-Theatre in 1975. Although he had overseen many productions, this was the first time that he had taken complete control. Walter Asmus was his conscientious young assistant director. The production was not naturalistic. Beckett explained,

It is a game, everything is a game. When all four of them are lying on the ground, that cannot be handled naturalistically. That has got to be done artificially, balletically. Otherwise everything becomes an imitation, an imitation of reality [...]. It should become clear and transparent, not dry. It is a game in order to survive."[70]

Over the years, Beckett clearly realised that the greater part of Godot's success came down to the fact that it was open to a variety of readings and that this was not necessarily a bad thing. Beckett himself sanctioned "one of the most famous mixed-race productions of Godot, performed at the Baxter Theatre in the University of Cape Town, directed by Donald Howarth, with [...] two black actors, John Kani and Winston Ntshona, playing Didi and Gogo; Pozzo, dressed in checked shirt and gumboots reminiscent of an Afrikaner landlord, and Lucky ('a shanty town piece of white trash'[71]) were played by two white actors, Bill Flynn and Peter Piccolo [...]. The Baxter production has often been portrayed as if it were an explicitly political production, when in fact it received very little emphasis. What such a reaction showed, however, was that, although the play can in no way be taken as a political allegory, there are elements that are relevant to any local situation in which one man is being exploited or oppressed by another."[72]

Political

"It was seen as an allegory of the Cold War"[73] or of French Resistance to the Germans. Graham Hassell writes, "[T]he intrusion of Pozzo and Lucky [...] seems like nothing more than a metaphor for Ireland's view of mainland Britain, where society has ever been blighted by a greedy ruling élite keeping the working classes passive and ignorant by whatever means."[74]

Vladimir and Estragon are often played with Irish accents, as in the Beckett on Film project. This, some feel, is an inevitable consequence of Beckett's rhythms and phraseology, but it is not stipulated in the text. At any rate, they are not of English stock: at one point early in the play, Estragon mocks the English pronunciation of "calm" and has fun with "the story of the Englishman in the brothel".[75]

Freudian

"Bernard Dukore develops a triadic theory in Didi, Gogo and the absent Godot, based on Sigmund Freud's trinitarian description of the psyche in The Ego and the Id (1923) and the usage of onomastic techniques. Dukore defines the characters by what they lack: the rational Go-go embodies the incomplete ego, the missing pleasure principle: (e)go-(e)go. Di-di (id-id) – who is more instinctual and irrational – is seen as the backward id or subversion of the rational principle. Godot fulfills the

function of the superego or moral standards. Pozzo and Lucky are just re-iterations of the main protagonists. Dukore finally sees Beckett's play as a metaphor for the futility of man's existence when salvation is expected from an external entity, and the self is denied introspection."[76]

Jungian

"The four archetypal personalities or the four aspects of the soul are grouped in two pairs: the ego and the shadow, the persona and the soul's image (animus or anima). The shadow is the container of all our despised emotions repressed by the ego. Lucky, the shadow, serves as the polar opposite of the egocentric Pozzo, prototype of prosperous mediocrity, who incessantly controls and persecutes his subordinate, thus symbolising the oppression of the unconscious shadow by the despotic ego. Lucky's monologue in Act I appears as a manifestation of a stream of repressed unconsciousness, as he is allowed to "think" for his master. Estragon's name has another connotation, besides that of the aromatic herb, tarragon: "estragon" is a cognate of estrogen, the female hormone (Carter, 130). This prompts us to identify him with the anima, the feminine image of Vladimir's soul. It explains Estragon's propensity for poetry, his sensitivity and dreams, his irrational moods. Vladimir appears as the complementary masculine principle, or perhaps the rational persona of the contemplative type."

Philosophical Existential

Broadly speaking, existentialists hold that there are certain fundamental questions that all human beings must come to terms with if they are to take their subjective existences seriously and with intrinsic value. Questions such as life, death, the meaning of human existence and the place of God in that existence are among them. By and large, the theories of existentialism assert that conscious reality is very complex and without an "objective" or universally known value: the individual must create value by affirming it and living it, not by simply talking about it or philosophising it in the mind. The play may be seen to touch on all of these issues.

Martin Esslin, in his The Theatre of the Absurd (1960), argued that Waiting for Godot was part of a broader literary movement that he called the Theatre of the Absurd, a form of theatre which stemmed from the absurdist philosophy of Albert Camus. Absurdism itself is a branch of the traditional assertions of existentialism, pioneered by Søren Kierkegaard, and posits that, while inherent meaning might very well exist in the universe, human beings are incapable of finding it due to some form of mental or philosophical limitation. Thus humanity is doomed to be faced with the Absurd, or the absolute absurdity of the existence in lack of intrinsic purpose.[78]

Ethical

Just after Didi and Gogo have been particularly selfish and callous, the boy comes to say that Godot is not coming. The boy (or pair of boys)

may be seen to represent meekness and hope before compassion is consciously excluded by an evolving personality and character, and in which case may be the youthful Pozzo and Lucky. Thus Godot is compassion and fails to arrive every day, as he says he will. No-one is concerned that a boy is beaten.[79] In this interpretation, there is the irony that only by changing their hearts to be compassionate can the characters fixed to the tree move on and cease to have to wait for Godot.

Christian

Much of the play is steeped in scriptural allusion. The boy from Act One mentions that he and his brother mind Godot's sheep and goats. Much can be read into Beckett's inclusion of the story of the two thieves from Luke 23:39–43 and the ensuing discussion of repentance. It is easy to see the solitary tree as representative of the Christian cross or the tree of life. Some see God and Godot as one and the same. Vladimir's "Christ have mercy upon us!"[80] could be taken as evidence that that is at least what he believes.

This reading is given further weight early in the first act when Estragon asks Vladimir what it is that he has requested from Godot:[81]

Vladimir: "Oh ... nothing very definite."

Estragon: "A kind of prayer."

Vladimir: "Precisely."

Estragon: "A vague supplication."

Vladimir: "Exactly."

Other explicit Christian elements that are mentioned in the play include, but not limited to, repentance,[82] the Gospels,[83] a Saviour,[84] human beings made in God's image,[85] the cross,[86] and Cain and Abel.[87]

According to biographer Anthony Cronin, "[Beckett] always possessed a Bible, at the end more than one edition, and Bible concordances were always among the reference books on his shelves."[88] Beckett himself was quite open on the issue: "Christianity is a mythology with which I am perfectly familiar so I naturally use it."[89] As Cronin argues, these biblical references "may be ironic or even sarcastic".[90]

"In answer to a defence counsel question in 1937 (during the libel action brought by his uncle against Oliver St. John Gogarty) as to whether he was a Christian, Jew or atheist, Beckett replied, 'None of the three'□".[91] Looking at Beckett's entire œuvre, Mary Bryden observed that "the hypothesised God who emerges from Beckett's texts is one who is both cursed for his perverse absence and cursed for his surveillant presence. He is by turns dismissed, satirised, or ignored, but he, and his tortured son, are never definitively discarded."[92]

Autobiographical

Waiting for Godot has been described as a "metaphor for the long walk into Roussillon, when Beckett and Suzanne slept in haystacks [...] during the day and walked by night [... or] of the relationship of Beckett to Joyce."[93] Beckett told Ruby Cohn that Caspar David Friedrich's painting Two Men Contemplating the Moon, which he saw on his journey to Germany in 1936, was a source for the play.[94]

Sexual

Though the sexuality of Vladimir and Estragon is not always considered by critics,[95][96] some see the two vagabonds as an ageing homosexual couple, who are worn out, with broken spirits, impotent and not engaging sexually any longer. The two appear to be written as a parody of a married couple.[97] Peter Boxall points out that the play features two characters who seem to have shared life together for years; they quarrel, embrace, and are mutually dependent.[98] Beckett was interviewed at the time the play was premiering in New York, and, speaking of his writings and characters in general, Beckett said "I'm working with impotence, ignorance. I don't think impotence has been exploited in the past."[99] Vladimir and Estragon consider hanging themselves, as a desperate way to achieve at least one final erection. Pozzo and his slave, Lucky, arrive on the scene. Pozzo is a stout man, who wields a whip and holds a rope around Lucky's neck. Some critics have considered that the relationship of these two characters is homosexual and sado-masochistic in nature.[100] Lucky's long speech is a torrent of broken ideas and speculations regarding man, sex, God, and time. It has been said that the play contains little or no sexual hope; which is the play's lament, and the source of the play's humour and comedic tenderness.[101] Norman Mailer wonders if Beckett might be restating the sexual and moral basis of Christianity, that life and strength is found in an adoration of those in the lower depths where God is concealed.[102]

Beckett's objection to female actors

Beckett was not open to most interpretative approaches to his work. He famously objected when, in the 1980s, several women's acting companies began to stage the play. "Women don't have prostates", said Beckett,[103] a reference to the fact that Vladimir frequently has to leave the stage to urinate.

Let us Sum Up:

In 1988 a Dutch theatre company, De Haarlemse Toneelschuur, put on a production directed by Matin Van Veldhuizen with all female actors, using a French-to-Dutch translation by Jacoba Van Velde. Beckett brought an unsuccessful lawsuit against the theatre company. "The issue of gender seemed to him to be so vital a distinction for a playwright to make that he reacted angrily, instituting a ban on all productions of his plays in The Netherlands." This ban was short-lived, however: in 1991 (two years after Beckett's death), Judge Huguette Le Foyer de Costil ruled that productions

with female casts would not cause excessive damage to Beckett's legacy, and allowed the play to be duly performed by the all-female cast of the Brut de Beton Theater Company at the prestigious Avignon Festival.

Unit End Exercises:

1) What was the relationship between Pozzo and Lucky from post colonial perspectives ?

2) If the boy and his brother represent Cain and Abel from the Bible, what do Pozzo and Lucky (and Vladimir and Estragon) represent biblically?

3) What impediment does Lucky have in act 2?

4) Does the messenger announce the arrival of Godot?

5) Why is the play in two acts?

6) what philosophical questions does Estragon raise in the play?

7) Who is Goddot?

8) relationship between vladimir and estragon in waiting for godot

Answers to check your progress:

1) What is the tone of Waiting for Godot?

Waiting for Godot is both bleak and absurdly humorous. From the moment the curtain rises, the barrenness of the set conveys loneliness and isolation, and the rundown characters exude a subtle desperation. They seem to have hope, persevering in waiting for some sort of meaning or salvation, but it is ultimately revealed to be foolish and futile. But the humor created by the absurdity of the characters and their situation saves the play from total darkness. The audience's laughter is cathartic, counteracting the sense of hopelessness to create a lighter mood. In a way, the two tones reinforce each other. Things are bleak to the point of absurdity, and the absurdity reveals bleak truths about humanity and existence. The first line of the play, "Nothing to be done," in addition to summing up the action in the play, demonstrates both bleak resignation and a comically absurd casualness. Beckett called the play a tragicomedy, and his work has been interpreted both bleakly and humorously on the stage.

2) Absurdity of Existence, Folly of Seeking Meaning

Why is Vladimir appalled in Waiting for Godot, Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir) and what does it mean in the context of the play?

In Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir), Vladimir is talking about "the last moment" when he says he feels "it coming." He is both relieved and appalled. He has also just tried to remember a quotation he heard before about "hope deferred" making someone sick. Presumably it is death that he feels coming, and remembering the quotation provokes these mixed feelings. Although he mentions being both relieved and appalled, the

feeling of being appalled is clearly stronger because the word is repeated, written in capital letters, and broken into syllables to be spoken with strong emphasis. Virtually, the only hope demonstrated in the play is implied by Vladimir's insistence on continuing to wait for Godot despite his ongoing failure to appear and Vladimir's recurring longing for death. For just a brief minute, Vladimir seems to recognize that waiting is the cause of his suffering, leaving him appalled and perhaps even making him physically ill. However, as often happens in the play, he quickly gives up on the thought with the comment "Nothing to be done."

Vladimir

Godot

Folly of Seeking Meaning

What does Vladimir mean by a man "blaming on his boots the faults of his feet" in Waiting for Godot, Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir)?

3) Like many statements in the play, Vladimir's statement in Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir) sounds like a profound truth, but becomes absurd on closer examination. This is often interpreted as pointing out the tendency of humans to blame their problems on external sources (the boot) rather than looking to themselves (one's own foot) for the root of the problem. While this is something people do, the metaphor is based on the absurd premise that feet should somehow fit their boots rather than the other way around. It also is an example of situational irony that Vladimir and Estragon are never able to take it upon themselves to escape the excruciating waiting by just leaving instead of waiting for an external figure, Godot, to appear and save them.

Vladimir

Estragon

Godot

Absurdity of Existence

What does Estragon suggest repenting of in Waiting for Godot, Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir)?

4) In Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir) when Vladimir comes up with the idea of repenting of something, Estragon suggests they repent of being born. In Christianity, repentance is usually understood to involve feelings of deep regret for past wrongs, so Estragon is suggesting their very existence is a regrettable mistake. If Estragon feels they would have been better off not being born, he must not feel their lives have contained much worth living for, thus contributing to the ideas in the play about life being devoid of purpose. Another interpretation suggests itself in the idea of Estragon repenting of something that cannot

possibly be his own fault—his birth. This exposes the idea of repentance as absurd.

