PERIYAR UNIVERSITY

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State University - NIRF Rank 56 - State Public University Rank 25)

SALEM - 636 011

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION

(CDOE)

M.A ENGLISH

SEMESTER - I

ELECTIVE I: AMERICAN LITERATURE

(Candidates admitted from 2024 onwards)

Prepared by

Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE),

Periyar University, Salem – 636 011.

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SYLLABUS

ELECTIVE I

AMERICAN LITERATURE

Course Objectives:

- To explore the uniqueness of American literature at an advanced level.
- To analyze the American concept of freedom, liberty, life and the American point of view.
- To relate the American personal experience to the literary world.

Course Outcomes:

On successful completion of the course, the students will be able to

CO1 - acquire knowledge about the origin and development of American Literature through centuries

CO2 - understand the shift in literary notion from time to time and the distinctive creativity of the respective era

CO3 - analyse the diverse concepts, themes and approaches within American Literature

CO4 - grasp the ideologies and skills of significant writers through their works

CO5 - enhance soft skills through American literature

Unit I Poetry

Ralph Waldo Emerson	:	Brahma
Walt Whitman	:	Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking
Emily Dickinson	:	“Hope’’ is the thing with feathers
Robert Frost	:	Directive
Maya Angelou	:	Still I Rise

Unit II Prose

Ralph Waldo Emerson	:	The American Scholar
Mark Twain	:	Advice to Youth

Unit III Drama

Edward Albee	:	The Zoo Story

Unit IV Short Story

Washington Irving	:	Rip Van Winkle
Edgar Allan Poe	:	The Purloined Letter
Charlotte Perkins Gilman	:	The Yellow Wallpaper
O Henry	:	The Gift of the Magi

Unit V Fiction

Tony Morrison	:	Beloved
Ernest Hemingway	:	The Old Man and the Sea
Navarre Scott Momaday	:	House Made of Dawn

Books Prescribed:

1. Fisher, William J, et al. *American Literature of the Nineteenth Century: An Anthology*. Eurasia Publishing House, 1984.
2. Oliver, Egbert S. *American Literature, 1890-1965: An Anthology*. 1994.

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2. Gates, Henry L, and Valerie Smith. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. W.W. Norton & Co, 2015.
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Unit I

Poetry I

UNIT- I POETRY

CONTENT OF UNIT- I

UNIT OBJECTIVES

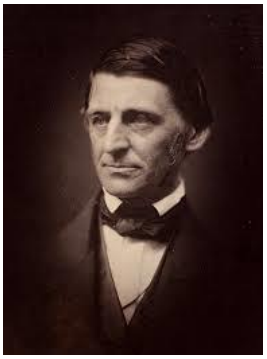
1. Gain intense knowledge of poetry
2. Understand the literary terms and devices
3. Critically analyse poetry
4. Identify patterns in terms of sound, form, and ideas
5. Create simple poem by using literary devices

SECTION 1.1 BRAHMA – RALPH WALDO EMERSON

1.1.1 Introduction to Ralph Waldo Emerson:

An American essayist, poet, and popular philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82) began his career as a Unitarian minister in Boston, but achieved worldwide fame as a lecturer and the author of such essays as “Self-Reliance,” “History,” “The Over-Soul,” and “Fate.” Drawing on English and German Romanticism, Neoplatonism, Kantianism, and Hinduism, Emerson developed metaphysics of process, an epistemology of moods, and an “existentialist” ethics of self-improvement. He influenced generations of Americans, from his friend Henry David Thoreau to John Dewey, and in Europe, Friedrich Nietzsche, who takes up such Emersonian themes as power, fate, the uses of poetry and history, and the critique of Christianity.

Ralph Waldo Emerson—a New England preacher, essayist, lecturer, poet, and philosopher—was one of the most influential writers and thinkers of the 19th century in the United States. Emerson was also the first major American literary and intellectual figure to widely explore, write seriously about, and seek to broaden the domestic audience for classical Asian and Middle Eastern works. He not only gave countless readers their first exposure to non-Western modes of thinking, metaphysical concepts, and sacred mythologies; he also shaped the way subsequent generations of American writers and thinkers approached the vast cultural resources of Asia and the Middle East.



Emerson was born on May 25, 1803 in Boston, Massachusetts. As a boy, his first contact with the non-Western world came by way of the merchandise that bustled across the India Wharf in Boston harbor, a major nexus of the Indo-Chinese trade that flourished in New England after the Revolutionary War. Emerson's first contact with writings from and about the non-Western world came by way of his father, William Emerson, a Unitarian minister with a genteel interest in learning and letters.

In 1817, at the age of 14, Emerson entered Harvard College. While at Harvard, Emerson had little opportunity to study the diverse literary and religious traditions of Asia or the Middle East. The curriculum focused on Greek and Roman writers, British logicians and philosophers, Euclidean geometry and algebra, and post-Enlightenment defenses of revealed religion. As his journals and library borrowing records attest, however, in his spare time, Emerson paid keen attention to the wider European Romantic interest in the "Orient" or the "East," which to him meant the ancient lands and sacred traditions east of classical Greece, such as Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, Persia, China, and India. An aspiring poet, Emerson also gravitated to selections of poetry that took up Eastern themes and Eastern poetry, including the works of Saadi and Hafez, which he would embrace in adulthood.

1.1.2 Summary of the Poem:

This poem by Ralph Waldo Emerson is written from the perspective of the Hindu spirit, Brahma, as indicated by the title. Brahma is a sort of universal energy, and in this poem, he addresses the lack of understanding humans have of what he is and can do.

He begins by stating that any "slayer" who really believes that he is killing, and equally any "slain" person who truly believes he is dead, does not understand the "subtle ways" of Brahma, who stays, turns, and returns continually.

Brahma goes on to explain his universality in terms of opposites. To him, "shadow and sunlight" are the same thing, and gods thought "vanished" by others are visible to him.

Those who do not pause to consider Brahma have thought poorly and made bad decisions. Brahma explains that he is everything—he is doubt, and he is the one who doubts; he is the hymn sung by the Brahmins. It is Brahma who is encapsulated by every human experience, and Brahma who is praised by those who are seeking spirits.

The "strong gods," Brahma says, yearn to live where Brahma lives—which is to say, everywhere. At the end of the poem, Brahma urges the reader, a person who loves "the good," to seek out Brahma and pursue him, rather than "heaven." We can recognize the sentiment here from other transcendentalist poetry of Emerson's—he is urging the reader to seek satisfaction and, indeed, self-reliance on earth, in this life, rather than living for some far-off spiritual future.

1.1.3 Analysis of the Poem

Greatly influenced by a sacred text of Hinduism, Katha-Upanishad, “Brahma” is a philosophical explication of the universal spirit by that name. The poetic form of elegiac quatrain is used to represent the solemn nature of the subject. Throughout the poem, Brahma appears as the only speaker, sustaining the continuity of the work. That the spirit is the only speaker signifies not only its absolute nature but also its sustaining power, upon which the existence of the entire universe metaphorically.

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“Brahma” is an excellent reflection and representation of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s work as a whole. Though he is more widely known as a writer of essays, several of his poems may be seen as keys to his use of style and theme in all of his work, and this is one of those poems. Stylistically, he uses the same spiral or circular method that he does in his prose, rather than the more straightforward linear development used by most poets of his time. Thematically, he insists on the same spiritual and physical unity and harmony in the universe, expressed in a similarly intensive and dense language, as he does in his essays. These qualities demand much from the reader.

“Brahma” is a poem of sixteen lines, divided into four quatrains. In order to understand and appreciate this poem fully, one must know something about Eastern religion, especially Hinduism. In Hindu theology, Brahma (or, more commonly, Brahman) is the supreme spirit or divine reality in the universe, the eternal spirit from which all has come and to which all shall return (similar to what Emerson more commonly called the

Over-Soul). The “strong gods” (line 13) are secondary gods who, like all mortals, seek ultimate union with the supreme god, Brahma: They include Indra, the god of the sky; Agni, the god of fire; and Yama, “the red slayer” (line 1), or god of death. The “sacred Seven” (line 14) are the highest holy persons or saints in Hinduism, who also seek union (or reunion) with Brahma.

In the first stanza, Emerson insists that in the creative spirit of the universe, nothing dies; if death thinks that in fact it kills, or if those who are killed think that they are really dead, they are wrong, for death is Maya, or illusion. Brahma is subtle; the patterns of life and death, of eternal return, are not always obvious to the human eye or mind. Through the intuition, however, a person can see and understand his or her role in these patterns and can accept and learn from them.

In the second stanza, the reader discovers the essential unity of opposites—what Emerson called polarity. The physical and spiritual are intimately intertwined, with the physical being the concrete representation in the material world of the spiritual, which alone is real. In Emerson’s terms, “both shadow and sunlight are the same” (line 6); in other words, light and dark, good and evil, life and death, happiness and sadness, and “shame and fame” (line 8) are all the same. They are illusions which mortals believe to be real but which are not. In the same way, all human experience is one and is eternally present; what is “far or forgot” (line 5) is in fact near, and both past and future are encapsulated in the present moment.

In the third stanza, the poet suggests that one can never escape this creative energy, since it is present everywhere in the universe. Humans ignore it at their own peril, since it alone is real, and it encompasses both “the doubter and the doubt” (line 11). It is the song of creative joy sung by the Brahmin, the highest caste in Hinduism. Fortunately, however, even if one does ignore the creative spirit, it remains present in one’s life, and eventually one’s spiritual eyes will open and one will recognize it. Both the person who doubts and the doubts themselves are essential parts of the universal plan.

In the fourth stanza, the poet states that all seek union with this eternal spirit—whether lesser gods, saints, or those persons who are considerably farther down on the spiral of spiritual enlightenment. If one loves the good, regardless of one’s faults, one shall find it. Even if one is insecure or “meek” in one’s beliefs, one should turn away from the illusion of the Calvinist Christian heaven, where entrance is limited to the very few elect, and all others are rejected and damned. One should seek the Brahma, or Over

Soul, the eternal spirit of creativity and life in the universe, from which all have come and to which all will return.

1.1.4 Themes

"Brahma" is a lyric poem in which the author assumes the persona of the Hindu god Brahma. Emerson completed the poem in 1856, and the Atlantic Monthly published it in 1857. A notable metaphysical poem of Emerson, "Brahma" envisages a supreme power that governs and guides the whole universe. This supreme power is the origin and creator of all beings, and also the final destination of all creatures. Through a ceaseless cycle of births and deaths, through nobility of needs and purity of heart; through purgation of baser passions and burning of all 'Karmas', the soul finally merges with Brahma. This is the highest stage of spiritual development. This is the stage of liberation or salvation which is sought after by all the saints and sages, yogis and devotees, and even by gods. Every individual soul of man is a spark of the Over-Soul or Brahma, and the highest spiritual advancement of the soul lies in its merging into its parent the Over-Soul or Brahma. This Ralph Waldo Emerson's 'Brahma' is the central thought around which this famous poem of Emerson has been developed.

This is the first stanza of Emerson's famous poem Brahma. It contains the very essence of Emerson's transcendental philosophy derived from Indian metaphysics and philosophy. Brahma or the Supreme Being is the beginning and end of all things.

Everything originates from him, and finally goes back into him. He is the creator as well as destroyer; the destroyer of everything. He is the means as well as the end. He is the actor as well as the act. He is player as well as the play. When one is born, he is born; when one dies, he dies; though birth and death are both illusions. He is immortal, eternal, omnipresent and omnipotent. He is without beginning and without end. He is everything, and everything is he. So, the poet says that man and his actions are mere illusions. It is Brahman who acts in the guise of man. The individual soul is Brahma himself in the ultimate sense. In this sense, the soul has no beginning, no middle and no end. It does not originate nor can it be destroyed. The slayer, the slain and the act of slaying are all one and the same. It is Brahma who plays all the three roles. If the slayer thinks that he is slaying, or if the slain thinks that he has been slain, both are wrong. Neither the slayer nor the slain is real. They are both the images of Brahma. The soul cannot be killed. The soul by itself is not active, and therefore it cannot kill. The slayer and the slain are both ignorant of the ways of Brahma. It is Brahma, in the guise of soul,

who is born, lives in the body of man, passes away and then returns with the new birth after death. This cycle of the soul goes on until the soul merges into the Over-soul or Brahma.

1.1.5 Literary Devices

"Brahma" reflects Emerson's periodic use of the standard poetic meter and rhyme of his time: The four quatrains are in iambic tetrameter, and his use of coupled rhymes (abab) is a reflection of his thematic sense of the inescapable polarity in the universe.

The central figure in the poem is the speaker, who is Brahma, or the Over-Soul, the creative spirit in the universe. Having the Brahma as the speaker allows Emerson to posit the unity within the world's polaric structure; though contradictions seem to exist, he suggests, they are in fact meaningful paradoxes and not meaningless contradictions. Emerson makes extensive use of irony in his poetic strategy; he indicates that death is not really death, that shadow and sunlight are the same, and that both the doubter and doubt are contained within the Brahma, to which all persons aspire to return. There are other ironies as well: It is clearly implied that it is the abode of Brahma (line 13) which is to be sought rather than a Christian heaven and that those who adopt the Darwinian perspective of the survival of the fittest miss the realization that, in reality, all survive.

Emerson has, in "Brahma," used a series of images borrowed from Hindu scriptures (many of which he translated in the issues of the Transcendentalist magazine The Dial, which he co-edited with Margaret Fuller for two years and then edited himself) to reflect the coordinated pattern and unity in the physical universe, which is itself a reflected pattern of the same unity in the spiritual universe

1.1.6 Sum up

Brahma is an excellent reflection and representation of Ralph Waldo Emerson's work as a whole. Emerson's poem is a transcendentalist exploration into the nature of life and death and the powers of the divine. In appropriating the Hindu god Brahma, Emerson seeks to develop a metaphor to explain the notion of transcendentalist thought.

The opening stanza helps to redefine the notion of traditionalist life and death, with the sense of continuity and complexity within such notions. In this stanza, Emerson is insisting that there is a sense of emotional understanding about the nature of 'slain' and that which 'slays'. Emphasizing the duality in both, the poem continues to the second stanza, which again suggests that dualistic opposition is actually in tandem with one

another. “Shadow and sunlight” are no longer in diametric competition, just as is “vanished gods” who might ‘appear’. The opposing polarities of “shame” and “fame” are cast in a similar light of symmetry. The implication of this stanza is that there is some type of energy that brings together that which is oppositional and traditionalist notions of demonising one force over another might not be in line with this energy.

Emerson’s Transcendentalist thought, a movement that sought to bring emotions into reconfiguring what had been stressed as normative and socially acceptable, is most evident. The fact that the last line integrates socially deemed values of “shame” and “fame” is evidence of this. This theme is continued in the concluding stanzas. The last two lines provide Emerson’s own twist to the notion of divinity, when he suggests that one need not look to heaven for such a cosmic and energetic force. The implication would be that this belief resides in the individual who can find and locate this spirit of unity and symmetry in their own sense of identity and self

The Indian concept of Brahma had great influence on Emerson. Brahma is the god of creation, and one of the Hindu trinity—others being Vishnu, the preserver and saviour of the world, and Siva, the destroyer or dissolver of the world. In this poem “Brahma,” Emerson describes the mystery of Brahma. It is almost impossible for humans to understand the “subtle ways” of Brahma because his character is beyond human comprehension. However, at the end of the poem, we see the light of hope because humans can find him although “strong gods” look for him “in vain.” This is the human supremacy, and as Brahma assures, anybody who is the “meek lover of the good” can find him.

Thus, the Indian philosophical and religious concepts and teachings had a great influence on Emerson’s intellectual works. By exploring and utilizing Indian spiritual beliefs and philosophical traditions, Emerson paved the way for his successors who continued to dig into the richness of ancient texts such as the Upanishads and the Gita. Therefore, with regard to Emerson’s contribution to American scholars’ growing interest in Indian thought, Dale Riepe is convincingly right when he says that “there has been a continuous concern for Indian thought in the United States since Emerson’s early years”.

1.1.7 Glossary

1. Hymn (noun) - a religious song or poem of praise to God or a god.
2. Brahmin (noun) - a member of the highest Hindu caste, that of the priesthood.

3. Slays (verb) - to kill violently.
4. Subtle (adjective) - delicate or precise as to be difficult to analyze or describe.
5. Slain (noun) - one who has been killed.
6. Reckon (verb) - to calculate or regard in a specified way.
7. ill (adverb) - badly or poorly.

1.1.8 Check Your Progress

Short Answers:

1. Who is the speaker in Emerson's poem "Brahma"?
2. What is the main theme of the poem "Brahma"?
3. What does the line "If the red slayer think he slays, Or if the slain think he is slain" convey?
4. Which philosophy heavily influences the poem "Brahma"?
5. What literary device is predominantly used in "Brahma"?
6. What does the line "I am the doubter and the doubt" signify?
7. How does "Brahma" reflect Transcendentalist ideas?
8. What does Brahma suggest about opposites like life and death?
9. What does the poem say about those who seek heaven?
10. How does Emerson portray the nature of truth in "Brahma"?

Essay Question:

1. Discuss the influence of Hindu philosophy on Ralph Waldo Emerson's poem "Brahma."
2. Analyze the theme of non-duality in "Brahma."
3. Explore the use of metaphors in "Brahma."
4. How does Emerson's poem "Brahma" reflect the principles of Transcendentalism?
5. Compare and contrast Emerson's portrayal of the divine in "Brahma" with traditional Western conceptions of God.
6. Examine the significance of the lines "If the red slayer think he slays, Or if the slain think he is slain." How do these lines encapsulate the poem's message about life and death?
7. Discuss the role of paradox in "Brahma." How does Emerson use paradoxical statements to challenge the reader's understanding of reality?

8. Analyze the structure and form of "Brahma." How do the poem's form and style contribute to its overall meaning and impact?
9. Explore the concept of self-realization in "Brahma."
10. Consider the line "Find me, and turn thy back on heaven." What does this suggest about Emerson's views on spirituality and the search for truth?

SECTION 1.2: OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING– WALT WHITMAN

1.2.1 Introduction to Walt Whitman

Walt Whitman (born May 31, 1819, West Hills, Long Island, New York, U.S.—died March 26, 1892, Camden, New Jersey) was an American poet, journalist, and essayist whose verse collection Leaves of Grass, first published in 1855, is a landmark in the history of American literature.

Whitman continued practicing his new style of writing in his private notebooks, and in 1856 the second edition of Leaves of Grass appeared. This collection contained revisions of the poems of the first edition and a new one, the "Sun-down Poem" (later to become "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"). The second edition was also a financial failure, and once again Whitman edited a daily newspaper, the Brooklyn Times, but was unemployed by the summer of 1859. In 1860 a Boston publisher brought out the third edition of Leaves of Grass, greatly enlarged and rearranged, but the outbreak of the American Civil War bankrupted the firm. The 1860 volume contained the "Calamus" poems, which record a personal crisis of some intensity in Whitman's life, an apparent homosexual love affair (whether imagined or real is unknown), and "Premonition" (later entitled "Starting from Paumanok"), which records the violent emotions that often drained the poet's strength. "A Word out of the Sea" (later entitled "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking") evoked some sombre feelings, as did "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life," "Chants Democratic," "Enfans d'Adam," "Messenger Leaves," and "Thoughts" were more in the poet's earlier vein.

Leaves of Grass

Walt Whitman is known primarily for Leaves of Grass, though it is actually more than one book. During Whitman's lifetime it went through nine editions, each with its own distinct virtues and faults. Whitman compared the finished book to a cathedral long under construction, and on another occasion to a tree, with its cumulative rings of growth. Both metaphors are misleading, however, because he did not construct his book unit by unit or by successive layers but constantly altered titles, diction, and even motifs and shifted poems—omitting, adding, separating, and combining. Beginning with the third edition (1860), he grouped the poems under such titles as "Chants Democratic," "Enfans d'Adam" (later "Children of Adam"), "Calamus," "Poems of Joy," and "Sea-Drift." Some of his later group titles were highly connotative, such as "Birds of Passage," "By the Roadside," "Autumn Rivulets," "From Noon to Starry Night," and "Songs of Parting," suggesting a life allegory. But the poems were not arranged in order of composition, either within a particular group or from one group to another. After 1881 Whitman made no further shifts in groups or revisions of poems within the groups, merely adding the poems of "Sands at Seventy" and "Good-Bye My Fancy."

Whitman's aim was to transcend traditional epics, to eschew normal aesthetic form, and yet by reflecting American society to enable the poet and his readers to realize themselves and the nature of their American experience. He has continued to hold the attention of very different generations because he offered the welcome conviction that "the crowning growth of the United States" was to be spiritual and heroic and because he was able to uncompromisingly express his own personality in poetic form. Modern readers can still share his preoccupation with the problem of preserving the individual's integrity amid broader social pressures. Whitman invigorated language, he could be strong yet sentimental, and he possessed scope and inventiveness. He portrayed the relationships of an individual's body and soul and the universe in a new way, often emancipating poetry from contemporary conventions. He had sufficient universality to be considered one of the greatest American poets.

1.2.2 Summary of the Poem:

This poem was written in 1859 and incorporated into the 1860 edition of Leaves of Grass. It describes a young boy's awakening as a poet, mentored by nature and his own maturing consciousness. The poem is loose in its form, except for the sections that purport to be a transcript of the bird's call, which are musical in their repetition of words and phrases. The opening of the poem is marked by an abundance of repeated prepositions describing movement—out, over, down, up, from—which appear regularly later in the poem and which convey the sense of a struggle, in this case the poet's struggle to come to consciousness.

Unlike most of Whitman's poems, "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" has a fairly distinct plot line. A young boy watches a pair of birds nesting on the beach near his home, and marvels at their relationship to one another. One day the female bird fails to return. The male stays near the nest, calling for his lost mate. The male's cries touch something in the boy, and he seems to be able to translate what the bird is saying. Brought to tears by the bird's pathos, he asks nature to give him the one word "superior to all." In the rustle of the ocean at his feet, he discerns the word "death," which continues, along with the bird's song, to have a presence in his poetry..

1.2.3 Analysis of the Poem

Popularity of "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking": This poem was written by Walt Whitman, a great American poet. Out of a Cradle Endlessly Rocking" is a superb

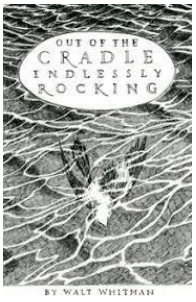
literary piece about life, death, unity, and individuality. It was first published in 1871 in New York Saturday Press. The poem speaks about the speaker's childhood memories and the moment he decided to be a poet. It also illustrates how his early experiences shaped his life.

"Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking", As Representative of Life: The poem begins when the speaker beckons to the seashore at night pushed by a variety of forces. He remembers how, as a child, he discovered the secrets of life and death. At first, he talks about his carefree days as a boy, and later describes the time when he found a pair of birds who were singing their joyous song. He begins to understand their language and feelings. After some days, the poet discovered that the female bird has died, leaving the male bird in a state of despair.

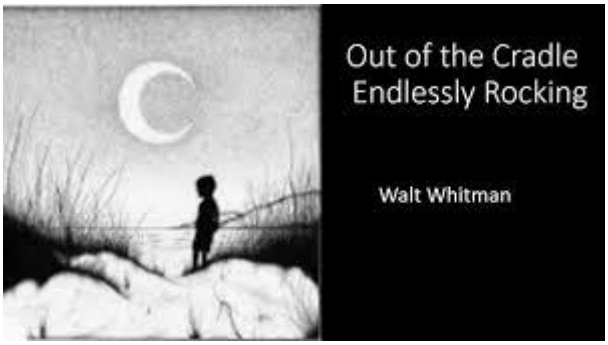
Since their joyous union touched him, he can interpret the lonely call of the male bird. He tries to explain the bird's love in terms of the soliloquy of lost love. The bird's melancholic tone not only touches his heart but also enables him to experience the pain of loss. Now, the carefree narrator is changed: his heavy heart is desperate to know his own destiny upon which the ocean replies only with "death."

Major themes in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking": Cycle of life, individuality, unity, and nature are the major themes underlined in this poem. The poem presents two things; the speaker's meaningful transformation from an immature child to a mature poet, and the transience of life. Through the images of tiny creatures, the speaker reflects on the secrets of life and death. Life, no matter how enchanting and vibrant, has to come to an end. Every living creature has to taste death. The theme of love is also established in the mutual love of mockingbirds. The sensitive boy translates their emotions into human words and human emotions to establish the fact that everything in the universe follows the cycle of nature. Like humans, other creatures also lament the loss of their loved ones.

Out of the ceaselessly rocking cradle of the sea waves, a memory comes back to the poet. He recalls that as a child, he left his bed and "wander'd alone, bareheaded, barefoot" in search of the mystery of life and death. He is a man now but "by these tears a little boy again," and he throws himself on the shore "confronting the waves." He is a "chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter," and he uses all his experiences but goes beyond them.



The experience he now recalls is that on the Paumanok seashore one May, when lilacs were in bloom, he observed two mockingbirds, "feather'd guests from Alabama." The female crouch'd on her nest, silent," and the male went "to and fro near at hand." The birds sang of their love; the words "two together" summed up their existence. One day the female disappeared, "may-be kill'd, unknown to her mate." The male anxiously awaited her, He addressed the wind: "I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me." His song penetrated the heart of the curious boy who "treasur'd every note for he understood the meaning of the bird, whom he called his "brother."



The bird's lament, or "aria," affected the boy deeply. Every shadow seemed to the bird the hoped-for shape of his mate reappearing. He had loved, but now "we two [are] together no more

The notes of the bird were echoed by the moaning sea, "the fierce old mother." To the boy who became the poet, "to the out setting bard," the sea hinted at secrets. The boy eagerly asked the sea to let him know the ultimate meaning, "the word final, superior to all." Before daybreak the sea whispered to the poet the "delicious word death . . . /Death, death."

In this experience the boy attempted to fuse the vision of the sea with that of the bird, and this knowledge marked the beginning of the poet in him. The bird, the solitary singer, was a projection of the boy's consciousness. The sea, like the "old crone rocking the cradle," whispered the key word in his ears.

This poem was first published under the title "A Child's Reminiscence" (1859), was later called "A Word out of the Sea" (1860), and the present, highly symbolic title was given it in 1871.

The poem, an elegy, is thought to be based on an intensely personal experience of the poet. Just what that experience was is a favorite but fruitless field of speculation for Whitman's biographers. The poem asserts the triumph of the eternal life over death. The meaning of the poem is not stated explicitly, but it springs naturally from a recollection of the narrator's childhood days. Whitman imaginatively recreates the childhood experience of this inquiring lad and also shows how the boy becomes a man, and the man, a poet. This time sequence is as much the essence of the poem as is the growth of the consciousness of the poet. Memory plays an important part in this dramatic development. First, the boy tries to absorb the moving song of the mockingbird. Later, the boy replaces the bird as a significant character in the drama because he attempts to fuse the substance of the bird's song with the secret emanating from the sea; this synthesis is, in essence, his poetry. The word "death" is "delicious" because it is a prerequisite for rebirth. Thus the secret of life which the boy grasps from the sea is the recurrent pattern of birth-death-rebirth.

"Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" is one of Whitman’s great poems because of his use of image and symbol. The title itself is a symbol of birth. The sun and the moon, the land and the sea, and the stars and the sea waves contribute to the atmosphere and symbolic scenery in the poem. These images deepen the effect of the emotions in the poem, as in the bird's song, and are part of the dramatic structure. The poem is very melodious and rhythmic and may itself be compared to an aria (in opera, an aria is an elaborate melody sung by one voice). Its use of dactylic and trochaic meter is very appropriate in describing the motion of the sea waves and their meaning

1.2.4 Themes

Innocence and Nature

The beauty of the natural world from the innocent perspective of a child and the first eroding of that innocence in the wake of loss illustrates a popular theme in Whitman’s time period. The idea of the innocent’s perspective on nature was a common theme among the Romantic poets, and Whitman’s use of this theme extends from the

groundwork laid by William Wordsworth's in his influential work The Prelude—which is also a poetic piece about a child's education in the natural world.

The child in Whitman's poem is, in the words of his adult self looking back, "a curious boy . . . / Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating." This close observation of nature leads to a loss of innocence for the boy, who "Never again" will "be the peaceful child I was before what there in the night . . . The messenger there arous'd." By listening to the songs of the bird and the sea, the innocent boy has come into an adult awareness of loneliness and death.