Estragon

Vladimir

Purposelessness of Life

In Waiting for Godot, Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir) why does Estragon say, "People are bloody ignorant apes"?

5) Estragon makes this statement in Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir) in response to Vladimir's complaint about the story of the two thieves in the Bible. Only one of the four Gospels in the New Testament says Christ took mercy on and saved one of the thieves crucified alongside him, yet Vladimir says it is the only version people know. (Another Gospel says both thieves were damned, and the other two don't mention the thieves at all.) Estragon explains this by saying you can't expect any more of people because they're really nothing but animals. Rather than thinking through complex ideas, they simply choose whatever seems likely to be better for them. It is fitting that, of the two main characters, Estragon is the one to observe that people are no more than animals because he is the character most in touch with his animal drives, including pain and hunger. Like the apes he decries, Estragon also refuses to think through complex ideas with Vladimir. It is also interesting to note that this statement, which is based on the theory of evolution, occurs during a discussion of a Bible story. It is only in evolutionary science that humans are believed to have descended from apes. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, people are created separately from animals and considered to be inherently superior.

Estragon

Vladimir

What must Godot do before answering Vladimir and Estragon's request in Waiting for Godot, Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir) and what does it reveal about Godot?

6) According to Vladimir and Estragon in Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir), before answering their "kind of prayer," Godot must "think it over" and consult with his family, friends, agents, correspondents, books, and bank account. This list is delivered in the same comic free-association format Vladimir and Estragon repeat throughout the play, in which they seem almost to compete to see which one can come up with the most ways to say the same thing. This raises the question of whether they're listing meaningful things or simply saying the next thing that occurs to them. If, however, their list is meaningful, it reveals that this higher power they are depending on to save them,

instead of having final decision-making power, must first consult with pretty much everyone he knows as well as established learning and financial institutions to make a decision. This reveals Godot to be less than a definitive or divine authority and points out the foolishness of Estragon's and, especially (because he represents the mind) Vladimir's reliance on him to provide meaning to their existence.

Vladimir

Estragon

Godot

Folly of Seeking Meaning

Why does Vladimir stifle his laughter in Waiting for Godot, Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir)?

7) In Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir), Vladimir "breaks into a hearty laugh" and stifles it, "his hand pressed to his pubis, his face contorted." Then Vladimir claims laughter is not allowed. He is the only character who makes this claim, however, and apparently the only one bound by it because both Pozzo and Estragon laugh freely and without consequence before the end of Act 1. This restriction Vladimir imposes clearly applies only to himself. Obviously, Vladimir has a prostate problem, but on a subtler level the restriction he tries to impose on everyone implies that he sees his physical illness as a type of punishment. Later in the play, he says they cannot drop (abandon) Godot because he will punish them. It explains perhaps why Vladimir insists on waiting for Godot, and it shows that he really does believe in Godot's powers.

Vladimir

Estragon

Godot

What is the significance of the confusion about Pozzo's name and identity in Waiting for Godot?

8) In both acts Estragon asks whether Pozzo is Godot when he and Lucky first arrive. They have been waiting for an authority figure, and Pozzo appears to be one, at least in Act 1 (Lucky and Pozzo Arrive). The idea is chilling: This pompous person who treats a fellow human being so callously could be the higher authority Vladimir and Estragon have been waiting for. Thankfully, Vladimir is certain he is not Godot—mostly. In the confusion about Pozzo's name in Act 1, Estragon calls him "Bozzo," comparing him to a clown. Vladimir says he knew a Gozzo family, the mother of which had a sexually transmitted disease (gonorrhea, known as "the clap"). He offers this

information to try to calm Pozzo, but the unfavorable comparisons only highlight the absurdity of Pozzo's demands for recognition and respect.

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UNIT VIII - TO THE LIGHTHOUSE – THE WINDOW

The Window: Chapters I–IV

Introduction:

Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay are staying at their summerhouse in the Hebrides with their eight children and several houseguests. James, the Ramsays' youngest child, sits on the floor carefully cutting out pictures from the Army and Navy Stores catalogue. Mrs. Ramsay assures James he will be able to visit the nearby lighthouse the following day if weather permits, but Mr. Ramsay interjects that the weather will not allow it. Six-year-old James feels a murderous rage against his father for ridiculing his mother, whom James considers "ten thousand times better in every way." Mrs. Ramsay tries to assure James that the weather may well be fine, but Charles Tansley, a stiff intellectual who greatly respects Mr. Ramsay, disagrees.

Objectives:

Tansley's insensitivity toward James irritates Mrs. Ramsay, but she tries to act warmly toward her male houseguests, forbidding her irreverent daughters to mock Tansley. After lunch, Mrs. Ramsay invites Tansley to accompany her on an errand into town, and he accepts. On their way out, she stops to ask Augustus Carmichael, an elderly poet also staying with the Ramsays, if he needs anything, but he responds that he does not. On the way into town, Mrs. Ramsay tells Carmichael's story. He was once a promising poet and intellectual, but he made an unfortunate marriage. Mrs. Ramsay's confidence flatters Tansley, and he rambles incessantly about his work.

An Impoverished Family:

The two pass a sign advertising a circus, and Mrs. Ramsay suggests that they all go. Hesitant, Tansley explains to Mrs. Ramsay that, having grown up in an impoverished family, he was never taken to a circus. Mrs. Ramsay reflects that Tansley harbors a deep insecurity regarding his humble background and that this insecurity causes much of his unpleasantness. She now feels more kindly toward him, though his self-centered talk continues to bore her. Tansley, however, thinks that Mrs. Ramsay is the most beautiful woman he has ever seen. Like most of her male guests, he is a little in love with her. Even the chance to carry her bag thrills him. Later that evening, Tansley looks out the window and announces gently, for Mrs. Ramsay's sake, that there will be no trip to the lighthouse tomorrow. Mrs. Ramsay finds him tedious and annoying.

Untoward Disposition:

Mrs. Ramsay comforts James, telling him that the sun may well shine in the morning. She listens to the men talking outside, but when their

conversation stops, she receives a sudden shock from the sound of the waves rolling against the shore. Normally the waves seem to steady and support her, but occasionally they make her think of destruction, death, and the passage of time. The sound of her husband reciting to himself Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade" returns to her the sense that all is right with the world. She notices Lily Briscoe painting on the edge of the lawn and remembers that she is supposed to keep her head still for Lily, who is painting her portrait.

Love for Mrs. Ramsay:

As Mr. Ramsay passes Lily on the grass, he nearly tips over her easel. Lily's old friend William Bankes, who rents a room near hers in the village, joins her on the grass. Sensing that they have somehow intruded on their host's privacy, Lily and Bankes are both slightly unnerved by the sight of Mr. Ramsay thundering about talking to himself. Lily struggles to capture her vision on canvas, a project, she reflects, that keeps her from declaring outright her love for Mrs. Ramsay, the house, and the entire scene.

An Intimate Relationship:

Bankes, who once enjoyed an intimate relationship with Mr. Ramsay, now feels somewhat removed from him. He cannot understand why Mr. Ramsay needs so much attention and praise. Bankes criticizes this facet of Ramsay's personality, but Lily reminds him of the importance of Mr. Ramsay's work. Lily has never quite grasped the content of Mr. Ramsay's philosophy, although Andrew, the Ramsays' oldest son, once helpfully likened his father's work on "the nature of reality" to thinking about a kitchen table when one is not there. Lily finds Mr. Ramsay at once otherworldly and ridiculous. When Mr. Ramsay realizes that Lily and Bankes have been watching him, he is embarrassed to have been caught acting out the poem so theatrically, but he stifles his embarrassment and pretends to be unruffled.

The Impact of Sigmund Freud:

Virginia Woolf read the work of Sigmund Freud, whose revolutionary model of human psychology explored the unconscious mind and raised questions regarding internal versus external realities. Woolf opens To the Lighthouse by dramatizing one of Freud's more popular theories, the Oedipal conflict. Freud turned to the ancient Greek story of Oedipus, who inadvertently kills his father and marries his mother, to structure his thoughts on both family dynamics and male sexual development. According to Freud, young boys tend to demand and monopolize their mothers' love at the risk of incurring the jealousy and wrath of their fathers. Between young James Ramsay and his parents, we see a similar triangle formed: James adores his mother as completely as he resents his father. Woolf's gesture to Freud testifies to the radical nature of her project. As much a visionary as Freud, Woolf set out to write a novel that mapped the psychological unconscious. Instead of chronicling the

many things characters say and do to one another, she concentrated on the innumerable things that exist beneath the surface of speech and action.

Innovative method of writing:

Achieving this goal required the development of an innovative method of writing that came to be known as stream of consciousness, which charts the interior thoughts, perceptions, and feelings of one or more characters. Although interior monologue is another term often used to refer to this technique, an important difference exists between the two. While both stream of consciousness and interior monologue describe a character's interior life, the latter does so by using the character's grammar and syntax. In other words, the character's thoughts are transcribed directly, without an authorial voice acting as mediator. Woolf does not make use of interior monologue; throughout To the Lighthouse, she maintains a voice distinct and distant from those of her characters. The pattern of young James's mind, for instance, is described in the same lush language as that of his mother and father. It is more apt to say, then, that the novel is about the stream of human consciousness—the complex connection between feelings and memories—rather than a literary representation of it.

Her own experience:

Through these forays into each character's mind, Woolf explores the different ways in which individuals search for and create meaning in their own experience. She strives to express how individuals order their perceptions into a coherent understanding of life. This endeavor becomes particularly important in a world in which life no longer has any inherent meaning. Darwin's theory of evolution, published in 1859 in The Origin of Species, challenged the then universal belief that human life was divinely inspired and, as such, intrinsically significant. Each of the three main characters has a different approach to establishing the worth of his or her life. Mr. -Ramsay represents an intellectual approach; as a metaphysical philosopher, he relies on his work to secure his reputation. Mrs. -Ramsay, devoted to family, friends, and the sanctity of social order, relies on her emotions rather than her mind to lend lasting meaning to her experiences. Lily, hoping to capture and preserve the truth of a single instant on canvas, uses her art.

The Walls of unfinished hotel:

At the house, Mrs. Ramsay inspects the stocking she has been knitting for the lighthouse keeper's son, just in case the weather allows them to go to the lighthouse the next day. Mrs. Ramsay thinks about her children and her tasks as a mother. She also recollects her father's death. Mr. Bankes reflects upon Mrs. Ramsay's beauty, which he cannot completely understand. She is, he thinks, much like the walls of the unfinished hotel he watches being built in back of his home. Mr. Bankes sees more than aesthetic beauty in her, "the quivering thing, the living thing." Mrs. Ramsay goes on knitting the stocking for the little boy, and

lovingly urges James to cut another picture from the Army and Navy Stores catalogue.

Extraordinary irrationality:

Mr. Ramsay approaches his wife. He is petulant and needs reassurance after his embarrassment in front of Lily and Bankes. When Mrs. Ramsay tells him that she is preparing a stocking for the lighthouse keeper's boy, Mr. Ramsay becomes infuriated by what he sees as her extraordinary irrationality. His sense of safety restored, Mr. Ramsay resumes his strolling on the lawn, giving himself over to the "energies of his splendid mind." He thinks to himself that the progress of human thought is analogous to the alphabet—each successive concept represents a letter, and every individual struggles in his life to make it through as many letters as he can. Mr. Ramsay thinks that he has plodded from A to Q with great effort but feels that R now eludes him. He reflects that not many men can reach even Q, and that only one man in the course of a generation can reach Z. There are two types of great thinkers, he notes: those who work their way from A to Z diligently, and those few geniuses who simply arrive at Z in a single instant. Mr. Ramsay knows he does not belong to the latter type, and resolves (or hopes) to fight his way to Z. Still, he fears that his reputation will fade after his death. He reminds himself that all fame is fleeting and that a single stone will outlast Shakespeare. But he hates to think that he has made little real, lasting difference in the world.

Mr. Ramsay as a failure:

James, reading with his mother, senses his father's presence and hates him. Discerning his father's need for sympathy, he wishes his father would leave him alone with his mother. Mr. Ramsay declares himself a failure, and Mrs. Ramsay, recognizing his need to be assured of his genius, tells him that Tansley considers him the greatest living philosopher. Eventually, she restores his confidence, and he goes off to watch the children play cricket. Mrs. Ramsay returns to the story that she is reading to James. Inwardly, she reflects anxiously that people observing her interactions with Mr. Ramsay might infer that her husband depends on her excessively and think mistakenly that her contributions to the world surpass his. -Augustus Carmichael shuffles past.

Gratitude and Admiration:

Carmichael, an opium addict, ignores Mrs. Ramsay, hurting her feelings and her pride. She realizes, however, that her kindness is petty because she expects to receive gratitude and admiration from those she treats with sympathy and generosity. Still troubled, Mr. Ramsay wanders across the lawn, mulling over the progress and fate of civilization and great men, wondering if the world would be different if Shakespeare had never existed. He believes that a "slave class" of unadorned, unacknowledged workers must exist for the good of society. The thought displeases him, and he resolves to argue that the world exists for such human beings, for the men who operate the London subway rather than for immortal writers.

Metaphor for human ignorance:

He reaches the edge of the lawn and looks out at the bay. As the waves wash against the shore, Mr. Ramsay finds the encroaching waters to be an apt metaphor for human ignorance, which always seems to eat away what little is known with certainty. He turns from this depressing thought to stare at the image of his wife and child, which makes him realize that he is primarily happy, even though "he had not done that thing he might have done."

The poem often recited by Mr. Ramsay:

The line of poetry that Mr. Ramsay recites as he blusters across the lawn is taken from Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade." The poem, which tells of 600 soldiers marching bravely to their death, ends with the lines

When can their glory fade?

O the wild charge they made!

All the world wonder'd.

Honour the charge they made!

A meditation on immortality, the poem captures the tumultuous state of Mr. Ramsay's mind and his anxiety about whether he and his work will be remembered by future generations. Here, Mr. Ramsay emerges as an uncompromising but terribly insecure intellectual. He knows the world almost exclusively through words, so he tries to express and mediate his sadness with the lines by Tennyson. He yearns for the "glory" and the "wild charge" of which the poem speaks in the form of brilliant contributions to philosophy. Although he acknowledges a more profound truth—that in the end no immortality exists, and even a stone will outlast a figure as influential as -William Shakespeare—Mr. Ramsay cannot help but indulge his need to be comforted, to have others assure him of his place in the world and its importance. The posture he assumes as he approaches his wife in Chapter VII is one that he returns to often. Again and again, he displays a relentless desire for sympathy and understanding from her.

The Fatal sterility of the male:

Mr. Ramsay is not alone in his need for his wife's affections. Through Mrs. Ramsay, Woolf suggests that Mr. Ramsay's traits belong to all men. Charles Tansley exhibits similar behavior in the opening chapters. He navigates the world according to what he has studied and read, and lashes out with "the fatal sterility of the male" for fear that his contributions will be deemed lacking. Mrs. Ramsay believes such daunted and insecure behavior to be inevitable, given the importance of men's concerns and work. She sees men as well as women forced into roles that prescribe their behavior. In her extended sympathy for her husband and in her attempts at matchmaking, Mrs. Ramsay recognizes and observes these roles while trying to make it less painful for the people in her life to have to

play them. This question of gender roles, which occupies much space in the coming chapters, is played out most fully in the relationship between Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe. Mrs. Ramsay's maternal and wifely devotion represents the kind of traditional lifestyle to which Lily Briscoe refuses to conform.

The Eminent Philosopher:

Mr. Ramsay, who is obsessed with understanding and advancing the process of human thought, reveals the novel's concern with knowledge. To the Lighthouse asks how humanity acquires knowledge and questions the scope and validity of that knowledge. The fact that Mr. Ramsay, who is decidedly one of the eminent philosophers of his day, doubts the solidity of his own thoughts suggests that a purely rational, universally agreed-upon worldview is impossibility. Indeed, one of the effects of Woolf's narrative method is to suggest that objective reality does not exist. The ever-shifting viewpoints that she employs construct a world in which reality is merely a collection of subjectively determined truths.

Lets Sum Up:

Mr. Ramsay declares that he and James and Cam, one of his daughters, will journey to the lighthouse. On the morning of the voyage, delays throw him into a fit of temper. He appeals to Lily for sympathy, but, unlike Mrs. Ramsay, she is unable to provide him with what he needs. The Ramsays set off, and Lily takes her place on the lawn, determined to complete a painting she started but abandoned on her last visit. James and Cam bristle at their father's blustery behavior and are embarrassed by his constant self-pity. Still, as the boat reaches its destination, the children feel a fondness for him. Even James, whose skill as a sailor Mr. Ramsay praises, experiences a moment of connection with his father, though James so willfully resents him. Across the bay, Lily puts the finishing touch on her painting. She makes a definitive stroke on the canvas and puts her brush down, finally having achieved her vision.

Unit End Exercises:

1) 'The Window' opens before the start of which war?

   a) WW1 b) WW2 c) The Vietnam War d) The Boer War

2) Paul, Minta and two of the Ramsay children are late to the dinner party because they were ___.

   a) Painting in the garden b) Walking on the beach c) Visiting the lighthouse d) Climbing in the hills

3) How much time passes in the 'Time Passes' section before the Ramsays return to their summerhouse?

   a) 10 years b) 20 years c) 1 year d) 100 years

4) Which character, present at the dinner party in 'The Window', returns to the summerhouse first?

a) James b) Mrs. Ramsay c) Minta d) Lily

5) What does Lily do as the Ramsays finally travel to the lighthouse?

a) Finishes her painting b) Finishes her book
c) Finishes her poem d) Solves her equation

Answers to Check Your Progress:

1) A 2) b 3) a 4) d 5)a

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UNIT IX - TIME PASSES

Introduction:

Paul, Minta, Andrew, Prue, and Lily return from the beach. One by one, they retire to their rooms and shut off their lamps. The house sinks into darkness, except for the room of Augustus Carmichael, who stays up reading Virgil.

Objectives:

Darkness floods the house. Furniture and people seem to disappear completely. The wind creeps indoors and is the only movement. The air plays across objects of the house—wallpaper, books, and flowers. It creeps up the stairs and continues on its way. At midnight, Carmichael blows out his candle and goes to bed. Nights pass and autumn arrives. The nights bring destructive winds, bending trees and stripping them of their leaves. Confusion reigns. Anyone who wakes to ask the night questions "as to what, and why, and wherefore" receives no answer. Mrs. Ramsay dies suddenly. The following morning, Mr. Ramsay wanders through the hallway, reaching out his arms for her.

Rhetoric Questions:

The contents of the house are packed and stored. The winds enter and, without the resistance of lives being lived, begin to "nibble" at the possessions. As it moves across these things, the wind asks, "Will you fade? Will you perish?" The objects answer, "We remain," and the house is peaceful. Only Mrs. McNab, the housekeeper, disturbs the peace, as she arrives to dust the bedrooms.

Nostalgia:

Mrs. McNab makes her way through the house. She is old and weary and hums a tune that bears little resemblance to the joyous song of twenty years earlier. As she cleans the house, she wonders how long it all will endure. Some pleasant memory occurs to the old woman, which makes her job a bit easier.

The Tragic Flaw of Prue Ramsay:

It is spring again. Prue Ramsay marries, and people comment on her great beauty. Summer approaches, and Prue dies from an illness connected with childbirth. Flies and weeds make a home in the Ramsays' summerhouse. Andrew Ramsay is killed in France during World War I. Augustus Carmichael publishes a volume of poetry during the war that greatly enhances his reputation. While the days bring stillness and brightness, the nights batter the house with chaos and confusion.

Disintegrated Family:

Mrs. McNab, hearing a rumor that the family will never return, picks a bunch of flowers from the garden to take home with her. The house

is sinking quickly into disrepair. The books are moldy and the garden is overgrown. While cleaning, the old woman comes across the gray cloak that Mrs. Ramsay used to wear while gardening and she can imagine Mrs. Ramsay bent over her flowers with one of her children by her side. Mrs. McNab has little hope that the family will return or that the house will survive, and she thinks that keeping it up is too much work for an old woman.

Darkness of the House:

During the night, only the beam of the lighthouse pierces the darkness of the house. At last, once the war is over, Mrs. McNab leads an effort to clean up the house, rescuing its objects from oblivion. She and a woman named Mrs. Bast battle the effects of time and, eventually, after much labor, get the house back in order. Ten years have passed. Lily Briscoe arrives at the house on an evening in September.

Sense of Peace:

Lily listens to the sea while lying in bed, and an overwhelming sense of peace emerges. Carmichael arrives at the house and reads a book by candlelight. Lily hears the waves even in her sleep, and Carmichael shuts his book, noting that everything looks much as it looked ten years earlier. The guests sleep. In the morning, Lily awakes instantly, sitting bolt upright in bed.

The "Time Passes"

This section of *To the Lighthouse* radically alters the novel's development. Many of the characters from the first section disappear. What we learn of them in this brief following section is presented as an aside, set apart by brackets. To the Lighthouse frequently comments on the notion and passage of time. In "The Window," Woolf conceives of time as a matter of psychology rather than chronology. She creates what the French philosopher Henri Bergson termed durée, a conception of the world as primarily intuitive and internal rather than external or material. Woolf returns to this narrative strategy in the final section of the novel, "The Lighthouse." But here, in the intervening chapters, she switches gears completely and charts the relentless, cruel, and more conventional passage of time. The brackets around the deaths of Prue and Andrew associate them with Mrs. Ramsay's intermittent refrains in "The Window" and accentuate the traumatic suddenness and ultimate lack of impact these events possess. These bracketed sentences take on the tone of news bulletins or marching orders.

The Legacy of the work:

While "The Window" deals with the minute details of a single afternoon and evening, stretching them out into a considerable piece of prose, "Time Passes" compresses an entire decade into barely twenty pages. Woolf chooses to portray the effects of time on objects like the house and its contents rather than on human development and emotion.

"Time Passes" validates Lily's and the Ramsays' fears that time will bring about their demise, as well as the widespread fear among the characters that time will erase the legacy of their work. Here, everything from the garden to the prized Waverley novels slowly sinks into oblivion.

Psychology and Chronology:

Because the focus shifts from psychology in "The Window" to chronology in "Time Passes," human beings become secondary concerns in the latter section of the novel. This effect replicates the anxieties that plague the characters. Mr. Ramsay's fear that there is little hope for human immortality is confirmed as Woolf presents the death of the novel's heroine in an unadorned aside. This choice is remarkable on two levels. First, thematically, it skillfully asserts that human life is, in the natural scheme of things, incidental. As Mr. Ramsay notes in "The Window," a stone will outlive even Shakespeare. Second, the offhand mention of Mrs. Ramsay's death challenges established literary tradition by refusing to indulge in conventional sentiment. The emotionally hyperbolic Victorian deathbed scene is absent for Mrs. Ramsay, and Woolf uses an extreme economy of words to report the deaths of Mrs. Ramsay, Prue, and Andrew.

The Death of the womanhood:

In this section, the darkened tone that begins to register toward the end of "The Window" comes to the fore both literally and figuratively. Mrs. Ramsay's death constitutes the death of womanhood and the dismantling of domesticated power in the novel. With the deaths of Prue and Andrew, the world's best potential and best hope seem dashed. Prue's death in childbirth strikes out at beauty and continuity, while Andrew's demise brings out the impact of war and the stunting of masculine potential so important to the novel's historical context. In a way, the novel miniaturizes a vast historical moment for Europe as a whole. "Time Passes" brings to the Ramsays destruction as vast as that inflicted on Europe by World War I. When the Ramsays return to their summer home shaken, depleted, and unsure, they represent the postwar state of an entire continent.

Lets Sum Up:

At the beginning of the novel, both Mr. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe are drawn out of moments of irritation by an image of extreme beauty. The image, in both cases, is a vision of Mrs. Ramsay, who, as she sits reading with James, is a sight powerful enough to incite "rapture" in William Bankes. Beauty retains this soothing effect throughout the novel: something as trifling as a large but very beautiful arrangement of fruit can, for a moment, assuage the discomfort of the guests at Mrs. Ramsay's dinner party. Lily later complicates the notion of beauty as restorative by suggesting that beauty has the unfortunate consequence of simplifying the truth. Her impression of Mrs. Ramsay, she believes, is compromised by a determination to view her as beautiful and to smooth over her complexities and faults. Nevertheless, Lily continues on her quest to "still" or "freeze" a

moment from life and make it beautiful. Although the vision of an isolated moment is necessarily incomplete, it is lasting and, as such, endlessly seductive to her.

Unit End Exercises:

1. What are some of the main symbols in To the Lighthouse, and what do they signify? How does Woolf's use of symbolism advance her thematic goals?

2. If To the Lighthouse is a novel about the search for meaning in life, how do the characters conduct their search? Are they successful in finding an answer?

3. Compare and contrast Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay. How are they alike? How are they different?

Answers to check your progress:

1) James gives us a clue as to how to interpret symbols in To the Lighthouse. As he finally draws the Ramsays' boat up to the lighthouse, he considers two competing, and seemingly contradictory, meanings of the lighthouse. The first depends upon the lighthouse as it appeared to him as a child; then, it was a "silvery, mist-colored tower" and seemed to suggest the vague, romantic quality of the past. The second meaning stands in opposition, for, as James nears the lighthouse and sees its barred windows and laundry drying on the rocks, there is nothing romantic about it. He resolves, however, to honor the truth of both images, deciding that "nothing [is] simply one thing."

2) Like James's interpretation of the lighthouse, the dominant symbols in the novel demand open readings. Mrs. Ramsay wrapping her shawl around the boar's head can be read merely as protection of her impressionable children from the unsightly suggestion of death, but it can also be read as a selfish attempt to keep from them a profound and inescapable truth. Choosing one option or the other diminishes the complexity of the novel's symbols and characters. Woolf resists formulaic symbols, whereby one entity straightforwardly stands for another; she thus places us in the same position as her characters. The world of the novel is not filled with solidly or surely determined truths. Rather, truth, as Lily points out, must be collected from an endless number of impressions—she wishes that she had more than fifty pairs of eyes with which to view Mrs. Ramsay and understand her. We must approach the symbolism of To the Lighthouse with the same patience for multiple meanings.