Coming of Age

One of the chief themes of Whitman's poem is coming of age. "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" is specifically about the speaker recalling the incident in childhood that inspired him to become a poet: viewing a pair of birds in a nest and then witnessing their ultimate separation when the female bird did not return to the nest. It is the "aria" sung by the abandoned male bird that calls into being the boy's own vocation as a "bard." Addressing the bird, the boy says,

Death and Loss

The bird's mate cannot return to their nest because it has died, and this affects the young speaker greatly, giving him his first taste of death's power over the living. By showing a death in the world of nature rather than the death of a fellow human, Whitman is driving home the fact that, even in the idealized world of nature, loss is inevitable. By proving this point with the death of one bird and the other bird mourning its loss, Whitman is actually commenting on the human condition.

The sea, too, speaks to the boy of death, repeating the word many times: "Death, death, death, death, death." Perhaps surprisingly, the speaker considers the word death in a positive light, calling it "The word of the sweetest song and all songs, / That strong and delicious word" that accompanied his dawning awareness of his artistic gifts.

The Redemptive and Healing Power of Art

One of the most central themes in the poem is the power of art and its ability to redeem and heal in the wake of loss and pain. Though the story of the two birds is sad and an apt illustration of the human condition, the young poet is able to turn pain into something beautiful. He is able to grapple with his feelings by turning his suffering into a poem for the bereaved bird.

The boy poet's own despair and loss is sublimated into artistic refinement, and thus Whitman is saying that art can make the more painful parts of life bearable—allowing both artist and audience to transcend their suffering in order to enter into something grander and more elevating

1.2.5 Literary Devices

Literary devices are tools that enable the writers to enhance simple texts with multiple meanings. Their appropriate use helps the readers understand the latent meanings of the text. Walt Whitman has also employed some literary devices in this poem to bring depth to his text. The analysis of some of the literary devices used in this poem is given below.

Anaphora: It refers to the repetition of a word or expression in the first part of some verses. Whitman has repeated the words "Out of the" in the first stanza of the poem to emphasize the point. For example,

"Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,

Out of the mockingbird's throat, the musical shuttle,

Out of the Ninth-month midnight."

Assonance: Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in the same line. For example, the sound of /i/ in "twittering, rising, or overhead passing" and the sound of /ai/ in "Shine! shine! shine!."

Alliteration: Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds in the same line in quick succession. The poem has plenty of alliterations. For example, such as the sound of /d/ in "For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding," and the sound of /m/ in "But my mate no more, no more with me!"

Imagery: Imagery is used to make readers perceive things involving their five senses. For example, "Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you sea-waves?", "A man, yet by these tears a little boy again" and "As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing.

Personification: Personification is to give human qualities to inanimate objects. The poet has used this device at many places in the poem. For example, "Over the hoarse surging of the sea", "That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet" and "The sea whisper'd me."

Rhetorical Question: Rhetorical question is a question that is not asked in order to receive an answer; it is just posed to make the point clear and emphasize a point. For example, “O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?” and “What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?

Symbolism: Symbolism is using symbols to signify ideas and qualities, giving them symbolic meanings that are different from the literal meanings. “Sea” symbolizes the spiritual and the imaginary world of poetry.

1.2.6 Sum up

Unlike most of Whitman’s poems, “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” has a fairly distinct plot line. A young boy watches a pair of birds nesting on the beach near his home, and marvels at their relationship to one another. One day the female bird fails to return. The male stays near the nest, calling for his lost mate. The male’s cries touch something in the boy, and he seems to be able to translate what the bird is saying. Brought to tears by the bird’s pathos, he asks nature to give him the one word “superior to all.” In the rustle of the ocean at his feet, he discerns the word “death,” which continues, along with the bird’s song, to have a presence in his poetry.

1.2.7 Glossary

- Cradle - a small bed or cot for a baby, symbolizing infancy, nurture, and protection.
- Haply - perhaps; by chance or accident.
- Tremulous - shaking or quivering, often due to fear, excitement, or weakness.
- Perches - rests or settles in a particular place, like a bird landing on a branch or ledge.
- Soothe - to calm, comfort, or alleviate distress or pain.
- Laving - bathing or washing, often in a gentle or affectionate manner.
- Magnetic - having the power to attract or exert a strong influence on others.
- Dank - unpleasantly damp, cold, and humid.
- Lore - traditional knowledge or teachings, especially of a particular group or culture.

1.2.8 Check Your Progress

Short Answers:

1. Who is the primary speaker in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking"?
2. What natural object serves as a significant symbol throughout the poem?
3. What event triggers the poet's memories in the poem?
4. In "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," what does the cradle symbolize?
5. What is the mockingbird singing about in the poem?

Essay Questions:

1. Explore the significance of the sea as a central symbol in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking."
2. Analyze the relationship between the mockingbird's song and the poet's memories in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking."
3. Discuss the role of memory and nostalgia in Whitman's poem "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking."
4. How does Walt Whitman explore the idea of spiritual awakening and enlightenment through the imagery and symbolism in the poem?
5. Compare and contrast the structure and style of "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" with other works by Walt Whitman.

SECTION 1.3: "HOPE" IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS- EMILY DICKINSON

1.3.1 Introduction of Emily Dickinson

Emily Dickinson (born December 10, 1830, Amherst, Massachusetts, U.S.—died May 15, 1886, Amherst) was an American lyric poet who lived in seclusion and commanded a singular brilliance of style and integrity of vision. With Walt Whitman, Dickinson is widely considered to be one of the two leading 19th-century American poets.

Only 10 of Emily Dickinson's nearly 1,800 poems are known to have been published in her lifetime. Devoted to private pursuits, she sent hundreds of poems to friends and correspondents while apparently keeping the greater number to herself. She habitually worked in verse forms suggestive of hymns and ballads, with lines of three or four stresses. Her unusual off-rhymes have been seen as both experimental and influenced by the 18th-century hymnist Isaac Watts. She freely ignored the usual rules of versification and even of grammar, and in the intellectual content of her work she likewise proved exceptionally bold and original. Her verse is distinguished by its epigrammatic compression, haunting personal voice, enigmatic brilliance, and lack of high polish.

In her last 15 years Dickinson averaged 35 poems a year and conducted her social life mainly through her chiseled and often sibylline written messages. Her father's sudden death in 1874 caused a profound and persisting emotional upheaval yet eventually led to a greater openness, self-possession, and serenity. She repaired an 11-year breach with Samuel Bowles and made friends with Maria Whitney, a teacher of modern languages at Smith College, and Helen Hunt Jackson, poet and author of the novel Ramona (1884). Dickinson resumed contact with Wadsworth, and from about age 50 she conducted a passionate romance with Otis Phillips Lord, an elderly judge on the supreme court of Massachusetts. The letters she apparently sent Lord reveal her at her most playful, alternately teasing and confiding. In declining an erotic advance or his proposal of marriage, she asked, "Don't you know you are happiest while I withhold and not confer—don't you know that 'No' is the wildest word we consign to Language?"

1.3.2 Summary of the Poem:

Originally published in 1891, " 'Hope' is the thing with feathers" is a poem by Emily Dickinson. In her lifetime, Dickinson was mostly known as something of recluse, rarely leaving her town or home. Her work was only published after her death in 1886, following

the discovery of a large cache of her poems. Her writing made use of numerous stylistic idiosyncrasies including slant rhyme, frequent capitalization, and dashes.

At three stanzas long, the poem is rather short, but still manages to be full of emotional resonance. The speaker describes a songbird as the embodiment of hope. Initially, the speaker offers a depiction of its song, before going on to show it enduring the travails of a storm. In the end, the speaker mentions that, at various extremes, this little bird has completed many journeys, while never requiring anything from them. It is a work that is largely concerned with the durability of hope, even in the face of tribulation.

The poem features slant rhyme in the second and fourth lines of each of its stanzas. It also makes use of dashes, which create an embedded rhythm in various lines. On the whole, these stylistic elements add to the musicality of the poem. This is fitting, considering that it is a portrait of a bird whose song is heard in even the most dangerous weather and dire straits. As with many of Dickinson's poems, "'Hope' is the thing with feathers" is both mysteriously abstract and emotionally urgent.

The speaker defines "Hope" as a feathered creature that dwells inside the human spirit. This feathery thing sings a wordless tune, not stopping under any circumstances. Its tune sounds best when heard in fierce winds. Only an incredibly severe storm could stop this bird from singing. The "Hope" bird has made many people feel warm. The speaker has heard the bird's singing in the coldest places, and on the weirdest seas. But in the speaker's experiences, even the most extreme ones, the bird has never asked for anything in return.

1.3.3 Analysis of the Poem

Emily Dickinson is an expert employer of metaphors, as she uses the small bird to convey her message, indicating that hope burns in the harshest of storms, coldest of winds, and in the unknown of seas for that matter, yet it never demands in return. It persists continuously within us, keeping us alive.

In the case of the first quatrain, the narrator feels that hope can be deemed as a bird with feathers, singing in its own tune merrily. It may not speak any specific language, yet it’s certainly present within human souls. Just as importantly, Emily Dickinson voices that hope is an eternal spring, as it’s a vital constituent of human beings, enabling us to conquer unchartered territories.

In the case of the second stanza, the poetess elucidates the expansive power hope wields over us. It gets merrier and sweeter as the storm gets mightier and relentless. The poetess deems that no storm can sway hope and its adamant attitude. According to the poetess, it would take a deadly storm of astronomical proportions to flatten the bird of hope that has kept the ship sailing for most men.

In the last stanza, or quatrain, Emily Dickinson concludes her poem by stressing that hope retains its clarity and tensile strength in the harshest of conditions, yet it never demands in return for its valiant services. Hope is inherently powerful and certainly needs no polishing, as it steers the ship from one storm to another with efficacy.

The metaphorical aspect of 'Hope is the Thing with Feathers' is an old practice, used by well-known poets, the small bird represents hope in this poem. When abstract concepts are under study such as death, love, and hope, they are often represented by an object from nature, in this case, the bird.

The speaker describes hope as a bird ("the thing with feathers") that perches in the soul. There, it sings wordlessly and without pause. The song of hope sounds sweetest "in the Gale," and it would require a terrifying storm to ever "abash the little Bird / That kept so many warm." The speaker says that she has heard the bird of hope "in the chillest land— / And on the strangest Sea—", but never, no matter how extreme the conditions, did it ever ask for a single crumb from her.

"Hope is the thing with feathers" is a kind of hymn of praise, written to honor the human capacity for hope. Using extended metaphor, the poem portrays hope as a bird that lives within the human soul; this bird sings come rain or shine, gale or storm, good times or bad. The poem argues that hope is miraculous and almost impossible to defeat. Furthermore, hope never asks for anything in return—it costs nothing for people to maintain hope. By extension, then, "Hope is the thing with feathers" implores its readers to make good use of hope—and to see it as an essential, deeply valuable part of them.

The poem begins by establishing its key metaphor—that hope is a bird. It then tells the reader more about this bird, adding detail, before showing it in different situations. The poem concludes by stating that, despite all it does, hope never asks for anything from the speaker. Overall, then, the poem turns hope into a vivid imagined character in order to show how important it is, both to individuals and to humanity as a whole.

The poem initially defines hope as “the thing with feathers.” Though it’s obvious that this is a bird, the unusualness of this first description shows that the poem wants the reader to look afresh at hope—to see hope with clear eyes and not take it for granted. Starting with “hope is a bird” would have the same literal meaning but would feel much less surprising, and the surprise element helps establish the poem’s purpose of redefining hope.

This "Hope" bird “perches” in the soul, showing that the soul itself is hope’s home. Hope is thus directly linked with the human spirit, where it sings without ever stopping. This perseverance, then, is a representation of humanity’s infinite capacity for hope. Even in the depths of despair, the poem seems to say, people can still have hope—and this hope will sustain them. Indeed, the bird sings “sweetest” in the storm. In other words, hope shows its importance in times of adversity and seems to guide people through that adversity. This point could apply to humanity’s challenges in a general sense, or it could relate to more personal experiences like individual grief and loss. In either case, hope gives people the strength to carry on, and it’s at its most useful when circumstances are at their worst.

Of course, there might be times when people do seem to lose their strength—but, the poem argues, hope still plays an important role in these situations. The poem demonstrates this by gesturing towards the sheer number of people (“so many”) who have been sustained by hope, saying that it would have to be a truly “sore” “storm” that could diminish the strength of “the little Bird.” Hope, it seems, can keep people “warm” even in the worst situations.

And though hope is so essential to human life, the beauty of it—according to the poem—is that it requires practically nothing of people. Hope costs nothing, not a “crumb”—yet it can literally and figuratively keep people alive. With hope, people can make it through the hardest of times—they just have to listen to “the little Bird” singing its tune. Overall, then, “Hope is the thing with feathers” implores its readers to value their capacity for hope—and to recognize that it’s never really gone. Without becoming overly specific, the poem argues that hope can be especially helpful in the most extreme situations and that people should therefore rely on it as a precious resource.

1.3.4 Themes

This simple, metaphorical description of hope as a bird singing in the soul is another example of Dickinson's homiletic style, derived from Psalms and religious hymns. Dickinson introduces her metaphor in the first two lines (" 'Hope' is the thing with feathers— / That perches in the soul—"), then develops it throughout the poem by telling what the bird does (sing), how it reacts to hardship (it is unabashed in the storm), where it can be found (everywhere, from "chillest land" to "strangest Sea"), and what it asks for itself (nothing, not even a single crumb). Though written after "Success is counted sweetest," this is still an early poem for Dickinson, and neither her language nor her themes here are as complicated and explosive as they would become in her more mature work from the mid-1860s. Still, we find a few of the verbal shocks that so characterize Dickinson's mature style: the use of "abash," for instance, to describe the storm's potential effect on the bird, wrenches the reader back to the reality behind the pretty metaphor; while a singing bird cannot exactly be "abashed," the word describes the effect of the storm—or a more general hardship—upon the speaker's hopes.

1.3.5 Literary Devices

Rhyme. The poem follows a loose rhyme scheme of ABCB, conforming to the expected pattern of a ballad. The lines break the pattern (in both stanza one and stanza two) but generally, the pattern remains intact.

Rhythm. 'Hope is the Thing with Feathers' is written in ballad meter, a common meter. This means that the lines alternate between iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter. The odd-numbered lines contain a total of eight syllables. These are divided into sets of two, the first beat of which is unstressed and the second stressed. The even-numbered lines are written in iambic trimeter. This means, in regards to the metrical foot, that they follow the same pattern of stresses but contain only six syllables.

Repetition: the poet uses 'that' and 'and' several times throughout 'Hope is the Thing with Feathers'.

Enjambment: seen when the poet cuts off a line before its natural stopping point. For example, the transition between lines three and four of the second stanza.

Metaphor: seen through the initial comparison between hope and a bird.

Anaphora: the repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of multiple lines. For example, "And" which starts a total of five lines.

1.3.6 Sum up

The speaker describes hope as a bird ("the thing with feathers") that perches in the soul. There, it sings wordlessly and without pause. The song of hope sounds sweetest "in the Gale," and it would require a terrifying storm to ever "abash the little Bird / That kept so many warm." The speaker says that she has heard the bird of hope "in the chillest land— / And on the strangest Sea—", but never, no matter how extreme the conditions, did it ever ask for a single crumb from her.

1.3.7 Glossary

- Extremity - the furthest point or limit of something, suggesting the depths or peaks of human experience.
- Plight - a difficult or adverse situation, indicating the challenges or struggles of life.
- Sore - painful or tender, suggesting the emotional pain or hardship experienced in life.
- Surge - a sudden powerful forward or upward movement, indicating a rise or resurgence of hope
- Whirlwind - a rapidly rotating column of air, suggesting chaos or unpredictability.
- Ebb - the movement of the tide out to sea, suggesting a decline or recession of hope.
- Balm - a soothing substance or influence, suggesting the comforting and healing nature of hope.

1.3.8 Check Your Progress

Short Answers:

1. What metaphor is Dickinson using for hope?
2. What is the message in Hope is the Thing with Feathers?
3. What is Emily Dickinson saying about hope?
4. What is an important characteristic of hope?

Essay Questions:

1. What is the tone of Emily Dickinson's "Hope is the Thing with Feathers"?

2. What metaphors are in "Hope is the Thing with Feathers" and what do they express?
3. Why did Emily Dickinson write "Hope is the thing with feathers"?
4. What does the gale symbolize in "Hope Is the Thing with Feathers"?
5. In Dickinson's "Hope Is the Thing with Feathers," what does the "storm" represent?

SECTION 1.4: DIRECTIVE– ROBERT FROST

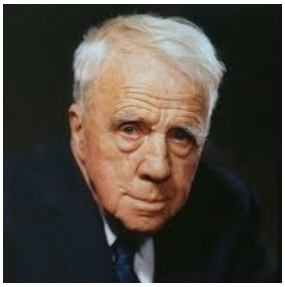
1.4.1 Introduction to Robert Frost

Robert Frost, one of America's most celebrated poets, was born on March 26, 1874, in San Francisco, California. He was raised in San Francisco until the age of eleven when his father died, after which his mother moved the family to Lawrence, Massachusetts, to live with Frost's grandparents.

Frost attended Dartmouth College for a short time but left due to illness. Later, he worked various jobs, including teaching and farming, before moving to England in 1912 with his wife and children to pursue a career in poetry.

In England, Frost met several prominent poets who encouraged his work. He published his first collection of poems, "A Boy's Will," in 1913, followed by "North of Boston" in 1914. These collections garnered attention for their rural New England settings, colloquial language, and exploration of themes such as isolation, nature, and the human condition.

Frost returned to the United States in 1915 and settled on a farm in New Hampshire, where he wrote many of his most famous poems. Over his lifetime, Frost received numerous honors and awards for his poetry, including four Pulitzer Prizes for Poetry.



Some of Frost's most well-known poems include "The Road Not Taken," "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," "Mending Wall," and "Birches." His poetry is characterized by its use of rural imagery, natural settings, and deep exploration of complex human emotions.

Frost's work continues to be studied and admired for its lyrical beauty, deep insights, and timeless themes. He passed away on January 29, 1963, in Boston, Massachusetts, leaving behind a rich legacy of poetry that continues to inspire readers around the world.

1.4.2 Summary of the Poem:

"Directive" is Robert Frost's "grail' poem—a single stanza of 62 lines that is essentially a journey through a life's work, a quest for fulfilment, and an individual take on mortality and spirituality within the context of poetry. Written when Frost was in his seventies, the poem is a reflective, typically ambiguous work that contains references to past poems, geographical places and biblical passages related to the worthiness of the individual—Frost and his poetry set before the divine.

"Directive" uses metaphor, symbol and allusion to attract the reader into a world of discovery and uncertainty. The speaker becomes a guide but the reader is given a kind of deal: come with me only if your getting lost is part of the exchange. It's a poem of history, geography, and legend—mountains, monoliths, the Grail and the New Testament all feature. Frost seeks a form of redemption or renewal as he comes to the end of the quest, drinking of the water that is poetic inspiration, becoming like a child again. Is this poem an attempt on the poet's behalf to find God—a god? As ever with Frost nothing is clear-cut when it comes to matters of faith in a conventional (Christian) god. Here's his tongue-in-cheek couplet

1.4.3 Analysis of the Poem

This journey backward in time begins in a cemetery with deteriorating "graveyard marble sculpture." We know something momentous is involved by the phrase "all this now too much for us." Here the "loss of detail" informs us that memories are imperfect, that we no longer see things exactly as they were. The past has been "made simple" by the loss of detail, so that we only remember the "bigger picture," as it were.

The surrounding landscape has changed: houses, farms and an entire town have vanished with the years. The house, farm and town are still present in one way (memory) but not in another (reality).

The guide who "only has at heart your getting lost" is the endlessly strange "savior" of the gospels, who was able to save the thief on the cross with a nod of his head, but for some inexplicable reason declined to nod his head at everyone. This guide's desire to get people lost will be explained by the speaker, in due course, more explicitly.

A quarry is used to extract rock, which can then be used to create foundations and buildings. In the New Testament, both Jesus and his foremost apostle, Peter, were called "rocks." According to the New Testament, Jesus told Peter, whose name in Greek ("Petros") means "rock," that Peter would be the "rock" on which he would build his church. A town might literally be fashioned out of rock, while spiritually being based on the "rock" of faith and church. But let's keep in mind that the speaker tells us "it may seem as if it should have been a quarry." So perhaps what appears to be a quarry is not really a source of rock, after all. One prays one one's knees, so is Frost suggesting that his former town had given up any pretense of covering what it was praying for: i.e., salvation of the "chosen few" at the expense of the rest of the world?

"And there's a story in a book about it" refers to the Bible. Here, I believe Frost is confirming that the poem's story relates to the Bible. "It" is the quarry, the source or pretended source of rock. So this seems to mean, "There is a story in the Bible about the source of faith, church and/or apostleship."

When Frost says "You must not mind certain coolness from him / Still said to haunt this side of Panther Mountain," I take him to be speaking about Jesus Christ, who of course never speaks personally to the children who pray so earnestly to him. And of course "haunt" is what a spirit does; the Bible says its god is a spirit. Jesus was called the Lion of Judah, and a panther is an American lion, so metaphorically we have the

Jesus of American Christianity. Frost's Christ, who predestines human beings to hell, is enormously, glacially cold.

The number forty is a "biblical" number: it rained forty days and nights at the time of Noah's flood. Jesus spent forty days and forty nights in the desert, fasting and being tempted by Satan. Cellar holes are suggestive of hell, which was underground according to the Bible. That would make the eyes those of people or demons in hell. A firkin is a wooden cask, which sounds like an ark. The Bible says that while Jesus's body lay in the grave, his spirit preached, in hell, to the souls from the time of Noah when great sinfulness led to the Great Flood. So take Frost to be saying that the children of his poem were caught between a rock (the glacially cold Christ) and a hard place (hell).

Here, the woods may represent the natural world, which is young and "inexperienced" compared to the purported infinite "experience" of the Bible's Creator. Or Frost might mean that children find pleasure in the woods when they are not being taught about damnation and hell.

The story of the Garden of Eden and "forbidden fruit" symbolic of sin, which is commonly said by Christians to have been an apple. Here, it may be that Frost is saying that for a time the natural world and its excitements "shaded out" thoughts of sin—perhaps of "sin" that is sexual in nature due to "pecker-fretted." If so, the "shading" seems to have been only temporary.

Reaping and harvesting grain—"bringing in the sheaves"—is a staple image and metaphor of Christianity. Perhaps after a struggle with sexual "sin," the speaker felt "saved" for a season. Perhaps a family member or pastor slightly ahead of the speaker purported to lead him to "salvation." Perhaps there was a time that the speaker was on the same "road home" to heaven as the people around him.

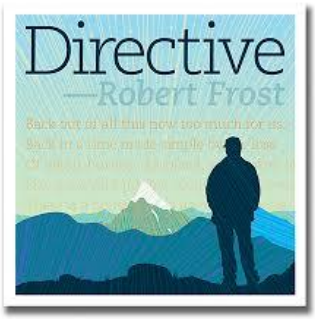
Here, to think "lost" is a key word. The two cultures may be the Christian culture of abstinence from sex until marriage, while the natural culture is to "do what comes naturally." In the end, both cultures are "lost," perhaps in the Christian sense of a person being "unsaved" and thus damned. Or perhaps the speaker simply gave up on both cultures.

"put a sign up closed to all but me" refers to the Christian idea that only the "chosen few" will be saved. This is an extraordinarily heavy burden for a child to bear, because most people who have lived and died did not believe in Jesus Christ. So

Christian "salvation" is very much like closing off all hope to most of the world, in order to be saved oneself.

The Bible says the path to salvation is narrow, and that only a few people (the chosen few) will find it. Again, this is a very frightening prospect for a child, especially an empathetic child.

The "children's house of make believe" is their childhood faith in the enormously cold Christ who saves only the "chosen few" and thus lets everyone else be damned. The shattered dishes may be shattered communion plates and glasses, shattered illusions, the loss of faith, etc. For me, this is one of the most touching lines in the English language. Despite all the heavy burdens their religion placed on them, there were "little things" that made the children glad, from time to time. The children were very earnest in their beliefs. Faith was no game for them. They took "hell" and "salvation" very seriously. Although what they were taught was make believe, it seemed very real to them.



Frost called himself an "Old Testament Christian," so the "source" may well be the original Bible (the Hebrew Bible). This source was "too lofty" to rage, and thus much higher and more original than the abandoned religion. Because the Hebrew prophets never mentioned a "hell" or suffering after death, but said that everyone would be saved together in the end, perhaps the "higher source" is universalism.

The Holy Grail is the ultimate article of Christian faith. The "broken drinking goblet like the Grail" is the Christian gospel, which is hidden from the "wrong ones" so they "can't find it," according to Saint Mark. The passage in question is about the horrendous doctrine of predestination: an all-knowing, all-powerful God created some human beings to be "glorified" and others to be damned, with their fates being determined and sealed before they were given life. Nothing could be more unfair, more unjust, unless everyone is saved in the end.

Frost says that he stole the goblet. His conclusion is that one can only find himself by losing this terrible gospel and returning to the original source to become "whole again beyond confusion." Frost found something higher and better in the universalism of ancient Hebrew prophets like Ezekiel. Christian parents and pastors would read this poem and try to understand why the "good news" that Jesus saves only the "chosen few" is not good news at all, and is bound to terrify any empathetic child who buys into it.

1.4.4 Themes

Nostalgia and Memory: The poem is suffused with a sense of nostalgia for a simpler past. It explores the longing for a return to innocence and simplicity, as seen in the speaker's desire to revisit a childhood place.

Nature and Landscape: Frost often uses nature as a backdrop for his poems, and "Directive" is no exception. The rural landscape serves as both a setting and a source of imagery, contributing to the poem's atmosphere and themes.

Journey and Discovery: The poem can be interpreted as a journey, both literal and metaphorical. The speaker guides the reader through a physical landscape while also exploring themes of self-discovery and the passage of time.

Isolation and Solitude: There's a sense of isolation in the abandoned farmhouse and the overgrown garden. This theme is further emphasized by the speaker's solitary exploration of the landscape.

Legacy and Tradition: The poem reflects on the passage of time and the legacy of the past. The relics of the past, such as the abandoned house and the overgrown garden, serve as reminders of the generations that came before.

1.4.5 Literary Devices

Imagery: Frost uses vivid imagery to evoke a sense of time and place. Descriptions of the rural landscape, the abandoned farmhouse, and the overgrown garden create a vivid picture in the reader's mind.

Symbolism: The abandoned farmhouse and the overgrown garden can be seen as symbols of the past and the passage of time. They represent a lost way of life and the inevitability of change.

Allusion: The poem contains allusions to other works of literature, such as the reference to the "dolls in crochet and faded silk" which alludes to Victorian-era dolls and the poem "Mending Wall" with the mention of "good fences".

Narrative Voice: Frost often employs a conversational and reflective narrative voice in his poetry, and "Directive" is no exception. The speaker addresses the reader directly, inviting them to join him on his journey of exploration

Repetition: Frost uses repetition to create rhythm and emphasis in the poem. For example, the repetition of the phrase "Here are your waters and your watering place" emphasizes the significance of the place to the speaker.

Irony: There's an ironic tone in the speaker's instructions to the reader. While he invites the reader to join him on a journey of discovery, he also warns them not to expect too much, suggesting that the past may not live up to their expectations.

1.4.6 Sum up

"Directive" by Robert Frost is a reflective poem that explores themes of nostalgia, memory, and the passage of time. Through vivid imagery and rich symbolism, the poem guides the reader on a journey through a rural landscape, evoking a sense of longing for a simpler past. The abandoned farmhouse and overgrown garden serve as symbols of the past, while the speaker's instructions to the reader invite them to join him on a journey of exploration and self-discovery. Ultimately, the poem captures the bittersweet beauty of memory and the enduring legacy of the past.

1.4.7 Glossary

1. Directive- A directive is an official or authoritative instruction; in this context, it refers to guidance or instructions provided by the speaker.
2. Char- Char refers to the remains of something that has been burned or partially burned.
3. Byword- Byword can refer to a person, place, or thing that is a proverbial or commonly known symbol or representative, often used in expressions to convey a particular quality or characteristic.
4. Solstice - A solstice is an astronomical event that occurs twice each year, marking the point at which the sun reaches its highest or lowest point in the sky at noon, resulting in the longest and shortest days of the year.