3) Although all the characters engage themselves in the same quest for meaningful experience, the three main characters have vastly different approaches. Mr. Ramsay's search is intellectual;

he hopes to understand the world and his place in it by working at philosophy and reading books. Mrs. Ramsay conducts her search through intuition rather than intellect; she relies on social traditions such as marriage and dinner parties to structure her experience. Lily, on the other hand, tries to create meaning in her life through her painting; she seeks to unify disparate elements in a harmonious whole.

Suggested Reading:

Virginia Woolf, To the Lighthouse, (London: Hogarth, 1927) First edition; 3000 copies initially with a second impression in June.

Virginia Woolf, To the Lighthouse, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1927) First US edition; 4000 copies initially with at least five reprints in the same year.

Virginia Woolf, To the Lighthouse (Wordsworth Classics, 1994), with introduction and notes by Nicola Bradbury, ISBN 978-1853260919

UNIT X - To THE LIGHTHOUSE: (CHAPTERS I TO X)

Introduction:

Although Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay's love for each other and for their children is beyond doubt, their approaches to life could not be more opposite. Mrs. Ramsay is loving, kind to her children, selfless, and generously giving, while Mr. Ramsay is cold and socially awkward. He is stern with his children, which causes them to hate and fear him, and he displays a neediness that makes him rather pathetic in the eyes of his guests. Despite these profound differences, however, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay share the knowledge that all things—from human life to human happiness—are destined to end. It is from this shared knowledge that their greatest differences grow. Keenly aware of human mortality, Mrs. Ramsay is fueled to cultivate moments that soothe her consciousness, while Mr. Ramsay nearly collapses under the weight of this realization.

Objectives:

While these characters experience varying degrees of success in their quest for meaning, none arrives at a revelation that fulfills the search. As an old man, Mr. Ramsay continues to be as tortured by the specter of his own mortality as he is in youth. Mrs. Ramsay achieves moments in which life seems filled with meaning, but, as her dinner party makes clear, they are terribly short-lived. Lily, too, manages to wrest a moment from life and lend to it meaning and order. Her painting is a small testament to that struggle. But, as she reflects while pondering the meaning of her life, there are no "great revelations" but only "little daily miracles" that one, if lucky, can fish out of the dark.

The Role of Paintings:

Lily sits at breakfast, wondering what her feelings mean, returning after ten years now that Mrs. Ramsay is dead. She decides that she feels nothing that she can express. The entire scene seems unreal and disjointed to her. As she sits at the table, she struggles to bring together the parts of her experience. She suddenly remembers a painting she had been working on years ago, during her last stay at the Ramsays', and the inspiration that the leaf pattern on the tablecloth gave her. She decides that she will finish this painting now, heads outside, and sets up her easel on the lawn. Upon her arrival the previous night, she was unable to assuage Mr. Ramsay's need for sympathy, and she fears his interference with her current project. She sets a clean canvas on the easel, but she cannot see the shapes or colors that surround her because she feels Mr. Ramsay bearing down on her. She thinks angrily that all Mr. Ramsay knows how to do is take, while all Mrs. Ramsay did was give. As her host approaches, Lily lets her brush fall to her side, convinced that it will be easier to remember and imitate the sympathy

that Mrs. Ramsay was able to muster for her husband than to let him linger on the lawn beside her.

Lily as a failure:

Mr. Ramsay watches Lily, observing her to be "shrivelled slightly" but not unattractive. He asks if she has everything she needs, and she assures him that she does. Lily cannot give him the sympathy he needs, and an awful silence falls between them. Mr. Ramsay sighs, waiting. Lily feels that, as a woman, she is a failure for not being able to satisfy his need. Eventually, she compliments him on his boots, and he gladly discusses footwear with her. He stoops to demonstrate the proper way to tie a shoe, and she pities him deeply. Just then, Cam and James appear for the sojourn to the lighthouse. They are cold and unpleasant to their father, and Lily reflects that, if they so wished, they could sympathize with him in a way that she cannot.

Painting the scenes:

Lily sighs with relief as Mr. Ramsay and the children head off for the boat. With Mr. Ramsay standing by, she had jammed her easel into the ground at the wrong angle and taken up the wrong brush. She writes the canvas, raises the correct brush, and wonders where to begin. She makes a stroke on the canvas, then another. Her painting takes on a rhythm, as she dabs and pauses, dabs and pauses. She considers the fate of her painting, thinking that if it is to be hung in a servant's room or rolled up under a sofa, there is no point in continuing it.

The derogatory words of Charles Tansley—

Women cannot paint, cannot write—return to her, but she maintains the rhythm of her work. She remembers a day on the beach with Tansley and Mrs. Ramsay, and is amazed by Mrs. Ramsay's ability to craft substance out of even "silliness and spite." She thinks, perhaps, that there are no great revelations. There is, to her, only the memory of Mrs. Ramsay making life itself an art. Lily feels that she owes what revelation she has in this moment to Mrs. Ramsay. On the edge of the water, she notices a boat with its sail being hoisted and, sure that it belongs to the Ramsays, watches it head out to sea.

The course of the novel:

The structure of To the Lighthouse creates a strange feeling of continuity between drastically discontinuous events. "The Window" ends after dinner, as night falls; "Time Passes" describes the demise of the house as one night passes into the next over the course of ten years; "The Lighthouse" resumes in the morning, at breakfast. Woolf almost suggests the illusion that Lily sits at the table the morning after the dinner party, even though the scene takes place a decade later. This structure lends the impression that Mr. Ramsay's voyage to the lighthouse with Cam and James occurs the next day as James had hoped, though his world is now wholly different.

Magnificent Dinner Party:

In spite of these differences, the Ramsays' house in the Hebrides remains recognizable, as do the rhythmic patterns of the characters' consciousnesses. As Woolf resumes her exploration of the subtle undercurrents of interpersonal relationships, she begins with characters that are "remote" from one another. They occupy, in fact, the same positions of private suffering as at the beginning of Mrs. Ramsay's magnificent dinner party. Mr. Ramsay, a man in decline, is no longer imposing to Lily. Rather, he is awkward and pathetic. His children are waging a barely veiled revolt against his oppressive and self-pitying behavior. Still desperate for sympathy but unable to obtain it from Mrs. Ramsay, Mr. Ramsay turns to Lily and his children to satisfy his need. Lily, on the other hand, still feels unable to give of herself in this way. Her reluctance to show sympathy to Mr. Ramsay recalls her reaction to Charles Tansley at the dinner table. Then, as now, she cannot bring herself to soothe the tortured male ego. The world, as a result of these disjointed personalities and desires, seems "chaotic" and "aimless," and Lily concludes that the house is brimming with "unrelated passions."

Common Feeling:

"The Window" establishes a rhythm between chaos and order, which allows us to anticipate the direction that "The Lighthouse" will take. Mr. Ramsay eventually reaches the lighthouse, just as Lily eventually completes her painting. The poignant scene in which Mr. Ramsay bends to knot Lily's shoe foreshadows the "common feeling" that the two share when Lily's consciousness becomes tied to her host's. Before this union can happen, though, the two must be separated. Indeed, Lily's thoughts toward Mr. Ramsay begin to soften only after he leaves her alone at her easel and sets off for the lighthouse. Only then does the sight of Cam, James, and Mr. Ramsay reveal itself as a potential image of harmony—"a little company bound together and strangely impressive to her."

The Nature of Art:

Memory is another vital step toward this harmony. Though long dead, Mrs. Ramsay lives in Lily's consciousness in the final section of the novel, for it was Mrs. Ramsay who taught Lily a valuable lesson about the nature of art. As her hostess once demonstrated on an outing to the beach, art is the ability to take a moment from life and make it "permanent." With this goal in mind, Lily begins to paint.

The journey in silence:

As the boat sails toward the lighthouse, both James and Cam feel their father's mounting anxiety and impatience. Mr. Ramsay mutters and speaks sharply to Macalister's boy, a fisherman's son who is rowing the boat. Bound together against what they perceive to be their father's tyranny, the children resolve to make the journey in silence. They secretly hope that the wind will never rise and that they will be forced to turn back. But as they sail farther out, the sails pick up the wind and the boat speeds

along. James steers the boat and mans the sail, knowing that his father will criticize him if he makes the slightest mistake.

Female mind:

Mr. Ramsay talks to Macalister about a storm that sank a number of ships near the lighthouse on Christmas. Cam realizes that her father likes to hear stories of men having dangerous adventures and thinks that he would have helped the rescue effort had he been on the island at the time. She is proud of him, but also, out of loyalty to James, means to resist his oppressive behavior. Mr. Ramsay points out their house, and Cam reflects how unreal life on shore seems. Only the boat and the sea are real to her now. Cam, though disgusted by her father's melodramatic appeals for sympathy, longs to find a way to show him that she loves him without betraying James. James, for his part, feels that Cam is about to abandon him and give in to their father's mood. Meanwhile, Mr. Ramsay muses that Cam seems to have a simple, vague "female" mind, which he finds charming. He asks Cam who is looking after their puppy, and she tells him that Jasper is doing it. He asks what she is going to name the puppy, and James thinks that Cam will never withstand their father's tyranny like he will. He changes his mind about her resolve, however, and Cam thinks of how everything she hears her father say means "Submit to me." She looks at the shore, thinking no one suffers there.

Matchmaking:

Lily stands on the lawn watching the boat sail off. She thinks again of Mrs. Ramsay as she considers her painting. She thinks of Paul and Minta Rayley and contents herself by imagining their lives. Their marriage, she assumes, turned out badly. Though she knows that these sorts of imaginings are not true, she reflects that they are what allow one to know people. Lily has the urge to share her stories of Paul and Minta with the matchmaking Mrs. Ramsay, and reflects on the dead, contending that one can go against their wishes and improve on their outdated ideas. She finally feels able to stand up to Mrs. Ramsay, which, she believes, is a testament to Mrs. Ramsay's terrific influence over her. Lily has never married, and she is glad of it now. She still enjoys William Bankes's friendship and their discussions about art. The memory of Mrs. Ramsay fills her with grief, and she begins to cry. She has the urge to approach Augustus Carmichael, who lounges nearby on the lawn, and confess her thoughts to him, but she knows that she could never say what she means. The fisherman's boy cuts a piece from a fish that he has caught and baits it on his hook. He then throws the mutilated body into the sea.

The soothing image:

Lily calls out to Mrs. Ramsay as if the woman might return, but nothing happens. She hopes that her cries will heal her pain, but is glad that Carmichael does not hear them. Eventually, the anguish subsides, and Lily returns to her painting, working on her representation of the hedge. She imagines Mrs. Ramsay, radiant with beauty and crowned with flowers,

walking across the lawn. The image soothes her. She notices a boat in the middle of the bay and wonders if it is the Ramsays'.

Mutilated Fish:

Although Chapter VI is presented in brackets and is only two sentences long, its description of a live mutilated fish is important to the novel since the fish represents the paradox of the world as an extremely cruel place in which survival is somehow possible. The brackets also hearken back to the reports of violence and sorrow in "Time Passes," which recount the deaths of Prue and Andrew Ramsay. To the Lighthouse is filled with symbols that have no easily assigned meaning. The mutilated fish, the boar's head wrapped in Mrs. Ramsay's shawl, Lily's painting, and the lighthouse itself are symbols that require us to sift through a multiplicity of meanings rather than pin down a single interpretation.

Stories of Shipwreck:

Mrs. Ramsay and the pasts of her guests and children haunt the novel's final section. As Lily stands on the lawn watching the Ramsays' boat move out into the bay, she is possessed by thoughts of Mrs. Ramsay, while Macalister spins out stories of shipwrecks and drowned sailors, and Cam reflects that there is no suffering on the distant shore where people are "free to come and go like ghosts." At first, Mrs. Ramsay exerts her old pull on Lily, who begins to feel anxious about the choices she has made in life. But as her thoughts turn to Paul and Minta Rayley, around whom she has built up "a whole structure of imagination," Lily begins to exorcise Mrs. Ramsay's spirit and better understand her old friend. Though she readily admits in regard to her imagining of the Rayleys' failed marriage that "not a word of it [is] true," she believes that her version of their lives constitutes real knowledge of the couple; thus, the novel again insists upon the subjective nature of reality. These thoughts allow Lily to approach Mrs. Ramsay, who insisted on Paul's marriage, from a new, more critical, and ultimately more truthful angle.

Lets Sum Up:

Lily's longing for Mrs. Ramsay is a result of understanding her as a more complicated, flawed individual. When she wakes that morning, Lily reflects solemnly that Mrs. Ramsay's absence at the breakfast table evokes no particular feelings in her; now, however, Lily calls out Mrs. Ramsay's name, as if attempting to chant her back from the grave. Lily's anguish and dissonance force us to reassess her art. Mrs. Ramsay's beauty has always rendered Lily speechless, but Lily now realizes that "beauty had this penalty—it came too readily, came too completely. It stilled life—froze it." She mimics Mrs. Ramsay's psychological gesture of smoothing away life's complexities and flaws under a veneer of beauty. Continuing to paint, Lily feels a deeper need to locate the Ramsays' boat on the water and reach out to Mr. Ramsay, to whom a short while earlier she feels that she has nothing to give.