1.4.8 Check Your Progress

Short Answers:

1) What is the significance of the "tombstones" mentioned in the poem?
2) Why does the speaker caution the reader not to expect too much from the past?
3) What does the speaker instruct the reader to do at the end of the poem?
4) What role does nature play in "Directive"?
5) How does the abandoned farmhouse contribute to the overall mood of the poem?

Essay Questions:

1) Discuss the theme of nostalgia in Robert Frost's "Directive." How does the speaker's longing for the past shape the poem's meaning?
2) Explore the symbolism of the abandoned farmhouse and overgrown garden in "Directive." How do these symbols contribute to the poem's themes of memory and the passage of time?
3) Analyze Frost's use of imagery in "Directive." How does his descriptive language create a vivid sense of place and atmosphere in the poem?
4) Consider the narrative voice in "Directive." How does Frost's use of a conversational tone impact the reader's experience of the poem?
5) Discuss the significance of the journey motif in "Directive." How does the speaker's guidance through the landscape reflect broader themes of self-discovery and exploration?

SECTION 1.5: STILL I RISE – MAYA ANGELOU

1.5.1 Introduction to Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou (born April 4, 1928, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.—died May 28, 2014, Winston-Salem, North Carolina) was an American poet, memoirist, and actress whose several volumes of autobiography explore the themes of economic, racial, and sexual oppression.

Although born in St. Louis, Angelou spent much of her childhood in the care of her paternal grandmother in rural Stamps, Arkansas. When she was not yet eight years old, she was raped by her mother's boyfriend and told of it, after which he was murdered; the traumatic sequence of events left her almost completely mute for several years. This early life is the focus of her first autobiographical work, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (1969; TV movie 1979), which gained critical acclaim and a National Book Award nomination. Subsequent volumes of autobiography include Gather Together in My Name (1974), Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas (1976), The Heart of a Woman (1981), All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes (1986), A Song Flung Up to Heaven (2002), and Mom & Me & Mom (2013).

In 1981 Angelou, who was often referred to as "Dr. Angelou" despite her lack of a college education, became a professor of American studies at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Among numerous honours was her invitation to compose and deliver a poem, "On the Pulse of Morning," for the inauguration of U.S. Pres. Bill Clinton in 1993. She celebrated the 50th anniversary of the United Nations in the poem "A Brave and Startling Truth" (1995) and elegized Nelson Mandela in the poem "His Day Is Done" (2013), which was commissioned by the U.S. State Department and released in the wake of the South African leader's death. In 2011 Angelou was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom

1.5.2 Summary of the Poem:

The poem is directed towards those oppressors in society who would tie the speaker to her past and to a history that has been misrepresented and cannot be relied upon. Her ancestors were depicted unfairly and dishonestly in history, and she will rise

above the cruelty and suffering they experienced. The speaker is both angry and confident throughout the poem. Initially, she is baffled by the way in which her oppressors-ostensibly, white people and specifically, white males-do not want her to succeed or become more than the sum of her history. She notes that her joy seems to make them miserable, and she questions why that is. At the same time, she taunts these oppressors, acknowledging the impact of her behaviors and personality and delighting in the fact that she bewilders them with her power and confidence. The poem as a whole is a declaration of strength and of determination.

The speaker proclaims boldly that whatever her oppressors do to try to hamper her progress or take away her rights, it will not matter. Nobody will ever take her power away, and she will always rise above the racism, pain, and sexism to be the powerful woman she knows she is. She will break the negative cycle of the past.

She also speaks on behalf of other black people without actually stating that this is what she is doing. By making references to her ancestors and naming slavery explicitly near the poem's conclusion, she is addressing the collective experiences of her people and stating that they as a race are more powerful than their oppressors. Whatever the oppressors do, they cannot stop her people from moving forward in their lives.

The poet ends her declaration by affirming that no matter what happens, she will continue to rise above history, hate, and bigotry just like her ancestors dreamed would be possible. She will fulfill their dreams and hopes for freedom and happiness.

1.5.3 Analysis of the Poem

The poem “Still I Rise” has been penned down by a famous American poet and civil rights activist, Maya Angelou. Being a historian, novelist and a playwright Angelou has written widely acknowledged works that talk about racism and the social injustices. Through her poems, she takes out people from the spell of hopelessness and allows them to focus on the optimistic side of their lives.

The poem, “Still I Rise” addresses the oppression and subjugation of the African American society and the struggle that the people, especially women had to go through to achieve the level of equality. Being a representative of courage and hopefulness, this empowering poem gives people the courage to rise up for their rights and change the nature of the society that they are living in.

This work has been crafted with the essence of great courage, pride, and self-confidence. One of the main ideas behind writing this poem is that of oppression that has been a part of black people's lives throughout history. Another important aspect that the poem deals with is that of resilience; in spite of all these difficulties, the author says "Still I'll rise" i.e. despite all the injustices and harsh treatments, the African American people will still struggle to rise and fight for their rights. The poetess finds pride in being a black woman and talks about the power and beauty of blackness by comparing black people like her to "a black ocean".

First Stanza

The first stanza of the poem diverts reader's attention to the past injustices that has been done to the black people. Being packed fully with poetic techniques like Anaphora, the poetess has repeated the words "you may" in the first stanza to pay emphasis to the fact that no matter whatever the oppressors do, they can never succeed in letting the African American society down. A simile has also been used "like dust" that these black people will not get suppressed by the harsh behavior of white

Second Stanza

The poetess proceeds on to the second stanza with rhetorical questioning as to why her success is upsetting the people around her. She wants to acknowledge people around her that despite of all the difficulties and toughness the world has to offer, she knows that she has succeeded in life and she walks with great pride due to her achievements.

Third Stanza

In the third stanza, Angelou uses element of simile "like moons and like suns" to compare herself to the moon and sun in a way as they are affected by the tides, and she says that she will keep on rising against oppression and making progress for a successful life by comparing her confidence to high hopes by using these lines "just like hopes springing high".

Fourth Stanza

In the fourth stanza, the poetess addresses the racist community by asking a direct and blunt question from them. She asks them with bitterness in her voice that they want to see her "broken with bowed head and lowered eyes?" Though she knows the answer to her questions, she asks these to draw the attention of her readers to reveal the

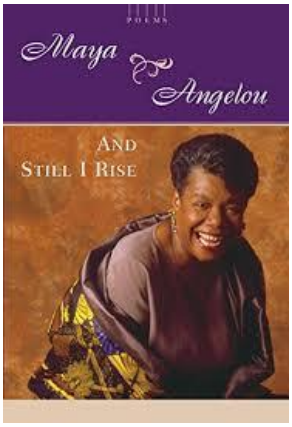
nature of this racist society that will never want to see black people especially black women rise up high and get escape from the oppression.

Fifth Stanza

In the fifth stanza of the poem, Angelou continues to question the racist society that gets offended to see a black woman full of pride, courage, and a motivation to rise up. She uses “Sarcasm” and in a mocking way, pretends to show her care for those people who detest her success. With the help of a simile “laugh like I got gold mines”, she compares her success to getting gold mines.

Sixth Stanza

The sixth stanza opens up with a strong and determined approach of the poetess that no matter whether the society tries to let her down with her words, looks, or acts, she will never lose hope and this time, she uses air as a simile that she will lift herself up “like air”.



Seventh Stanza

Just like the fourth and fifth stanza, in the seventh stanza, the speaker continues to direct the process of cross-examination towards the racist society and motivates herself and other black community by revealing self-confidence.

Eighth Stanza

Finally, the eighth stanza unveils the reasons behind her pain and oppression. She refers to the past and reveal how this racially prejudiced society tried to hold her ancestors down and kept them in the slavery. The use of consonance can be seen in this stanza; the sound of /i/ in “Welling and swelling I bear in the tide” and the sound of /t/ in “Out of the huts of history’s shame”.

Ninth Stanza

In the last stanza, the poetess says that she is leaving the fearful effects of that past slavery behind and begins to live her life with a clear and positive vision. She intends to convey the message that the hatred of this society cannot stop her from achieving her dreams and to pay emphasis to it, she repeats the words “I rise: thrice in her last stanza that leaves a motivating and inspirational impact on the readers

1.5.4 Themes

The Resilience of Black Women

The speaker of “Still I Rise” is a Black woman who powerfully expresses her strength and resilience in the face of an oppressive, racist society. The theme of resilience runs like a thread through all nine of the poem’s stanzas. In some cases, the resilience she evokes applies to Black Americans in general. For instance, in the first stanza, the speaker defies attempts on the part of dominant, white society to misrepresent Black history. Later, in the sixth stanza, she refuses to let racist words, glances, and actions negatively impact her sense of self-worth. Finally, she ends the poem by situating her contemporary experience in a longer history of Black resilience in the face of slavery and disenfranchisement (stanzas 8–9). In other cases, however, the speaker’s emphasis on resilience relates to Black American women in particular. In stanzas 2–5, for instance, she insists on her right to carry herself with a sense of pride, expressed through an upright posture and a confident stride. Later in the poem, she expresses the sense of personal empowerment she derives from her sexuality (stanzas 7–8). What unites each of these topics is a tone of defiance, which the speaker uses to express her own strength and resilience.

Defiance of Oppressive Social Expectations

A major theme of “Still I Rise” is the need to defy oppressive social expectations. This theme emerges through the speaker’s tone more than her actual words. Consider the opening lines, which initiate the speaker’s confrontational tone: “You may write me down in history / With your bitter, twisted lies” (lines 1–2). Although the words plainly state a misdeed committed by this “you,” it’s the speaker’s use of the verb “may” that makes these opening lines so powerful. The use of “may” at once extends an invitation and anticipates a refusal, as if to say: “You can try all you want to harm me, but it won’t

work." Whereas the speaker's words clearly the indict the "you" for their wrongdoings, it's her tone that most clearly evokes the empowerment she derives from defying this "you." A similar phenomenon occurs in the poem's fourth stanza. There (lines 13–16), the speaker asks a series of rhetorical questions that simultaneously acknowledge and reject common stereotypes about how Black women should act:

Did you want to see me broken?

Bowed head and lowered eyes?

Shoulders falling down like teardrops,

Weakened by my soulful cries?

The speaker uses rhetorical questions to powerful and ironic effect, implicitly refusing to subscribe to the oppressive stereotype of Black women as weak and demure. Once again, the sense of defiance emerges primarily through the speaker's tone.

The Power of Reclaiming History

At the opening and closing of the poem, the speaker references the importance of reclaiming one's own history from the misrepresentations of dominant society. The speaker emphasizes the violence of misrepresentation in the first stanza when she says, "You may write me down in history / With your bitter, twisted lies" (lines 1–2). With these lines, the speaker references the adage that history is told by those who wield the most power. As a member of a marginalized and oppressed group, the speaker recognizes that the most prevalent version of her own community's history is full of dehumanizing half-truths and harmful reductions. It is precisely these half-truths and reductions that dominant society uses to "trod [the speaker] in the very dirt" (line 3). In the poem's final two stanzas, however, the speaker makes explicit references to Black American history in ways that actively recuperate it and use to develop a clearer sense of self (lines 29–32 and 39–40):

Out of the huts of history's shame

I rise

Up from a past that's rooted in pain

I rise

. . .

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,

I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

The speaker directly connects her own experience in the contemporary moment to the long history of slavery and Black disenfranchisement. From this history of her own people, the speaker derives a clear sense of identity that also gives her the strength necessary to survive ongoing oppression.

1.5.5 Literary Devices

Repetition: Angelou uses repetition extensively throughout the poem, particularly with the phrase "I rise" and "Still I rise". This repetition emphasizes resilience and defiance, reinforcing the speaker's determination to overcome adversity.

Anaphora: Anaphora is a type of repetition where the same word or phrase is repeated at the beginning of successive clauses or lines. In "Still I Rise," the repeated use of "You may" followed by various descriptions of oppression serves to highlight the speaker's defiance in the face of adversity.

Metaphor: Angelou employs metaphorical language to convey her message. For example, "You may trod me in the very dirt" compares the speaker's experiences of oppression to being trampled upon, while "I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide" uses the metaphor of an ocean to symbolize the vastness and strength of the speaker's identity.

Simile: Similes are used to make comparisons between two different things using the words "like" or "as." In "Still I Rise," Angelou uses similes to vividly describe the speaker's resilience, such as "like dust, I'll rise" and "like air, I'll rise."

Alliteration: Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words in close proximity. Angelou uses alliteration to create rhythm and emphasis in the poem, such as in the line "I rise" where the repetition of the "r" sound adds to the poem's power and momentum.

Imagery: Angelou employs vivid imagery throughout the poem to evoke a sense of strength, resilience, and defiance. For example, "Just like moons and like suns, With the certainty of tides, Just like hopes springing high, Still I'll rise" creates powerful visual imagery that reinforces the speaker's indomitable spirit.

1.5.6 Sum up

"And Still I Rise" is a collection of poetry that was published in 1978 by Random House. This was Maya Angelou's third collection and tackles the struggles of being a black woman, oppression in society, and the surge of racism. Angelou heavily draws from the history of slavery in America as inspiration.

The collection has 32 poems in total and is divided into three sections: "Touch Me, Life, Not Softly"; "Traveling"; "And Still I Rise." There are many themes and characteristics in this collection, but the key one is confidence. Angelou took inspiration from the history of slavery and emphasizes her message by using repetition.

1.5.7 Glossary

1. Trod- Walked upon or stepped on, often with heavy footsteps, suggesting oppression or mistreatment.

2. Tides- The regular rise and fall of sea levels caused primarily by the gravitational pull of the moon and the sun.

3. Racism - Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief in the superiority of one's own race, reflecting one of the themes of the poem - overcoming systemic oppression and racism.

4. Gait - Manner of walking or moving on foot, suggesting confidence and pride in one's stride despite facing obstacle

1.5.8 Check Your Progress

Short Answers:

1. What is the central message of "Still I Rise"?
2. How does repetition contribute to the poem's impact?
3. What literary device is used in the line "You may shoot me with your words"?
4. How does Angelou use imagery to convey the speaker's strength?
5. What is the significance of the title "Still I Rise"?

Essay Questions:

1. What types of figurative language are used in "Still I Rise"?
2. What does "I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide" mean in "Still I Rise"?
3. What symbols are present in Maya Angelou's poem "Still I Rise"?