Unit End Exercises:

1 How does Andrew Ramsay die?

A BOATING ACCIDENT

TUBERCULOSIS

FIGHTING IN WORLD WAR I

SUICIDE

2 What is Mrs. Ramsay knitting for the Lighthouse keeper's boy?

STOCKINGS

A SCARF

A SHAWL

A HAT

3 What worries Mrs. Ramsay about Jasper?

HIS FORGETFULNESS

HIS FONDNESS FOR SHOOTING BIRDS

HIS HOT TEMPER

HIS SUDDEN FEVER

4 In what year was To the Lighthouse published?

1952

1927

1893k

1856

5Where is the Ramsays' summer home?

THE HEBRIDES

BARBADOS

LONG ISLAND

THE RIVIERA

6 How does Augustus Carmichael infuriate Mr. Ramsay at dinner?

BY FLIRTING WITH MRS. RAMSAY

BY YELLING AT PRUE

BY CRITICIZING HIS WORK

BY ASKING FOR MORE SOUP

7 With what does Mrs. Ramsay cover the boar's head on the nursery wall?

ATOWEL

A HAT

A SHAWL

A BASKET

8 What does Lily decide to move to the center of her painting?

A BOAT

A TREE

A PURPLE TRIANGLE

THE LIGHTHOUSE

9 How does Mrs. Ramsay envision her essential self?

AS A BIRD

AS A BOAR

AS A WEDGE-SHAPED CORE OF DARKNESS

AS A NUN

10 What poem does Mr. Ramsay recite to himself on the beach?

THE SECOND COMING

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

FOUR QUARTETS

THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK

11 Which of the Ramsay's guests is a poet?

LILY BRISCOE

PAUL RAYLEY

AUGUSTUS CARMICHAEL

CHARLES TANSLEY

12 Where does Nancy find Minta and Paul kissing?

ON THE BOAT

ON THE TERRACE

IN THE DINING ROOM

NONE OF THE ABOVE

13 Who are the Owl and the Poker?

TWO OF ROSE'S DOLLS

MINTA DOYLE'S PARENTS

TWO BIRDS THAT JASPER SHOOTS

TWO CHARACTERS FROM JAMES'S STORYBOOK

14 What is Charles Tansley proud to carry home for Mrs. Ramsay?

HER SHAWL

HER HANDBAG

A LETTER ADDRESSED TO HER

JAMES

15Who asks to go to the Lighthouse at the beginning of the book?

LILY

ANDREW

JAMES

CAM

Answers to check your progress:

1) Fighting in World War I
2) A Shawal
3) His Fondness for Soothing birds
4) 1927
5) The Hebrides
6) By asking for more soups
7) Shawal
8) A tree
9) As a Wedge-shaped
10) The Charge of the Light Brigade
11) Augustus Carmicheal
12) None of the above
13) Minta Doyel's parents
14) Her handbag
15) James

Suggested Reading:

Davies, Stevie (1989). Virginia Woolf To the Lighthouse. Great Britain: Penguin Books. ISBN 0-14-077177-8.

Raitt, Suzanne (1990). Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf. ISBN 0-7450-0823-2.

Dick, Susan; Virginia Woolf (1983). "Appendix A". To the Lighthouse: The Original Holograph Draft. Toronto, Londo: University of Toronto Press.

Woolf, Virginia (1980). Bell, Anne Olivier; McNeillie, Andrew (eds.). The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Volume III: 1925–1930. London: Hogarth. ISBN 0-7012-0466-4.

UNIT XI - ANIMAL FARM

Introduction:

One night, all the animals at Mr. Jones' Manor Farm assemble in a barn to hear old Major, a pig, describe a dream he had about a world where all animals live free from the tyranny of their human masters. old Major dies soon after the meeting, but the animals — inspired by his philosophy of Animalism — plot a rebellion against Jones. Two pigs, Snowball and Napoleon, prove themselves important figures and planners of this dangerous enterprise. When Jones forgets to feed the animals, the revolution occurs, and Jones and his men are chased off the farm. Manor Farm is renamed Animal Farm, and the Seven Commandments of Animalism are painted on the barn wall.

Objectives:

Initially, the rebellion is a success: The animals complete the harvest and meet every Sunday to debate farm policy. The pigs, because of their intelligence, become the supervisors of the farm. Napoleon, however, proves to be a power-hungry leader who steals the cows' milk and a number of apples to feed him and the other pigs. He also enlists the services of Squealer, a pig with the ability to persuade the other animals that the pigs are always moral and correct in their decisions.

The tactics of Snowball:

Later that fall, Jones and his men return to Animal Farm and attempt to retake it. Thanks to the tactics of Snowball, the animals defeat Jones in what thereafter becomes known as The Battle of the Cowshed. Winter arrives, and Mollie, a vain horse concerned only with ribbons and sugar, is lured off the farm by another human. Snowball begins drawing plans for a windmill, which will provide electricity and thereby give the animals more leisure time, but Napoleon vehemently opposes such a plan on the grounds that building the windmill will allow them less time for producing food. On the Sunday that the pigs offer the windmill to the animals for a vote, Napoleon summons a pack of ferocious dogs, who chase Snowball off the farm forever. Napoleon announces that there will be no further debates; he also tells them that the windmill will be built after all and lies that it was his own idea, stolen by Snowball. For the rest of the novel, Napoleon uses Snowball as a scapegoat on whom he blames all of the animals' hardships.

The Principles of Animal Farm:

Much of the next year is spent building the windmill. Boxer, an incredibly strong horse, proves himself to be the most valuable animal in this endeavor. Jones, meanwhile, forsakes the farm and moves to another part of the county. Contrary to the principles of Animalism, Napoleon hires a solicitor and begins trading with neighboring farms. When a storm

topples the half-finished windmill, Napoleon predictably blames Snowball and orders the animals to begin rebuilding it.

A totalitarian dictator:

Napoleon's lust for power increases to the point where he becomes a totalitarian dictator, forcing "confessions" from innocent animals and having the dogs kill them in front of the entire farm. He and the pigs move into Jones' house and begin sleeping in beds (which Squealer excuses with his brand of twisted logic). The animals receive less and less food, while the pigs grow fatter. After the windmill is completed in August, Napoleon sells a pile of timber to Jones; Frederick, a neighboring farmer who pays for it with forged banknotes. Frederick and his men attack the farm and explode the windmill but are eventually defeated. As more of the Seven Commandments of Animalism are broken by the pigs, the language of the Commandments is revised: For example, after the pigs become drunk one night, the Commandment, "No animals shall drink alcohol" is changed to, "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess."

A make-believe tale:

Boxer again offers his strength to help build a new windmill, but when he collapses, exhausted, Napoleon sells the devoted horse to a knacker (a glue-boiler). Squealer tells the indignant animals that Boxer was actually taken to a veterinarian and died a peaceful death in a hospital — a tale the animals believe.

The Seven Commandments:

Years pass and Animal Farm expands its boundaries after Napoleon purchases two fields from another neighboring farmer, Pilkington. Life for all the animals (except the pigs) is harsh. Eventually, the pigs begin walking on their hind legs and take on many other qualities of their former human oppressors. The Seven Commandments are reduced to a single law: "All Animals Are Equal / But Some Are More Equal Than Others." The novel ends with Pilkington sharing drinks with the pigs in Jones' house. Napoleon changes the name of the farm back to Manor Farm and quarrels with Pilkington during a card game in which both of them try to play the ace of spades. As other animals watch the scene from outside the window, they cannot tell the pigs from the humans.

Success becomes significant when the benefits are shared:

As Orwell spent more and more time with the down-and-outs of England, he became convinced that the only remedy for the invidious problem of poverty lay in socialism, a political and economic philosophy arguing that only when the state controls the means of production and distribution will all members of a nation share its profits and rewards. Unlike capitalism, the philosophy holding that a nation's means of production and distribution should be privately owned and controlled, socialism argues that only government regulation of a nation's economy can close the gap between the rich and the poor. Although he was not a

virulent anti-capitalist, Orwell did think that only with the gradual introduction of socialist ideas and practices into British life would the poor eventually come to share in the fruits of their nation's prosperity.

Fascism:

As he explained in his Preface to the Ukrainian edition of Animal Farm, "I became pro-Socialist more out of disgust with the way the poorer section of the industrial workers were oppressed and neglected than out of any theoretical admiration for a planned society." After fighting against fascism (an oppressive system of government in which the ruling party has completes economic control) in the Spanish Civil War, Orwell dedicated himself to exploring political questions in his writing. As he explains in the essay "Why I Write," "Every line of serious work I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism." His detestation and fear of totalitarianism — an even more extreme form of fascism in which the ruling party has complete control over all aspects of a people's lives — thus informed much of his literary output.

The Impact of Russian Revolution:

Orwell examined socialism in a number of his nonfiction works but was prompted to write Animal Farm by what he saw as a prevalent — and false — belief that the Russian Revolution of 1917 was a step toward socialism for millions of poor and oppressed Russians. Orwell felt that Stalin's brutal rise to power was not only barbaric, but a betrayal of the socialist principles for which Lenin, Trotsky, and he had presumably revolted. In hindsight, this seems obvious, but in the world of World War II Europe, such an attack on Russia was willingly stifled by many British leftists who wanted to believe that Russia was indeed moving toward a true union of socialist republics. The fact that Russia was — like England — fighting Hitler also made Orwell's position more unpalatable to leftist thinkers. Still, he felt that the U.S.S.R. was not progressing toward socialism but totalitarianism: "I was struck by clear signs of its transformation into a hierarchical society, in which the rulers have no more reason to give up their power than any ruling class." Convinced that "a destruction of the Soviet myth was essential if we wanted a revival of the Socialist movement," Orwell began thinking about how he could best communicate his opinions on socialism and Stalin.

Men exploiting animals:

His thoughts were ignited when he happened to see a village boy whipping a cart-horse. At that moment, Orwell received the inspiration he needed to formulate his ideas into Animal Farm: "It struck me that if only such animals became aware of their strength we would have no power over them, and that men exploit animals" as the government in a totalitarian state exploits the common people. Now Orwell had a plan for his novel which would both argue the need for a true socialist government and warn the world of the ways in which socialist ideas threatened the will of these

in power who wish to control other people. His book would demonstrate the ways in which — despite all of their socialist propaganda — the leaders of the Russian Revolution (especially Stalin) had created in a system even worse than its previous one and sound an alarm to all English readers about the dangers of believing in the Soviet myth. (For a more detailed examination of how the events of the novel parallel those of the Russian Revolution, see the Critical Essays.) After a number of rejections from publishers, the novel was finally accepted by the small publishing firm of Secker and Warburg and proved to be a tremendous success, both in England and the United States. After Nineteen Eighty-Four, another novel that portrays life under an oppressive government, Animal Farm is Orwell's most renowned work.

Let us Sum Up:

Of course, the novel's meaning is not rooted solely in its portrayal of the Russian Revolution. The novel asks its readers to examine the ways in which political leaders with seemingly noble and altruistic motives can betray the very ideals in which they ostensibly believe, as well as the ways in which certain members of a nation can elect themselves to positions of great power and abuse their fellow citizens, all under the guise of assisting them. The novel also presents the subtle ways in which a group of citizens — of a farm or a nation — can be eventually led by the nose into a terrible life ruled by a totalitarian regime. In "Why I Write," Orwell describes Animal Farm as "the first book in which I tried, with full consciousness of what I was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole." His political purpose — presenting a model of socialism gone wrong — is found in the way that the novel's animals reflect different kinds of humans and their struggles for freedom and power. Orwell felt that a farm where "All Animals Are Equal" would solve many social and economic problems — but he also knew that such a system would be difficult to maintain, since some animals would act on the principle that "Some Are More Equal than Others."

Unit end exercises:

1) Compare and contrast Napoleon and Snowball. What techniques do they use in their struggle for power? Does Snowball represent a morally legitimate political alternative to the corrupt leadership of Napoleon?

2) Why do you think Orwell chose to use a fable in his condemnation of Soviet communism and totalitarianism? Fiction would seem a rather indirect method of political commentary; if Orwell had written an academic essay, he could have named names, pointed to details, and proven his case more systematically. What different opportunities of expression does a fable offer its author?

3) From whose perspective is Animal Farm told? Why would Orwell have chosen such a perspective?

Answers to check your progress:

1) As Joseph Stalin did, Napoleon prefers to work behind the scenes to build his power through manipulation and deal-making, while Snowball devotes himself, as Leon Trotsky did, to winning popular support through his ideas, passionate speeches, and success in debates with his opponent. Snowball seems to work within the political system, while Napoleon willingly circumvents it. Napoleon, for instance, understands the role of force in political control, as is made clear by his use of the attack dogs to expel Snowball from the farm.

2) Despite Napoleon's clearly bullying tactics, Orwell's text doesn't allow us to perceive Snowball as a preferable alternative. Snowball does nothing to prevent the consolidation of power in the hands of the pigs, nor does he stop the unequal distribution of goods in the pigs' favor—he may even, in fact, be complicit in it early on. Furthermore, the ideals of Animal Farm—like Orwell's ideal version of socialism—are rooted in democracy, with all of the animals deciding how their collective action should be undertaken. For any one animal to rise to greater power than any other would violate that ideal and essentially render Animal Farm indistinguishable from a human farm—an unavoidable eventuality by the end of the novella. Though their motives for power may be quite different—Napoleon seems to have a powerful, egocentric lust for control, while Snowball seems to think himself a genius who should be the one to guide the farm toward success—each represents a potential dictator. Neither pig has the other animals' interests at heart, and thus neither represents the socialist ideals of Animal Farm.

3) Historically, fables or parables have allowed writers to criticize individuals or institutions without endangering themselves: an author could always claim that he or she had aimed simply to write a fairy tale—a hypothetical, meaningless children's story. Even now, when many nations protect freedom of speech, fables still come across as less accusatory, less threatening. Orwell never condemns Stalin outright, a move that might have alienated certain readers, since Stalin proved an ally against Adolf Hitler's Nazi forces. Moreover, the language of a fable comes across as gentle, inviting, and unassuming: the reader feels drawn into the story and can follow the plot easily, rather than having to wade through a self-righteous polemic. In writing a fable, Orwell expands his potential audience and warms it to his argument before he even begins.

4) Because fables allow for the development of various characters, Orwell can use characterization to add an element of sympathy to his arguments. Especially by telling the story from the point

of view of the animals, Orwell draws us in and allows us to identify with the working class that he portrays. Thus, a fable allows him to appeal more intensely to emotion than a political essay might enable him to do. Additionally, in the case of Animal Farm, the lighthearted, pastoral, innocent atmosphere of the story stands in stark contrast to the dark, corrupt, malignant tendencies that it attempts to expose. This contrast adds to the story's force of irony: just as the idyllic setting and presentation of the story belies its wretched subject matter, so too do we see the utopian ideals of socialism give way to a totalitarian regime in which the lower classes suffer.

5) Finally, by writing in the form of a fable, Orwell universalizes his message. Although the specific animals and events that he portrays clearly evoke particular parallels in the real world, their status as symbols allows them to signify beyond specific times and places. Orwell himself encourages this breadth of interpretation: while the character of Napoleon, for example, refers most directly to Stalin in deed and circumstance, his name evokes his resemblance to the French general-turned-autocrat Napoleon.

6) Animal Farm is not told from any particular animal's perspective; properly speaking, it doesn't have a protagonist. Rather, it is told from the perspective of the common animals as a group: we read, for example, that "[t]he animals were stupefied. . . . It was some minutes before they could take it all in." This technique enables Orwell to paint a large portrait of the average people who suffer under communism. Through this choice of narrative perspective, he shows the loyalty, naïveté, gullibility, and work ethic of the whole class of common animals. In this way, he can effectively explore the question of why large numbers of people would continue to accept and support the Russian communist government, for example, even while it kept them hungry and afraid and even after its stated goals had clearly and decisively failed.

Suggested Reading:

1) Orwell, writing in his review of Franz Borkenau's The Spanish Cockpit in Time and Tide, 31 July 1937, and "Spilling the Spanish Beans", New English Weekly, 29 July 1937

2) Bradbury, Malcolm, Introduction, according to Christopher Hitchens, "the persons of Lenin and Trotsky are combined into one [i.e., Snowball], or, it might even be [...] to say, there is no Lenin at all."

3) Orwell 1976 page 25 La libertà di stampa Struve, Gleb. Telling the Russians, written for the Russian journal New Russian Wind, reprinted in Remembering Orwell A Note on the Text, Peter Davison, Animal Farm, Penguin edition 1989

UNIT XII - SIDEWISE IN TIME

Introduction:

It is a science fiction short story by American writer Murray Leinster that was first published in the June 1934 issue of Astounding Stories. "Sidewise in Time" served as the title story for Leinster's second story collection in 1950.

Objectives:

The Sidewise Award for Alternate History, established in 1995 to recognize the best alternate history stories and novels of the year, was named in honor of "Sidewise in Time."

Apocalyptic cataclysm

Professor Minott is a mathematician at Robinson College in Fredericksburg, Virginia who has determined that an apocalyptic cataclysm is fast approaching that could destroy the entire universe. The cataclysm manifests itself on June 5, 1935 (one year in the future of the story's original publication) when sections of the Earth's surface begin changing places with their counterparts in alternate timelines. A Roman legion from a timeline where the Roman Empire never fell appears on the outskirts of St. Louis, Missouri. Viking longships from a timeline where the Vikings settled North America raid a seaport in Massachusetts. A traveling salesman from Louisville, Kentucky, whose van bears a commercial logo including Uncle Sam with the Stars and Stripes, finds himself in trouble with the law when he travels into an area where the South won the American Civil War. A ferry approaching San Francisco finds the flag of Tsarist Russia flying from a grim fortress dominating the city.

Original timeline:

When a forest of sequoias appears north of Fredericksburg, Professor Minott leads an expedition of seven students from Robinson College to explore it. They reach the Potomac River, and find on its banks a Chinese village surrounded by rice paddies. At this point, Minott reveals the true situation to the students: he knew in advance that the timeline exchanges were going to take place, and he intends to lead the students to a timeline where he can use his scientific knowledge to gain wealth and power. The party returns to Fredericksburg, which in their absence has been replaced by wilderness, and Minott informs the students that they cannot return to their original timeline.

Primitive timeline:

That night, an airplane from their own timeline makes a crash landing near Minott's party. Before the pilot dies, they learn from him that Washington, D.C. from their timeline was still in place. A student named Blake wants to make for Washington, but Minott refuses. The forest catches fire from the burning airplane, and the party flees to a Roman villa.

They are captured by the villa's owner, except for Blake, who escapes. Later that night Blake secretly returns to the villa and frees the others from the slave pen, shooting the owner in the process. The next morning, the party finds itself near a section of their own timeline. Blake leads the other students there, but Minott refuses to come; he still intends to travel to a more primitive timeline and make himself its ruler. One of the women in the party joins him, while the rest of the students return to their timeline. The students are able to contact the rest of the world and inform them of Minott's deductions about the event. Within two weeks, the timeline exchanges trail off, leaving bits and pieces of other timelines embedded in our own.

Much stranger physical phenomena:

Professor Minott, "instructor in mathematics on the faculty of Robinson College in Fredericksburg, Va", is one of the few who has an idea of strange upheaval happening everywhere - like familiar sight across the road getting replaced with strange scenery. Cross the boundary, & you are in a parallel universe. With the turmoil still on, you might never be able to return to your original universe. Signs have been around a while, in the form of much stranger physical phenomena.

Professor knows exactly what he wants:

Taking his secret lady love "Maida Hayns, daughter of the professor of Romance languages" & cross as many of these parallel universe boundaries as needed - till he is in a timeline where he can call the shots & live happily ever after. He will also take some other students - 3 other couples - along on horses & with guns. Not only the students not take kindly to his one-sided affections for the girl, but the group has many adventures among the people populating alternate versions of US (mostly clichéd versions of alternate cultures, obviously inferior to that of adventurers!)

Let’s sum up:

By the end of the story, all students including Maida will return to our universe. One of the girls, Lucy Blair, will go with Prof on his parallel universe adventures.

UNIT XIII - MIDNIGHT CHILDREN

Introduction:

Saleem Sinai, the narrator of Midnight's Children, opens the novel by explaining that he was born on midnight, August 15, 1947, at the exact moment India gained its independence from British rule. Now nearing his thirty-first birthday, Saleem believes that his body is beginning to crack and fall apart. Fearing that his death is imminent, he grows anxious to tell his life story. Padma, his loyal and loving companion, serves as his patient, often skeptical audience.

Objectives:

Saleem's story begins in Kashmir, thirty-two years before his birth, in 1915. There, Saleem's grandfather, a doctor named Aadam Aziz, begins treating Naseem, the woman who becomes Saleem's grandmother. For the first three years Aadam Aziz treats her, Naseem is always covered by a sheet with a small hole in it that is moved to expose the part of her that is sick.

Loss of Religious Faith:

Aadam Azis sees his future wife's face for the first time on the same day World War I ends, in 1918. Aadam Aziz and Naseem marry, and the couple moves to Agra, where Aadam—a doctor whose loss of religious faith has affected him deeply—sees how protests in the name of independence get violently suppressed. Aadam and Naseem have three daughters, Alia, Mumtaz, and Emerald, and two sons, Mustapha and Hanif. Aadam becomes a follower of the optimistic activist Mian Abdullah, whose anti-Partition stance eventually leads to his assassination. Following Abdullah's death, Aadam hides Abdullah's frightened assistant, Nadir Khan, despite his wife's opposition.

Secret Marriage:

While living in the basement, Nadir Khan falls in love with Mumtaz, and the two are secretly married. However, after two years of marriage, Aadam finds out that his daughter is still a virgin, as Nadir and Mumtaz have yet to consummate their marriage. Nadir Khan is sent running for his life when Mumtaz's sister, Emerald, tells Major Zulfikar—an officer in the Pakistani army, soon to be Emerald's husband—about his hiding place in the house. Abandoned by her husband, Mumtaz agrees to marry Ahmed Sinai, a young merchant who until then had been courting her sister, Alia.

Sense of guilt:

Mumtaz changes her name to Amina and moves to Delhi with her new husband. Pregnant, she goes to a fortune-teller who delivers a cryptic prophecy about her unborn son, declaring that the boy will never be older or younger than his country and claiming that he sees two heads, knees and

a nose. After a terrorist organization burns down Ahmed's factory, Ahmed and Amina move to Bombay. They buy a house from a departing Englishman, William Methwold, who owns an estate at the top of a hill. Wee Willie Winky, a poor man who entertains the families of Methwold's Estate, says that his wife, Vanita, is also expecting a child soon. Unbeknownst to Wee Willie Winky, Vanita had an affair with William Methwold, and he is the true father of her unborn child. Amina and Vanita both go into labor, and, at exactly midnight, each woman delivers a son. Meanwhile, a midwife at the nursing home, Mary Pereira, is preoccupied with thoughts of her radical socialist lover, Joseph D'Costa. Wanting to make him proud, she switches the nametags of the two newborn babies, thereby giving the poor baby a life of privilege and the rich baby a life of poverty. Driven by a sense of guilt afterward, she becomes an ayah, or nanny, to Saleem.

Significant birth of Saleem:

Because it occurs at the exact moment India gains its independence, the press heralds Saleem's birth as hugely significant. Young Saleem has an enormous cucumberlike nose and blue eyes like those of his grandfather, Aadam Aziz. His mischievous sister, nicknamed the Brass Monkey, is born a few years later. Overwhelmed by the expectations laid on him by the prophecy, and ridiculed by other children for his huge nose, Saleem takes to hiding in a washing chest. While hiding one day, he sees his mother sitting down on the toilet; when Amina discovers him, she punishes Saleem to one day of silence. Unable to speak, he hears, for the first time, a babble of voices in his head. He realizes he has the power of telepathy and can enter anyone's thoughts. Eventually, Saleem begins to hear the thoughts of other children born during the first hour of independence. The 1,001 midnight's children—a number reduced to 581 by their tenth birthday—all have magical powers, which vary according to how close to midnight they were born. Saleem discovers that Shiva, the boy with whom he was switched at birth, was born with a pair of enormous, powerful knees and a gift for combat.

Saleem's fate:

One day, Saleem loses a portion of his finger in an accident and is rushed to the hospital, where his parents learn that according to Saleem's blood type, he couldn't possibly be their biological son. After he leaves the hospital, Saleem is sent to live with his Uncle Hanif and Aunt Pia for a while. Shortly after Saleem returns home to his parents, Hanif commits suicide. While the family mourns Hanif's death, Mary confesses to having switched Saleem and Shiva at birth. Ahmed—now an alcoholic—grows violent with Amina, prompting her to take Saleem and the Brass Monkey to Pakistan, where she moves in with Emerald. In Pakistan, Saleem watches as Emerald's husband, General Zulfikar, stages a coup against the Pakistani government and ushers in a period of martial law.

War between India and China:

Four years later, after Ahmed suffers a heart failure, Amina and the children move back to Bombay. India goes to war with China, while Saleem's perpetually congested nose undergoes a medical operation. As a result, he loses his telepathic powers but, in return, gains an incredible sense of smell, with which he can detect emotions.

Saleem's misfortunes:

Saleem's entire family moves to Pakistan after India's military loss to China. His younger sister, now known as Jamila Singer, becomes the most famous singer in Pakistan. Already on the brink of ruin, Saleem's entire family—save Jamila and himself—dies in the span of a single day during the war between India and Pakistan. During the air raids, Saleem gets hit in the head by his grandfather's silver spittoon, which erases his memory entirely.

Animalistic state:

Relieved of his memory, Saleem is reduced to an animalistic state. He finds himself conscripted into military service, as his keen sense of smell makes him an excellent tracker. Though he doesn't know exactly how he came to join the army, he suspects that Jamila sent him there as a punishment for having fallen in love with her. While in the army, Saleem helps quell the independence movement in Bangladesh. After witnessing a number of atrocities, however, he flees into the jungle with three of his fellow soldiers. In the jungle of the Sundarbans, he regains all of his memory except the knowledge of his name. After leaving the jungle, Saleem finds Parvati-the-witch, one of midnight's children, who reminds him of his name and helps him escape back to India. He lives with her in the magician's ghetto, along with a snake charmer named Picture Singh.