4. In Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise," what does the repeated phrase "I rise" convey?
5. What is the theme of the poem "Still I Rise"?
6. How does Angelou represent resilience in two poems from And Still I Rise?
7. What does the "black ocean" represent in "Still I Rise"?
8. How is oppression portrayed in "Still I Rise"?

Self Assessment Questions:

RALPH WALDO EMERSON: BRAHMA

2MARKS

1. What is the title of the poem by Emerson that explores the nature of the divine?

Answer: "Brahma".

2. What does the "unfathomed sea" represent in the poem?

Answer: The "unfathomed sea" symbolizes the vast, mysterious, and unknowable nature of the universe.

3. How does Emerson's portrayal of Brahma differ from traditional Hindu beliefs?

Answer: Emerson's speaker sees Brahma as a symbol of the divine within, whereas traditional Hinduism views Brahma as a creator deity with distinct attributes.

4. How does Emerson's poem "Brahma" relate to his philosophy of Transcendentalism?

Answer: The poem reflects Emerson's Transcendentalist ideas about the individual's direct connection to the divine and the unity of all existence.

5 MARKS

1. What are the primary themes explored in Emerson's poem "Brahma"?

2. Compare and contrast the portrayal of Brahma in Emerson's poem with the portrayal of gods in other literary works you have studied.

3. Examine the structure of "Brahma." How does the poem's structure enhance its thematic content?

8 MARKS

1. Assess the impact of Emerson’s transcendentalist philosophy on the themes and content of "Brahma." How does his philosophical outlook shape the poem's exploration of spiritual concepts?

2. How can Emerson's views on the nature of the divine in "Brahma" be applied to contemporary discussions about the relationship between the individual and the universe?

3. Explain the significance of the recurring motif of duality in "Brahma." How does Emerson use this motif to convey philosophical ideas about existence and unity?

WALT WHITMAN: OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING

2 MARKS

1. What is the primary setting of the poem "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking"?

Answer: The primary setting of the poem is a beach on a moonlit night.

2. What role does the bird's song play in the development of the poem’s theme?

Answer: The bird’s song symbolizes the poet's own process of mourning and discovery. It acts as a catalyst for the speaker's realization about the nature of loss and the continuity of life.

3. Identify the poetic form used in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking."

Answer: The poem is written in free verse, which allows Whitman to express his themes with a flexible structure and rhythm.

4. What effect does the repetition of certain phrases have on the reader’s understanding of the poem?

Answer: The repetition of certain phrases emphasizes the poem’s central themes and the speaker’s emotional state, reinforcing the sense of ongoing mourning and the quest for understanding.

5 MARKS

1. How does Whitman use imagery to convey the sense of loss and longing in the poem? Provide specific examples.

2. Compare and contrast the portrayal of the bird and the speaker in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking." How do their roles contribute to the poem's emotional impact?

3. Explain the symbolism of the waves and the shore in the poem. What do they represent in the context of the speaker's emotional journey?

8 MARKS

1. Discuss the role of the narrator in the poem. How does the narrator's personal journey reflect the broader themes of the poem?

2. Evaluate the effectiveness of Whitman's use of free verse in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking." How does it contribute to the thematic and emotional depth of the poem?

3. Explain how Whitman uses the imagery of the sea and the birds to convey the themes of loss and memory in the poem.

EMILY DICKINSON: HOPE IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS

2 MARKS

1. Explain why hope is described as a "feathered" thing in the poem.

Answer: Hope is described as "feathered" to suggest its lightness and ability to uplift the spirit, similar to how a bird can soar.

2. How does the poem convey the idea that hope is persistent?

Answer: The poem conveys this idea by describing hope as enduring and continuous, never asking for anything but always present.

3. Analyze how Dickinson uses imagery to enhance the theme of hope in the poem.

Answer: Dickinson uses imagery of a bird with feathers, singing, and enduring through storms to create a vivid picture of hope's persistent and uplifting nature.

4. What contrast is presented in the poem between hope and hardship?

Answer: The contrast is between the light, uplifting nature of hope and the harsh, challenging conditions of hardship, highlighting hope's role as a persistent source of comfort.

5 MARKS

1. Summarize the poem Hope is the Thing with Feathers in your own words.

2. Imagine you are writing a new poem with a similar theme. How would you use a different metaphor to represent hope.

3.Explain how Dickinson personifies hope in the poem.

8 MARKS

1. Describe the central metaphor in Emily Dickinson's poem "Hope is the Thing with Feathers." What does the metaphor represent in the context of the poem?

2. Examine how Dickinson's poem might be used in a psychological context to discuss the role of hope in coping with adversity. What insights could the poem provide?

3. Discuss how the imagery in "Hope is the Thing with Feathers" could be applied to a real-life situation where hope plays a crucial role. Provide an example to support your explanation.

ROBERT FROST: DIRECTIVE

2 MARKS

1. How does the poem's portrayal of nature relate to human experience?

Answer: Nature reflects human emotions and experiences.

2. What message do you think Frost conveys through the poem?

Answer: Frost emphasizes the importance of seeking guidance and wisdom.

3. Discuss the use of imagery in the poem. How does it contribute to the themes?

Answer: Imagery creates a sense of nostalgia and connection to nature.

4. How does the poem's portrayal of guidance relate to Frost's broader ideas about human nature?

Answer: Frost highlights the need for wisdom and direction.

5 MARKS

1. What is the primary theme of Robert Frost's poem "Directive"?

2. List three symbols used in "Directive" and describe their significance in the poem.

3. Examine the use of enjambment in "Directive" and its effect on the poem's flow and rhythm.

8 MARKS

1. Explain the significance of the journey motif in "Directive." How does it reflect the poem's message?

2. Evaluate the effectiveness of the poem's conclusion. How does it resolve the themes presented throughout the poem?

3. Analyze the structure of "Directive" and its impact on the poem's overall meaning. How does Frost's use of form contribute to the themes?

MAYA ANGELOU: STILL I RISE

2 MARKS

1. Who is the speaker of the poem "Still I Rise"?

Answer: The speaker is a confident and defiant woman who represents resilience and self-assurance.

2. What is the significance of the phrase "I rise" in the poem?

Answer: The phrase “I rise” signifies the speaker’s determination to overcome challenges and rise above oppression.

3. How does the speaker’s attitude towards her oppressors change throughout the poem?

Answer: The speaker’s attitude remains defiant and self-assured throughout the poem, showing no sign of submission to her oppressors.

4. Examine how the structure of the poem affects its impact on the reader.

Answer: The poem’s repetitive structure emphasizes the speaker’s unwavering confidence and helps to drive home the message of rising above adversity.

5 MARKS

1. Describe the historical and personal context that influenced Maya Angelou’s writing of "Still I Rise." How do these factors reflect in the poem?

2.Create a brief poem or passage inspired by the themes and style of "Still I Rise" that addresses a different social issue.

3.How does Angelou’s portrayal of oppression in "Still I Rise" reflect historical and cultural contexts of her time?

8 MARKS

1. Critique the impact of historical and cultural factors on the poem’s message. How does the poem reflect or challenge the socio-political climate of Angelou’s time?

2. Illustrate how the poem's themes of strength and defiance can be applied to contemporary issues of social justice. Provide specific examples.

3. Explain the significance of the recurring phrase "I rise" in the poem. How does it contribute to the overall theme of resilience?

Unit II

Prose

UNIT - II PROSE

CONTENT OF UNIT- I

Ralph Waldo Emerson	-The American Scholar
Mark Twain	-Advice to youth

UNIT OBJECTIVES

- Foster an appreciation for American literary classics and their lasting impact on society and culture.
- Enhance students' ability to critically read, analyze, and interpret literary texts.
- Promote thoughtful discussions and written reflections on the themes and ideas presented in the readings.
- Encourage the application of literary insights to personal and societal contexts.
- Develop a nuanced understanding of the authors' rhetorical strategies and their effectiveness in conveying complex ideas.

SECTION 2.1: THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR - RALPH WALDO EMERSON

2.1.1 About Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ralph Waldo Emerson was born on May 25, 1803, to the Reverend William and Ruth Haskins Emerson. His father, pastor of the First Unitarian Church of Boston, chaplain of the Massachusetts Senate, and an editor of *Monthly Anthology*, a literary review, once described two-year-old son Waldo as "a rather dull scholar." (Emerson was called Waldo throughout his lifetime and even signed his checks as Waldo.) Following William's death from stomach cancer in 1811, the family was left in a state of near-poverty, and Emerson was raised by his mother and Mary Moody Emerson, an aunt whose acute, critical intelligence would have a lifelong influence

on him. Through the persistence of these two women, he completed studies at the Boston Public Latin School.

Emerson entered Harvard College on a scholarship in 1817, and during collegiate holidays he taught school. An unremarkable student, he made no particular impression on his contemporaries. In 1821, he graduated thirteenth in his class of 1959, and he was elected class poet only after six other students declined the honor. It was at Harvard that he began keeping his celebrated journals.

After graduating from college, Emerson moved to Boston to teach at his brother William's School for Young Ladies and began to experiment with fiction and verse. In 1825, after quitting the ladies school, he entered Harvard Divinity School; one year later, he received his master's degree, which qualified him to preach. He began to suffer from symptoms of tuberculosis, and in the fall of 1827 he went to Georgia and Florida in hopes of improving his health. He returned in late December to Boston, where he preached occasionally. In Concord, New Hampshire, he met Ellen Tucker, a seventeen-year-old poet who also suffered from tuberculosis. The two were married in September 1829, just after Emerson had been ordained pastor of the Second Unitarian Church of Boston. They were very happy in the marriage, but, unfortunately, both were also quite ill with tuberculosis; in 1831, after less than two years of marriage, Ellen died.

By the end of the following year, Emerson had resigned his pastorate at Second Unitarian Church. Among his reasons for resigning were his refusal to administer the sacrament of the Last Supper, which he believed to be an

unnecessary theological rite, and his belief that the ministry was an "antiquated profession." On Christmas Day, 1832, he left for Europe even though he was so ill that many of his friends thought he would not survive the rigors of the winter voyage. While in Europe, he met many of the leading thinkers of his time, including the economist and philosopher John Stuart Mill; Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose *Aids to Reflection* Emerson admired; the poet William Wordsworth; and Thomas Carlyle, the historian and social critic, with whom Emerson established a lifelong friendship.

After his return from Europe in the fall of 1833, Emerson began a career as a public lecturer with an address in Boston. One of his first lectures, "The Uses of Natural History," attempted to humanize science by explaining that "the whole of Nature is a metaphor or image of the human mind," an observation that he would often repeat. Other lectures followed — on diverse subjects such as Italy, biography, English literature, the philosophy of history, and human culture.

In September 1834, Emerson moved to Concord, Massachusetts, as a boarder in the home of his step-grandfather, Ezra Ripley. On September 14, 1835, he married Lydia Jackson of Plymouth, Massachusetts, and they moved into a house of their own in Concord, where they lived for the rest of their lives.

Emerson's first book, *Nature*, was published anonymously in 1836. Although only a slim volume, it contains in brief the whole substance of his thought. It sold very poorly — after twelve years, its first edition of 500 copies had not yet sold out. However, "The American Scholar," the Phi Beta Kappa address that Emerson presented at Harvard in 1837, was very popular and, when printed, sold well. A year after he made this speech, he was invited back to Harvard to speak to the graduating class of Harvard Divinity School. His address, which advocated intuitive, personal revelation, created such an uproar that he was not invited back to his alma mater for thirty years. Perhaps Amos Bronson Alcott best summarizes this phase of Emerson's life when he wrote: "Emerson's church consists of one member — himself."

In 1836, Emerson joined the Transcendental Club, and in the ensuing years the group, which included Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and Alcott, met often at his home. In 1840, he helped launch *The Dial*, a journal of literature, philosophy, and religion that focused on transcendentalist views. After the first two

years, he succeeded Fuller as its editor. *The Dial* was recognized as the official voice of transcendentalism, and Emerson became intimately associated with the movement. Two years later, however, the journal ceased publication.

In 1841, Emerson published the first volume of his *Essays*, a carefully constructed collection of some of his best-remembered writings, including "Self-Reliance" and "The Over-Soul." A second series of *Essays* in 1844 would firmly establish his reputation as an authentic American voice.

Tragedy struck the Emerson family in January 1842 when Emerson's son, Waldo, died of scarlet fever. Emerson would later write "Threnody," an elegy expressing his grief for Waldo; the poem was included in his collection *Poems* (1846). Ellen, Edith, and Edward Waldo, his other children, survived to adulthood.

In 1847, Emerson again traveled abroad, lecturing in England with success. He renewed his friendship with Carlyle, met other notable English authors, and collected materials for *English Traits*, which was eventually published in 1856. A collection called *Addresses and Lectures* appeared in 1849, and *Representative Men* was published in 1850.

Emerson's later works were never so highly esteemed as his writings previous to 1850. However, he continued to lead an active intellectual and social life. He made many lecture appearances in all parts of the country, and he continued writing and publishing. During the 1850s, he vigorously supported the antislavery movement. When the American Civil War broke out, he supported the Northern cause, but the war troubled him: He was deeply appalled by the amount of violence, bloodshed, and destruction it engendered,

In 1866, Emerson was reconciled with Harvard, and a year later the college invited him to give the Phi Beta Kappa address. *May-Day and Other Pieces*, published in 1867, was a second gathering of his poems, and his later essays were collected in *Society and Solitude* (1870).

As he grew older, Emerson's health and mental acuity began to decline rapidly. In 1872, after his Concord home was badly damaged by fire, his friend

Russell Lowell and others raised $17,000 to repair the house and send him on vacation. However, the trauma added to his intellectual decline.

In 1879, Emerson joined Amos Bronson Alcott and others in establishing the Concord School of Philosophy. He often lamented that he had "no new ideas" in his later years. He also had to quit the lecture circuit as his memory began to lapse.

Emerson died of pneumonia on April 27, 1882, and, announcing his death, Concord's church bells rang 79 times.

2.1.2 Background of the American Scholar

Originally titled "An Oration Delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, at Cambridge, [Massachusetts,] August 31, 1837," Emerson delivered what is now referred to as "The American Scholar" essay as a speech to Harvard's Phi Beta Kappa Society, an honorary society of male college students with unusually high grade point averages. At the time, women were barred from higher education, and scholarship was reserved exclusively for men. Emerson published the speech under its original title as a pamphlet later that same year and republished it in 1838. In 1841, he included the essay in his book Essays, but changed its title to "The American Scholar" to enlarge his audience to all college students, as well as other individuals interested in American letters. Placed in his *Man Thinking: An Oration* (1841), the essay found its final home in *Nature; Addresses, and Lectures* (1849).