Disappointed Saleem:

Disappointed that Saleem will not marry her, Parvati-the-witch has an affair with Shiva, now a famous war hero. Things between Parvati and Shiva quickly sour, and she returns to the magicians' ghetto, pregnant and still unmarried. There, the ghetto residents shun Parvati until Saleem agrees to marry her. Meanwhile, Indira Gandhi, the prime minister of India, begins a sterilization campaign. Shortly after the birth of Parvati's son, the government destroys the magician's ghetto. Parvati dies while Shiva captures Saleem and brings him to a forced sterilization camp. There, Saleem divulges the names of the other midnight's children. One by one, the midnight's children are rounded up and sterilized, effectively destroying the powers that so threaten the prime minister. Later, however, Indira Gandhi loses the first election she holds.

Saleem set free:

The midnight's children, including Saleem, are all set free. Saleem goes in search of Parvati's son, Aadam, who has been living with Picture Singh. The three take a trip to Bombay, so Picture Singh can challenge a

man who claims to be the world's greatest snake charmer. While in Bombay, Saleem eats some chutney that tastes exactly like the ones his ayah, Mary, used to make. He finds the chutney factory that Mary now owns, at which Padma stands guarding the gate. With this meeting, Saleem's story comes full circle. His historical account finally complete, Saleem decides to marry Padma, his steadfast lover and listener, on his thirty-first birthday, which falls on the thirty-first anniversary of India's independence. Saleem prophesies that he will die on that day, disintegrating into millions of specks of dust.

Book One: The Perforated Sheet, Mercurochrome

Saleem Sinai opens the novel by explaining the exact date and time of his birth: August 15, 1947, at midnight. Saleem's birth coincides precisely with the moment India officially gains its independence from Britain. Thus, as Saleem notes, his miraculously timed birth ties him to the fate of the country. He is thirty-one years old now and feels that time is running out for him. Saleem's believes his life is ending and he must tell all of the stories trapped inside of him before he dies.

Kashmir's beauty:

Saleem begins the story with his grandfather, Aadam Aziz, on an early spring morning in Kashmir. Saleem describes Kashmir as a place of incredible beauty and notes that, in 1915, Kashmir was still pristine, looking just as it had during the time of the Mughal Empire. At this point in the story, Kashmir is free of the soldiers, camouflaged trucks, and military jeeps that will come to characterize it in later years.

Aadam's destiny:

While praying, Aadam bumps his nose against the hard ground, and three drops of blood fall from his nose. As a result, he vows never again to bow before man or god, and consequently a "hole" opens up inside of him. Aadam has recently returned home from Germany, after five years of medical study. While Aadam was away, his father had a stroke, and his mother took over his duties in the family gem business. As Aadam stands on the edge of a lake, Tai, an old boatman, comes rowing toward him. Saleem describes Aadam's features, particularly his prominent nose. Saleem also describes the enigmatic Tai and the local rumors that surround him.

The condition of Aadam:

Tai's boat draws closer. He shouts out to Aadam that the daughter of Ghani the landowner has fallen ill. Here, Saleem interrupts his narrative to note that most of what matters in our lives takes place in our absence, but he reassures us that he has the ability to see things he didn't actually witness. In this way, he is able to describe Aadam taking care of his mother, attending to the landowner's daughter, and being ferried across the lake by Tai, all at the same time.

The Seven-inch hole:

At the landowner's opulent house, Aadam realizes that the old man, Ghani, is blind. While waiting to see the patient, Aadam gets nervous and considers fleeing, but then he has a vision of his mother and decides to stay. Aadam is taken in to see the patient, who is flanked by two extremely muscular women holding a white bed sheet over her like a curtain. In the center of the sheet is a hole, approximately seven inches in diameter. Ghani tells Aadam that, for modesty's sake, he can only examine his daughter through the seven-inch hole.

Summary: Mercurochrome

Saleem sits at his desk, writing. Padma, described as a great comfort despite her inability to read, cooks for Saleem and presses him to eat. Saleem returns to his story, saying that his grandfather's premonition to run away was well founded, because, in the ensuing months and years, Aadam fell under the spell of the perforated cloth. The isolated parts of Naseem's body that Aadam has seen begin to haunt him, and his mother notes that Ghani is using the illnesses as a ploy, to arrange a marriage between his daughter and Aadam. Saleem notes that his grandfather fell in love through a hole in a sheet and that this love filled in the hole left by Aadam's renunciation of his faith.

Stream of Consciousness used:

From the very first passages of Midnight's Children, Rushdie establishes the novel's unique narrative voice. Saleem narrates in the first person, often addressing the audience directly and informally. He also writes in a prose style that feels spontaneous and improvised, as if he were writing his thoughts down as fast as he can, without stopping to revise or edit. Midnight's Children doesn't represent a cool, composed account of past events, nor does it resemble an objective voice recollecting events from a distant vantage point. Saleem rambles and veers off, rephrases and reworks, much as one does in conversation. This prose style is referred to as stream of consciousness, and, in its immediacy, it reflects Saleem's desperate, urgent need to finish his tale before he dies.

Lets sum up:

The prose style also makes the novel resemble a session of oral storytelling, a feature highlighted by the presence of Padma, Saleem's faithful listener and the reader's stand-in within the pages of Midnight's Children. At times, Padma plays the role of a passive audience member, while at other moments she actively interjects, making comments and suggestions and calling Saleem to task for some of his more excessive flights of fancy. In this way, acting on our behalf, Padma plays the role of skeptic and critic. Through Padma, Rushdie can anticipate and acknowledge the reader's potential frustrations. By preemptively addressing any doubts and concerns we might have, Rushdie is then free to pursue the narrative as he sees fit.

Unit end exercises:

1) How does Aadam Aziz's "origin story" compare to Saleem's prophesy of "knees and a nose, a nose and knees"?

Answers check your progress:

1) When Saleem is telling Aadam's story, there is a moment when Aadam is kneeling on his prayer mat. As he leans forward, he knocks his nose against the ground. This moment is that coincides with the motif of nose and knees, a crucial part of the prophesy and a legacy of Saleem's life.

Suggested Reading:

Mullan, John. "Salman Rushdie on the writing of Midnight's Children." Guardian. 26 July 2008.

"Midnight's Children wins the Best of the Booker". The Man Booker Prizes. Archived from the original on 21 November 2008.

"Rushdie wins Best of Booker prize". BBC News. 10 July 2008.

"The Big Read". BBC. April 2003. Retrieved 26 October 2012

UNIT XIV - WORLD'S FAMOUS SPEECH

Excerpt from Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech

Introduction:

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today! I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in Alabama little black boys and little black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today!

Objectives:

Noble Prize Acceptance Speech given by William Faulkner: Ladies and gentlemen, I feel that this award was not made to me as a man, but to my work – a life's work in the agony and sweat of the human spirit, not for glory and least of all for profit, but to create out of the materials of the human spirit something which did not exist before. So this award is only mine in trust. It will not be difficult to find a dedication for the money part of it commensurate with the purpose and significance of its origin. But I would like to do the same with the acclaim too, by using this moment as a pinnacle from which I might be listened to by the young men and women already dedicated to the same anguish and travail, among whom is already that one who will someday stand here where I am standing.

Worth writing:

Our tragedy today is a general and universal physical fear so long sustained by now that we can even bear it. There are no longer problems of the spirit. There is only the question: When will I be blown up? Because of this, the young man or woman writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat.

Man is immortal:

"I decline to accept the end of man. It is easy enough to say that man is immortal simply because he will endure: that when the last dingdong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging tide less in the last red and dying evening, that even then there will still be one more sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking. I refuse to accept this. I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and

compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glories of his past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail."

Writing expertise:

He must learn them again. He must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid; and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed – love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice. Until he does so, he labors under a curse. He writes not of love but of lust, of defeats in which nobody loses anything of value, of victories without hope and, worst of all, without pity or compassion. His griefs grieve on no universal bones, leaving no scars. He writes not of the heart but of the glands.

Inexhaustible voice:

Until he relearns these things, he will write as though he stood among and watched the end of man. I decline to accept the end of man. It is easy enough to say that man is immortal simply because he will endure: that when the last dingdong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging tide less in the last red and dying evening, that even then there will still be one more sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking.

.**Let us sum up:**

In 1950, William Faulkner delivered his "Speech Accepting the Nobel Prize in Literature." The historic moment was one of high atomic anxiety as the unfriendly relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union intensified and the possibility of nuclear war and the end of humanity increased. Faulkner recognized the anxiety and, through his address, offered a language to help cope with the anxieties of the atomic age. This study examines how through the rhetorical strategies of kairos, decorum, and enactment, Faulkner recast humanism in an atomic age and presented the world with a way of living through atomic fear.

1. Theodore Roosevelt, "Duties of American Citizenship"

January 26, 1883; Buffalo, New York

Young Theordore Roosevelt mutton chops assemblyman

Given while serving as a New York assemblyman, TR's address on the "Duties of American Citizenship" delved into both the theoretical reasons why every man should be involved in politics and the practical means of serving in that capacity. Roosevelt chided those who excused themselves from politics because they were too busy; it was every man's duty to devote some time to maintaining good government.

Worthy Excerpt:

Of course, in one sense, the first essential for a man's being a good citizen is his possession of the home virtues of which we think when we call a man by the emphatic adjective of manly. No man can be a good citizen who is not a good husband and a good father, who is not honest in his dealings with other men and women, faithful to his friends and fearless in the presence of his foes, who has not got a sound heart, a sound mind, and a sound body; exactly as no amount of attention to civil duties will save a nation if the domestic life is undermined, or there is lack of the rude military virtues which alone can assure a country's position in the world. In a free republic the ideal citizen must be one willing and able to take arms for the defense of the flag, exactly as the ideal citizen must be the father of many healthy children. A race must be strong and vigorous; it must be a race of good fighters and good breeders, else its wisdom will come to naught and its virtue be ineffective; and no sweetness and delicacy, no love for and appreciation of beauty in art or literature, no capacity for building up material prosperity can possibly atone for the lack of the great virile virtues.

But this is aside from my subject, for what I wish to talk of is the attitude of the American citizen in civic life. It ought to be axiomatic in this country that every man must devote a reasonable share of his time to doing his duty in the Political life of the community. No man has a right to shirk his political duties under whatever plea of pleasure or business; and while such shirking may be pardoned in those of small cleans it is entirely unpardonable in those among whom it is most common–in the people whose circumstances give them freedom in the struggle for life. In so far as the community grows to think rightly, it will likewise grow to regard the young man of means who shirks his duty to the State in time of peace as being only one degree worse than the man who thus shirks it in time of war. A great many of our men in business, or of our young men who are bent on enjoying life (as they have a perfect right to do if only they do not sacrifice other things to enjoyment), rather plume themselves upon being good citizens if they even vote; yet voting is the very least of their duties, Nothing worth gaining is ever gained without effort. You can no more have freedom without striving and suffering for it than you can win success as a banker or a lawyer without labor and effort, without self-denial in youth and the display of a ready and alert intelligence in middle age. The people who say that they have not time to attend to politics are simply saying that they are unfit to live in a free community.

Read full text of speech here.

2. Winston Churchill, "We Shall Fight on the Beaches"

June 4, 1940; House of Commons, London

Winston Churchill giving speech we shall fight on beaches Winston Churchill, one of the greatest orators of the 20th century, was interestingly enough, like Demosthenes and other great orators before him, born with a

speech impediment which he worked on until it no longer hindered him. One would never guess this from hearing Churchill's strong and reassuring voice, a voice that would buoy up Britain during some of her darkest hours.

During the Battle of France, Allied Forces became cut off from troops south of the German penetration and perilously trapped at the Dunkirk bridgehead. On May 26, a wholesale evacuation of these troops, dubbed "Operation Dynamo," began. The evacuation was an amazing effort-the RAF kept the Luftwaffe at bay while thousands of ships, from military destroyers to small fishing boats, were used to ferry 338,000 French and British troops to safety, far more than anyone had thought possible. On June 4, Churchill spoke before the House of Commons, giving a report which celebrated the "miraculous deliverance" at Dunkirk, while also seeking to temper a too rosy of view of what was on the whole a "colossal military disaster."

Worthy Excerpt:

I have, myself, full confidence that if all do their duty, if nothing is neglected, and if the best arrangements are made, as they are being made, we shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our Island home, to ride out the storm of war, and to outlive the menace of tyranny, if necessary for years, if necessary alone. At any rate, that is what we are going to try to do. That is the resolve of His Majesty's Government-every man of them. That is the will of Parliament and the nation. The British Empire and the French Republic, linked together in their cause and in their need, will defend to the death their native soil, aiding each other like good comrades to the utmost of their strength. Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this Island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.

Read full text of speech here.