The text begins with an introduction (paragraphs 1-7) in which Emerson explains that his intent is to explore the scholar as one function of the whole human being: The scholar is "Man Thinking." The remainder of the essay is organized into four sections, the first three discussing the influence of nature (paragraphs 8 and 9), the influence of the past and books (paragraphs 10-20), and the influence of action (paragraphs 21-30) on the education of the thinking man. In the last section (paragraphs 31-45), Emerson considers the duties of the scholar and then discusses his views of America in his own time.

2.1.3 Summary

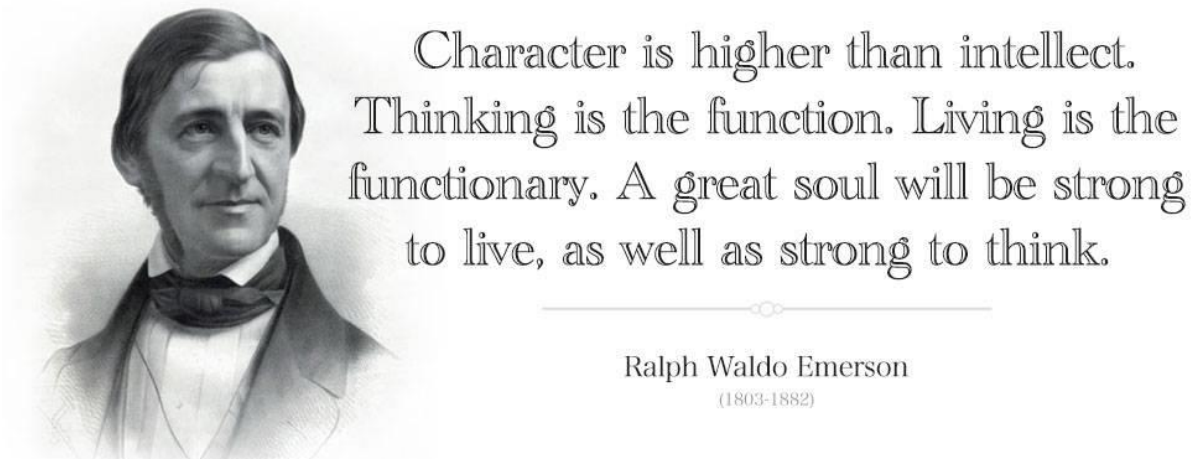
Section 1

Emerson says that the first and most important influence on the mind of a scholar is observing nature. Nature is full of infinitely repeating cycles that demonstrate to the attentive mind a similarity to the endless human spirit. In watching the world around them, young scholars learn how to classify and see the interconnectedness between things. They learn to discern that things function by "a law which is also a law of the human mind." No matter the subject, the scholar will observe that nature and human thought reflect each other, and the insights of one into the other allow the scholar to understand and classify all of creation.

Emerson says that studying nature will suggest to the scholar a root cause of all they see, one not merely scientific but universal and spiritual, from which both they and nature spring forth. The human soul and nature are complementary, "that nature is the opposite of the soul, answering to it part for part," and in studying nature, the scholarly mind will expand to encompass both an intellectual and spiritual understanding of God's interconnected universe, of which they are an inseparable part.

Section 2

The second major influence on the mind of the present scholar, Emerson says, is the thinking of the great minds of the past. This is transmitted through art, literature, and writing, especially through books. The great thinkers of the past learned from the world around them and recorded their thoughts poetically. The act of writing made it possible to transmit their ideas to future generations, to live on figuratively inside new minds. However, no writer can completely escape the mindset of their era, nor can later readers escape their own, and so the transmission will always be imperfect. There will be assumptions in the original work, as well as things that do not translate or are not relevant in later centuries. Each generation "must write its own books."



This, Emerson says, is where "mischief" sets in. People come to view the books of the past as perfect and cling dogmatically to old texts without adding innovation. Young scholars are taught to repeat the wisdom of previous great thinkers. They do not appreciate that the greatest thinkers of the past age were also once just young scholars challenging the wisdom of a previous generation. Instead of being "*Man Thinking,"* Emerson says, these people merely love books.

He contends that well-used books are "the best of things," but books misapplied are "among the worst." The value of books, in Emerson's estimation, is to awaken and inspire the soul of the reader. Every person has the ability, the right, and the higher duty to create, and, at their best, books inspire their readers toward creation. However, they also have a danger of inspiring slavish imitation. Emerson mentions that readers must glean only what is authentic in literary works, such as in Greek philosopher Plato's (c. 428–c. 328) works and in English writer William Shakespeare's (1564–1616) poetry and plays.

Emerson states that books should not be the primary way a scholar learns. Scholars should be interacting with the world first and reading only at night. However, Emerson hurries to assure the listener that he has no intention of underrating books. He says books bring a completely unique pleasure in their consumption because they connect minds across time. He talks about the joy and surprise at finding one's own thoughts similar to those of someone living centuries before. The reader is joined to the author through time as if to another piece of the collective intellect of humanity. The author could not have foreseen the future but left it nourishment anyway, in the way some insects do for their un hatched young: "But

for the evidence thence afforded to the philosophical doctrine of the identity of all minds," says Emerson, "we should suppose some pre established harmony, some foresight of souls that were to be, and some preparation of stores for their future wants, like the fact observed in insects, who lay up food before death for the young grub they shall never see." The pleasure in reading gives a sense of intellectual commune with the past as it nurtures the soul. The active and creative human mind can find intellectual nourishment in any sort of book. However, scholars should read judiciously, deciding for themselves what parts of any book are universally true and what parts are specific to the time a work was written. Also, some things, such as the sciences, can only be learned by "laborious reading" and drill in universities. However, the greater purpose of these institutions should always be to gather great young minds and let them mingle with each other while encouraging creative thought. Everything else universities do, in Emerson's opinion, is pure pomp and show.

Section 3

Emerson says there is a prevailing myth that a scholar ought to be a recluse and a "valetudinarian," or hypochondriac. In this view, a scholar should be someone whose labor is entirely mental and who shies away from physical exertion. He believes people tend to view scholars, especially priests, as effeminate and practically useless. Action, he argues, is an important part of scholarship, without which the full truth and beauty of the world cannot be apprehended. Without action, a person is not whole.

People learn by experience and by confrontation with the obstacles of the world. They learn to conquer fear by facing and overcoming challenges. "Drudgery, calamity, exasperation, want," Emerson says, "are instructors in eloquence and wisdom." The mind is always processing a person's experiences into new information and ways of thinking.

While a person can look back objectively and with emotional distance on actions taken in childhood, a person cannot comprehend actions as they take them. Only hindsight can transform experiences into an understanding of universal truths. Without diverse action, thoughts become circumscribed and too narrow. Then it is

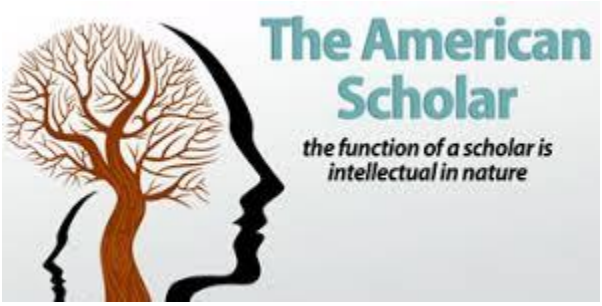
possible for the scholar to find the vein of thought they had invested their lives in dried up with nothing for them to fall back on. Life and action outside of academia expose the scholar to a rich variety of wisdom and vocabulary.

However, the greatest "value of action" is that it is a resource to the scholar. Thought and action undulate like the ebb and flow of breath, like all things in nature, and each strengthens the other. The active scholar always has the resources to live. Without life, there is no scholarship. If the scholar lives life well and virtuously, it will not only improve the world but also their thoughts. Emerson believes in the instincts of humanity toward positive change. These instincts exist outside of and are sometimes hampered by the lessons of civilization. He claims the energetic heroes of modern thought do not emerge from the exemplars of antique cultures. The ancestors of Shakespeare and of Alfred the Great (849–99), an English king who promoted learning, were uncultured barbarians during the height of Greek and Roman culture. He only puts one limitation on useful action: the thinking person should not subsume their own judgment to popular morals. When a scholar's own mind and soul tell them what is right and what is wrong, they should trust their own judgment, even if their community or their country tell them otherwise.

2.1.4 Analysis

Emerson opens "The American Scholar" with greetings to the college president and members of the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard College. Pointing out the differences between this gathering and the athletic and dramatic contests of ancient Greece, the poetry contests of the Middle Ages, and the scientific academies of nineteenth-century Europe, he voices a theme that draws the entire essay together: the notion of an independent American intelligentsia that will no longer depend for authority on its European past. He sounds what one critic contends is "the first clarion of an American literary renaissance," a call for Americans to seek their creative inspirations using America as their source, much like Walt Whitman would do in *Leaves of Grass* eighteen years later. In the second paragraph, Emerson announces his theme as "The American Scholar" not a particular individual but an abstract ideal.

The remaining five paragraphs relate an allegory that underlies the discussion to follow. According to an ancient fable, there was once only "One Man," who then was divided into many men so that society could work more efficiently. Ideally, society labors together — each person doing his or her task — so that it can function properly. However, society has now subdivided to so great an extent that it no longer serves the good of its citizens. And the scholar, being a part of society, has degenerated also. Formerly a "Man Thinking," the scholar is now "a mere thinker," a problem that Emerson hopes to correct successfully by re-familiarizing his audience with how the true scholar is educated and what the duties of this scholar are.



In these two paragraphs comprising the first section on how a scholar should be educated, Emerson envisions nature as a teacher that instructs individuals who observe the natural world to see — eventually — how similar their minds and nature are. The first similarity he discusses concerns the notion of circular power — a theme familiar to readers of the *Nature* essay — found in nature and in the scholar's spirit. Both nature and the scholar's spirit, "whose beginning, whose ending he never can find — so entire, so boundless," are eternal.

Order is another similarity — as it is in *Nature* — between the scholar and nature. At first, the mind views a chaotic and infinite reality of individual facts, but then it begins to classify these facts into categories, to make comparisons and distinctions. A person discovers nature's laws and can understand them because they are similar to the operations of the intellect. Eventually, we realize that nature and the soul — both proceeding from what Emerson terms "one root" — are parallel structures that mirror each other (Emerson's term for "parallel" may be misleading; he says that nature is the "opposite" of the soul). So, a greater knowledge of nature results in a greater understanding of the self, and vice versa. The maxims "Know

thyself" and "Study nature" are equivalent: They are two ways of saying the same thing.

Emerson devotes much of his discussion to the second influence on the mind, past learning — or, as he expresses it, the influence of books. In the first three paragraphs of this section, he emphasizes that books contain the learning of the past; however, he also says that these books pose a great danger. While it is true that books transform mere facts ("short-lived actions") into vital truths ("immortal thoughts"), every book is inevitably a partial truth, biased by society's standards when it was written. Each age must create its own books and find its own truths for itself.

Following this call for each age's creating truth, Emerson dwells on other dangers in books. They are dangerous, he says, because they tempt the scholar away from original thought. Excessive respect for the brilliance of past thinkers can discourage us from exploring new ideas and seeking individualized truths.

The worst example of slavish deference to past thinkers is the bookworm, a pedant who focuses all thought on trivial matters of scholarship and ignores large, universal ideas. This type of person becomes passive and uncreative, and is the antithesis of Emerson's ideal of the creative imagination: "Man hopes. Genius creates. To create, — to create, — is the proof of a divine presence." The non-creative bookworm is more spiritually distanced from God — and, therefore, from nature — than is the thinker of original thoughts.

But the genius, too, can suffer from the undue influence of books. Emerson's example of this kind of sufferer are the English dramatic poets, who, he says, have been "Shakespearized" for two hundred years: Rather than producing new, original texts and thoughts, they mimic Shakespeare's writings. Citing an Arabic proverb that says that one fig tree fertilizes another — just like one author can inspire another — Emerson suggests that true scholars should resort to books only when their own creative genius dries up or is blocked.

The last three paragraphs of this section refer to the pleasures and benefits of reading, provided it is done correctly. There is a unique pleasure in reading. Because

ancient authors thought and felt as people do today, books defeat time, a phenomenon that Emerson argues is evidence of the transcendental oneness of human minds. Qualifying his previous insistence on individual creation, he says that he never underestimates the written word: Great thinkers are nourished by any knowledge, even that in books, although it takes a remarkably independent mind to read critically at all times. This kind of reading mines the essential vein of truth in an author while discarding the trivial or biased.

Emerson concedes that there are certain kinds of reading that are essential to an educated person: History, science, and similar subjects, which must be acquired by laborious reading and study. Foremost, schools must foster creativity rather than rely on rote memorization of texts: ". . . [schools] can only highly serve us, when they aim not to drill, but to create."

In this third section, Emerson comments on the scholar's need for action, for physical labor. He rejects the notion that the scholar should not engage in practical action. Action, while secondary to thought, is still necessary: "Action is with the scholar subordinate, but it is essential." Furthermore, not to act — declining to put principle into practice — is cowardly. The transcendental concept of the world as an expression of ourselves makes action the natural duty of a thinking person.

Emerson observes the difference between recent actions and past actions. Over time, he says, a person's past deeds are transformed into thought, but recent acts are too entangled with present feelings to undergo this transformation. He compares "the recent act" to an insect larva, which eventually metamorphoses into a butterfly — symbolic of action becoming thought.

Finally, he praises labor as valuable in and of itself, for such action is the material creatively used by the scholar. An active person has a richer existence than a scholar who merely undergoes a second-hand existence through the words and thoughts of others. The ideal life has "undulation" — a rhythm that balances, or alternates, thought and action, labor and contemplation: "A great soul will be strong to live, as well as strong to think." This cycle creates a person's character that is far superior to the fame or the honor too easily expected by a mere display of higher learning.

After Emerson has discussed how nature, books, and action educate the scholar, he now addresses the scholar's obligations to society. First, he considers these obligations in general, abstract terms; then he relates them to the particular situation of the American scholar.