3. Lou Gehrig, "Farewell to Baseball Address"

July 4, 1939; Yankee Stadium

It seemed as if the luminous career of Lou Gehrig would go on forever. The Yankee's first baseman and prodigious slugger was nicknamed the Iron Horse for his durability and commitment to the game. Sadly, his record for suiting up for 2,130 consecutive games came to an end when at age 36, Gehrig was stricken with the crippling disease that

now bears his name. On July 4, 1939, the Yankees held a ceremony to honor their teammate and friend. They retired Gehrig's number, spoke of his greatness, and presented him with various gifts, plaques, and trophies. When Gehrig finally addressed the crowd, he did not use the opportunity to wallow in pity. Instead, he spoke of the things he was grateful for and what a lucky guy he was.

The Speech

Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about a bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth. I have been in ballparks for seventeen years and have never received anything but kindness and encouragement from you fans.

Look at these grand men. Which of you wouldn't consider it the highlight of his career to associate with them for even one day?

Sure, I'm lucky. Who wouldn't consider it an honor to have known Jacob Ruppert – also the builder of baseball's greatest empire, Ed Barrow – to have spent the next nine years with that wonderful little fellow Miller Huggins – then to have spent the next nine years with that outstanding leader, that smart student of psychology – the best manager in baseball today, Joe McCarthy!

Sure, I'm lucky. When the New York Giants, a team you would give your right arm to beat, and vice versa, sends you a gift, that's something! When everybody down to the groundskeepers and those boys in white coats remember you with trophies, that's something.

When you have a wonderful mother-in-law who takes sides with you in squabbles against her own daughter, that's something. When you have a father and mother who work all their lives so that you can have an education and build your body, it's a blessing! When you have a wife who has been a tower of strength and shown more courage than you dreamed existed, that's the finest I know.

So I close in saying that I might have had a tough break – but I have an awful lot to live for!

4. Demosthenes, "The Third Philippic"

342 B.C.; Athens, Greece

Demosthenes, master statesman and orator, loved his city-state of Athens. He cherished its way of life and abundant freedoms. And he believed in standing strong against anyone who might attempt to infringe on these privileges. This passion, unfortunately, was seldom shared by his fellow Athenians. While Philip the II of Macedon made bolder and bolder incursions into the Greek peninsula, the Athenian people seemed stuck in an apathetic stupor. For years, Demosthenes employed his powerful oratorical skills in attempts to awaken his fellow citizens from sleep to the realization of the imminent danger Philip posed. When Philip advanced on Thrace, the Athenians called an assembly to debate whether or not to

finally heed the great orator's advice. Demosthenes was sick of his brethren taking liberty and the Athenian way of life for granted and he boldly called upon them to rise up and take action. After his rousing speech, the assembly all cried out, "To arms! To arms!"

Worthy Excerpt:

It is this fate, I solemnly assure you, that I dread for you, when the time comes that you make your reckoning, and realize that there is no longer anything that can be done. May you never find yourselves, men of Athens, in such a position! Yet in any case, it were better to die ten thousand deaths, than to do anything out of servility towards Philip [or to sacrifice any of those who speak for your good]. A noble recompense did the people in Oreus receive, for entrusting themselves to Philip's friends, and thrusting Euphraeus aside! And a noble recompense the democracy of Eretria, for driving away your envoys, and surrendering to Cleitarchus! They are slaves, scourged and butchered! A noble clemency did he show to the Olynthians, who elected Lasthenes to command the cavalry, and banished Apollonides! It is folly, and it is cowardice, to cherish hopes like these, to give way to evil counsels, to refuse to do anything that you should do, to listen to the advocates of the enemy's cause, and to fancy that you dwell in so great a city that, whatever happens, you will not suffer any harm.

5. Chief Joseph, "Surrender Speech"

October 5, 1877; Montana Territory

In 1877, the military announced that the Chief Joseph and his tribe of Nez Perce had to move onto a reservation in Idaho or face retribution. Desiring to avoid violence, Chief Joseph advocated peace and cooperation. But fellow tribesmen dissented and killed four white men. Knowing a swift backlash was coming, Joseph and his people began to make their way to Canada, hoping to find amnesty there. The tribe traveled 1700 miles, fighting the pursuing US army along the way. In dire conditions, and after a five day battle, Chief Joseph surrendered to General Nelson A. Miles on Oct. 5, 1877 in the Bear Paw Mountains of Montana Territory, a mere 40 miles from the Canadian border. The Chief knew he was the last of a dying breed, and the moment of surrender was heartbreaking.

The Speech

Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before, I have it in my heart. I am tired of fighting. Our Chiefs are killed; Looking Glass is dead, Ta Hool Hool Shute is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say yes or no. He who led on the young men is dead. It is cold, and we have no blankets; the little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food. No one knows where they are – perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children, and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my Chiefs! I am tired;

my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever.

6. John F. Kennedy, "Inauguration Address"

January 20, 1961; Washington, D.C.

Young, handsome, with a glamorous family in tow, John F. Kennedy embodied the fresh optimism that had marked the post-war decade. On January 20, 1961, Kennedy took the oath of office as the 35th President of the United States. The youngest president in United States history, he was the first man born in the 20th century to hold that office. Listening to his inaugural address, the nation felt that a new era and a "new frontier" were being ushered in.

Worthy Excerpt:

Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility — I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it — and the glow from that fire can truly light the world. And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

7. Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation on the Challenger"

January 28, 1986; Washington, D.C.

On January 28, 1986, millions of Americans, many of them schoolchildren watching from their classroom desks, tuned in to see 7 Americans, including Christa McAuliffe, a 37 year old schoolteacher and the first ever "civilian astronaut," lift off in the space shuttle Challenger. Just 73 seconds later, the shuttle was consumed in a fireball. All seven aboard perished. These were the first deaths of American astronauts while in flight, and the nation was shocked and heartbroken by the tragedy. Just a few hours after the disaster, President Ronald Reagan took to the radio and airwaves, honoring these "pioneers" and offering comfort and assurance to a rattled people.

Worthy Excerpt:

We've grown used to wonders in this century. It's hard to dazzle us. But for 25 years the United States space program has been doing just that. We've grown used to the idea of space, and perhaps we forget that we've only just begun. We're still pioneers. They, the members of the Challenger crew, were pioneers. And I want to say something to the school children of

America who were watching the live coverage of the shuttle's takeoff. I know it is hard to understand, but sometimes painful things like this happen. It's all part of the process of exploration and discovery. It's all part of taking a chance and expanding man's horizons. The future doesn't belong to the fainthearted; it belongs to the brave. The Challenger crew was pulling us into the future, and we'll continue to follow them…… The crew of the space shuttle Challenger honored us by the manner in which they lived their lives. We will never forget them, nor the last time we saw them, this morning, as they prepared for the journey and waved goodbye and 'slipped the surly bonds of earth' to 'touch the face of God.'

8. "Speech of Alexander the Great"

326 B.C.; Hydaspes River, India

In 335 B.C., Alexander the Great began his campaign to recapture former Greek cities and to expand his empire. After ten years of undefeated battles, Alexander controlled an empire that included Greece, Egypt, and what had been the massive Persian Empire. That wasn't enough for Xander. He decided to continue his conquest into India. But after ten years of fighting and being away from home, his men lacked the will to take part in another battle, especially against an opponent like King Porus and his army. Alexander used the talent for oration he had developed while studying under Aristotle to infuse his men with the motivation they needed to continue on, to fight and to win.

Worthy Excerpt:

I could not have blamed you for being the first to lose heart if I, your commander, had not shared in your exhausting marches and your perilous campaigns; it would have been natural enough if you had done all the work merely for others to reap the reward. But it is not so. You and I, gentlemen, have shared the labour and shared the danger, and the rewards are for us all. The conquered territory belongs to you; from your ranks the governors of it are chosen; already the greater part of its treasure passes into your hands, and when all Asia is overrun, then indeed I will go further than the mere satisfaction of our ambitions: the utmost hopes of riches or power which each one of you cherishes will be far surpassed, and whoever wishes to return home will be allowed to go, either with me or without me. I will make those who stay the envy of those who return.

9. William Wilberforce, "Abolition Speech"

May 12, 1789; House of Commons, London

When William Wilberforce, a member of the British Parliament, converted to Christianity, he began to earnestly seek to reform the evils he found within himself and the world around him. One of the glaring moral issues of the day was slavery, and after reading up on the subject and meeting with anti-slavery activists, Wilberforce became convinced that God was calling him to be an abolitionist. Wilberforce decided to concentrate on ending the slave trade rather than slavery itself, reasoning

that the abolition of one would logically lead to the demise of the other. On May 12, 1789, Wilberforce made his first speech on the abolition of the slave trade before the House of Commons. He passionately made his case for why the trade was reprehensible and needed to cease. Wilberforce introduced a bill to abolish the trade, but it failed, a result he would become quite familiar with in the ensuing years. Yet Wilberforce never gave up, reintroducing the bill year after year, and the Slave Trade Act was finally passed in 1807.

Worthy Excerpt:

When I consider the magnitude of the subject which I am to bring before the House-a subject, in which the interests, not of this country, nor of Europe alone, but of the whole world, and of posterity, are involved: and when I think, at the same time, on the weakness of the advocate who has undertaken this great cause-when these reflections press upon my mind, it is impossible for me not to feel both terrified and concerned at my own inadequacy to such a task. But when I reflect, however, on the encouragement which I have had, through the whole course of a long and laborious examination of this question, and how much candour I have experienced, and how conviction has increased within my own mind, in proportion as I have advanced in my labours;-when I reflect, especially, that however averse any gentleman may now be, yet we shall all be of one opinion in the end;-when I turn myself to these thoughts, I take courage-I determine to forget all my other fears, and I march forward with a firmer step in the full assurance that my cause will bear me out, and that I shall be able to justify upon the clearest principles, every resolution in my hand, the avowed end of which is, the total abolition of the slave trade.

10. Theodore Roosevelt, "The Man with the Muck-rake"

April 14, 1906; Washington, D.C.

Theodore Roosevelt was president during the Progressive Era, a time of great enthusiasm for reform in government, the economy, and society. TR himself held many progressive ideals, but he also called for moderation, not extremism. The "Man with a Muck-rake" in Pilgrim's Progress never looked heavenward but instead constantly raked the filth at his feet. TR thus dubbed the journalists and activists of the day who were intent on exposing the corruption in society as "muckrakers." He felt that they did a tremendous amount of good, but needed to mitigate their constant pessimism and alarmist tone. He worried that the sensationalism with which these exposes were often presented would make citizens overly cynical and too prone to throw out the baby with the bathwater.

Worthy Excerpt:

To assail the great and admitted evils of our political and industrial life with such crude and sweeping generalizations as to include decent men in the general condemnation means the searing of the public conscience. There results a general attitude either of cynical belief in and indifference to public corruption or else of a distrustful inability to discriminate

between the good and the bad. Either attitude is fraught with untold damage to the country as a whole. The fool who has not sense to discriminate between what is good and what is bad is well-nigh as dangerous as the man who does discriminate and yet chooses the bad. There is nothing more distressing to every good patriot, to every good American, than the hard, scoffing spirit which treats the allegation of dishonesty in a public man as a cause for laughter. Such laughter is worse than the crackling of thorns under a pot, for it denotes not merely the vacant mind, but the heart in which high emotions have been choked before they could grow to fruition.

Let us sum up:

1. What do you love about the art of public speaking?
2. What do you hate about public speaking?
3. How do you feel about a life on the road?
4. In what ways does the relationship between speaker and audience sustain you, and in what ways not?
5. What do you want your audiences to remember of your presentation?
6. What do you want your audiences to do differently as a result of having heard your presentation?
7. What do you fear most about giving a presentation?
8. What from the past haunts you about public speaking? Were you not good enough once? Was there an audience that didn't like you? Was there a speech that didn't land? Was there a speech that you didn't give that you wanted to – or should have? What are you holding on to?
9. Who are the speakers and venues that you envy?
10. Why do you feel impelled to speak?

Answer to check your progress:

1) One of my favorite blogs is Warren Berger's A More Beautiful Question.
2) His questions are always illuminating – before even the answers start to flow. And that of course is his point. Recently Berger has identified the changing nature of leadership from authoritarian to more coach-like as part of a cultural move from answers to questions.
3) I guess that's good news for coaches, who (as Warren points out) are in the business of asking the right question at the right moment to spark insight in their clients and help them move forward.
4) He's inspired me to pose a series of questions that I believe are essential for speakers to ponder as they grow in their craft and become better at what they do. So be warned.

5) Normally, I'm offering answers in my blog posts. Today, it's questions. Twenty of them. If you just want the answers, then skip this one.

Suggested Reading:

Dragomir R. Radev, John Prager, and Valerie Samn. Ranking suspected answers to natural language questions using predictive annotation.

In Proceedings of the 6th Conference on Applied Natural Language Processing, Seattle, WA, May 2000.

John Prager, Eric Brown, Anni Coden, and Dragomir Radev.

Question-answering by predictive annotation. In Proceedings, 23rd Annual International ACM SIGIR Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval, Athens, Greece, July 2000.

Hutchins, W. John; Harold L. Somers (1992). An Introduction to Machine Translation. London: Academic Press. ISBN 978-0-12-362830-5.