The scholar's first and most important duty is to develop unflinching self-trust and a mind that will be a repository of wisdom for other people. This is a difficult task, Emerson says, because the scholar must endure poverty, hardship, tedium, solitude, and other privations while following the path of knowledge. Self-sacrifice is often called for, as demonstrated in Emerson's examples of two astronomers who spent many hours in tedious and solitary observation of space in order to make discoveries that benefited mankind. Many readers will wonder just how satisfying the reward really is when Emerson acknowledges that the scholar "is to find consolation in exercising the highest functions of human nature."

The true scholar is dedicated to preserving the wisdom of the past and is obligated to communicating the noblest thoughts and feelings to the public. This last duty means that the scholar — "who raises himself from private considerations, and breathes and lives on public illustrious thoughts" — must always remain independent in thinking and judgment, regardless of popular opinion, fad, notoriety, or expediency. Because the scholar discovers universal ideas, those held by the universal human mind, he can communicate with people of all classes and ages: "He is the world's eye. He is the world's heart."

Although he appears to lead a reclusive and benign life, the scholar must be brave because he deals in ideas, a dangerous currency. Self-trust is the source of

courage and can be traced to the transcendental conviction that the true thinker sees all thought as one; universal truth is present in all people, although not all people are aware of it. Instead of thinking individually, we live vicariously through our heroes; we seek self-worth through others when we should search for it in ourselves. The noblest ambition is to improve human nature by fulfilling our individual natures.

Emerson concludes the essay by observing that different ages in Western civilization, which he terms the Classic, the Romantic, and the Reflective (or the Philosophical) periods, have been characterized by different dominant ideas, and he acknowledges that he has neglected speaking about the importance of differences between ages while speaking perhaps too fervently about the transcendental unity of all human thought.

Emerson now proposes an evolutionary development of civilization, comparable to the development of a person from childhood to adulthood. The present age — the first half of the 1800s — is an age of criticism, especially self-criticism. Although some people find such criticism to be an inferior philosophy, Emerson believes that it is valid and important. Initiating a series of questions, he asks whether discontent with the quality of current thought and literature is such a bad thing; he answers that it is not. Dissatisfaction, he says, marks a transitional period of growth and evolution into new knowledge: "If there is any period one would desire to be born in,is it not the age of Revolution; when the old and the new stand side by side, and admit of being compared; . . . This [present] time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it."

Emerson applauds the views of English and German romantic poets like Wordsworth and Goethe, who find inspiration and nobility in the lives and work of common people. Instead of regarding only royal and aristocratic subjects as appropriate for great and philosophical literature, the Romantic writers reveal the poetry and sublimity in the lives of lower-class and working people. Their writing is full of life and vitality, and it exemplifies the transcendental doctrine of the unity of all people. Ironically, we should remember that at the beginning of the essay, Emerson advocated Americans' throwing off the European mantle that cloaks their own culture. Here, he distinguishes between a European tradition that celebrates the lives

of common people, and one that celebrates only the monarchical rule of nations: "We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe."

Making special reference to the Swedish philosopher and mystic Emanuel Swedenborg, Emerson contends that although Swedenborg has not received his due recognition, he revealed the essential connection between the human mind and the natural world, the fundamental oneness of humans and nature. Emerson finds much inspiration for his own thinking and writing in the doctrines of Swedenborg.

In his long, concluding paragraph, Emerson dwells on the romantic ideal of the individual. This fundamentally American concept, which he develops at much greater length in the essay "Self-Reliance," is America's major contribution to the world of ideas. The scholar must be independent, courageous, and original; in thinking and acting, the scholar must demonstrate that America is not the timid society it is assumed to be. We must refuse to be mere purveyors of the past's wisdom: ". . . this confidence in the unsearched might of man, belongs by all motives, by all prophecy, by all preparation, to the American Scholar," who will create a native, truly American culture.

2.1.5 Themes

The Fable of the Divided Man

The fable to which Ralph Waldo Emerson alludes in the opening of "The American Scholar" is a version of a speech given by Greek dramatist Aristophanes (c. 450 BCE–c. 388 BCE) in the *Symposium*, a famous philosophical work by Plato (c. 428 BCE–c. 348 BCE). In the original story, people were created back to back, and after the gods split them true love came from literally finding their other half. Emerson's version deviates significantly from the original. In this allegory, a whole and perfect human being was split into fragments to perform useful labor.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was a founding voice in the transcendentalism movement. One of the core tenets of transcendentalism is that every person has within themselves a true and universal wisdom, which can be grasped through self-reflection. The fable of the divided man encapsulates this idea. In the analogy, people spring from a common source but are separated and move independently, in

the same way five fingers extend from a single hand. Though they may move in different directions, they will always be part of the same structure.

However, the peril of the divided man is that within the constraints of the role they have been assigned, they forget their connection to the larger body. By analogy, they see themselves only as fingers, not as part of a hand. "The state of society is one in which the members have suffered amputation from the trunk and strut about so many walking monsters," Emerson says, "a good finger, a neck, a stomach, an elbow, but never a man." They do not understand they are part of a living community, and worse, centuries of further division and unequal power have trapped people in ever more confined roles. Furthermore, they often do not understand their own agency, only the particular drudgery required of them to accomplish their jobs. Because of this, they are not whole men, and at the worst they are merely tools.

The structure of the allegory serves to make both the analysis and the underlying idea more easily comprehensible to the listener. Couching the story in terms of a fable told in antiquity also lends it importance. This serves to underscore Emerson's point about truth being universal and accessible—though not equally—to all periods of history.

Rhetorical Devices

Ralph Waldo Emerson had practiced oration for many years as a Unitarian minister, and many of the devices used within his speech are designed to impress his message upon the listener. "The American Scholar" utilizes repetition, juxtaposed contrasts, rhetorical questioning, metaphor, and allegory to underscore Emerson's message.

Designed to be spoken rather than read, "The American Scholar" makes heavy use of repetition, particularly of the phrase "Man Thinking," which, once explained, becomes shorthand for the concept of true scholarship as holistic and active mental engagement. Sentences often utilize parallel construction, such as with "There are creative manners, there are creative actions, and creative words; manners, actions, words, that is, indicative of no custom or authority," and "Him Nature solicits with all her placid, all her monitory pictures. Him the past instructs. Him the future invites." When spoken, these repetitions evoke songs and sermons

and tie ideas closely together through similar sounds and rhythms. They aid in remembering spoken information and give the speech a quality of poetry. The speech also repeats itself structurally in defining the qualities of the scholar, shifting with some predictability between positive examples of scholarly growth and negative examples. This regular rhythm streamlines the central portion of the speech.

Throughout his explanation of what scholars are and how they grow, Emerson utilizes contrast to enumerate the benefits and the potential traps of their stages of development. For him, there is a right way and a wrong way to pursue knowledge. For example, a true scholar will use books to connect with and learn judiciously from ideas of the past, while a scholar misapplying the lesson will merely repeat the ideas they have learned from books without adding anything of their own. These paired and contrasting views of the scholar rhetorically reinforce the points Emerson is making. They clarify his meanings by providing counterexamples, and they serve as a poetic repetition, making them more memorable for the pattern and flow of the argument.

Like many orators, Emerson pauses at key points in the speech to rhetorically question the audience. Though these questions are not meant to be answered verbally, the direct address to the audience simulates the feel of conversation and implies a wish for participation from the audience, albeit a silent one. Emerson uses rhetorical questioning most often to present points he wishes to disprove, such as with "Is it so bad then? Sight is the last thing to be pitied. Would we be blind? Do we fear lest we should out see nature and God, and drink truth dry?" In his speech he is advocating for intellectual innovation, and his questions often address a consensus or conventional wisdom. The audience is invited to ask themselves the question, and Emerson anticipates that, like him, they will disagree.

Emerson uses both small, contained metaphors and extended metaphors in the form of allegory. "The divided Man" is the most prominent allegory, but he also references all things having two handles, one right and one wrong. His allegories provide a structure for larger points and help clarify complex ideas. His smaller analogies provide both concrete images to help reinforce points made and thematic resonance within the speech. For example, within a speech claiming that the human mind and nature spring from the same universal root, he compares concepts like

passing knowledge from one generation to the next with the life cycles of insects. That the insect life and human intellect can be comprehended by analogy reinforces his points about human intuition divining truth from observing nature and the interconnectedness of all things.

Scholarly Allusions

Throughout the speech, Emerson alludes to a canon of thought and literature that would have been familiar to his educated audience. These allusions give present-day readers insight into what ideas would have been considered important and influential at the time of the speech. The invocation of writers and philosophers of the past also grounds Emerson, his arguments, and his listeners in an intellectual history for which they, as scholars, are the current caretakers. Furthermore, the way in which allusions to great persons are grouped serves the rhetorical purpose of illustrating Emerson's assertion that ideas of worth and merit to the reader may come from any time period, if selected by a discerning mind.

In several places in the speech, Emerson groups allusions to figures from disparate disciplines and time periods to convey broad contentions and the observable patterns he cites as the foundation of scholarly understanding. For example, in the section in which he deals with dogmatically following written and accepted wisdom, he says: "Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views, which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon, have given, forgetful that Cicero, John Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books." Cicero (106 BCE-43 BCE), John Locke (1632-1704), and Roger Bacon (1220–92) would have been cornerstones to a Western education in the 19th century, but the three of them were each several centuries apart, with divergent interests. Cicero was a Roman orator and a stoic in the first century BCE; Locke was a social philosopher and a prominent thinker in the 18th century Enlightenment; Bacon was a 13th century advocate for the scientific method. However, Emerson is using these diverse examples to draw attention to the point that scholarly innovation exists in every century. Likewise, he uses the metonymy (using a related term to stand in for a concept) of Alfred the Great (849–99) and William Shakespeare (1564–1616) as shorthand for the best of British culture even though the king and the playwright never interacted. He also pairs Shakespeare with

the Greek philosopher Plato. His list of Carl Linnaeus (1707-78), Humphry Davy (1778–1829), and Georges Cuvier (1769–1832), all of whom were prominent and relatively recent scientists at the time of the speech, pairs like with like but also connects members of different disciplines under the larger theme of great minds and intellectual leaders. Though no names are mentioned, Emerson's opening invoking troubadours, scientists, and Greek athletes serves the same function: he is associating his Harvard listeners with gatherings of exceptional people throughout the ages. All of this reinforces the point that all of human learning is cumulative, and that the audience for the speech are the heirs to a great tradition, one that he presents not in the abstract, but as a populated and interconnected cadre of great minds throughout history.

Not all of the names fall into this pattern, and sometimes Emerson is operating in a more informative mode. His treatment of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), in particular, reads as if he does not expect the listeners to be familiar with his subject, but encourages them to learn more. In talking about the literature of ordinary people, the writers he cites are examples rather than stand-ins for other concepts. However, these still contribute to the overall feel of the piece as a celebration of the intellectual history being bequeathed to the listeners.

2.1.6 Sum up

"The American Scholar" is an essay by Ralph Waldo Emerson in which he calls for the development of a new type of scholar in America who is independent and self-reliant. Emerson argues that the traditional European model of scholarship is outdated and that American scholars should break free from it and develop their own unique voice and perspective. He believes that the American scholar should be influenced primarily by nature, which provides a source of spiritual and intellectual inspiration. He also stresses the importance of personal experience, intellectual curiosity, and creative imagination in shaping the American scholar. Through this essay, Emerson encourages the creation of a new generation of scholars who are unafraid to challenge the status quo and who are guided by their own instincts and ideas. He believes that this kind of scholar will be a leader in shaping a distinct American culture and intellectual tradition.

2.1.7 Glossary

1. **Troubadours -** a class of lyric poets and poet-musicians, they lived in southern France in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries and composed poems of love and chivalry.
2. **Sere-** withered.
3. **Constellation-** Harp another name for Lyra, a constellation of stars in the northern hemisphere; it contains Vega, the fourth brightest star in the heavens.
4. **monitory** - a warning.
5. **refractory** - unruly.
6. **Cicero, Marcus Tullius (106-43 B.C.)-** A Roman statesman and Stoic philosopher, he is best known for his speech making.
7. **Locke, John (1632-1704)-** An English philosopher, Locke developed a theory of cognition that denied the existence of innate ideas and asserted that all thought is based on our senses. His works influenced American Puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards, who modified Puritan doctrine to allow for more play of reason and intellect, building a foundation for Unitarianism and, eventually, transcendentalism.
8. **Bacon, Francis (1561-1626)-** An English essayist, statesman, and philosopher, he proposed a theory called the inductive method, a scientific knowledge based on observation and experiment.
9. **Third Estate -** The "common people" under the French monarchy; the clergy and nobles formed the first two estates.
10. **Emendators** Those who make textual corrections.

2.1.8 Check Your Progress

Short Answers:

1. What is the significance of Emerson's term "Man Thinking" in "The American Scholar"?

2. How does Emerson describe the influence of nature on the scholar?

3. What role do books play in the development of a scholar according to Emerson?

4. Why does Emerson emphasize the importance of action for a scholar?

5. What dangers does Emerson associate with over-reliance on books?

6. In what ways does Emerson advocate for American intellectual independence in "The American Scholar"?

7. How does Emerson define the scholar's duty to society?

8. What is Emerson's view on the relationship between the past and the present for scholars?

9. How does Emerson suggest scholars should approach learning and knowledge?

10. Why does Emerson believe that scholars should be inspired by nature?

Essay Questions:

1. Discuss the concept of "Man Thinking" as presented by Emerson in "The American Scholar."
2. Analyze Emerson's views on the role of nature in the education and development of the American scholar.

3. Evaluate Emerson's perspective on the use and potential misuse of books. Why does he caution against over-reliance on books, and what alternative does he suggest?

4. Examine the importance of action in Emerson's vision of the ideal scholar. How does he believe action complements and enhances scholarly pursuits?

5. Explore Emerson's call for American intellectual independence in "The American Scholar."

6. What are the dangers Emerson sees in conformity and societal expectations for scholars?
7. Discuss Emerson's views on the relationship between past and present knowledge.

8. Analyze Emerson's idea of the scholar's duty to society. What responsibilities does he assign to scholars, and how does he envision their role in social progress?

SECTION 2.2: ADVICE TO YOUTH – MARK TWAIN

2.2.1 About Mark Twain

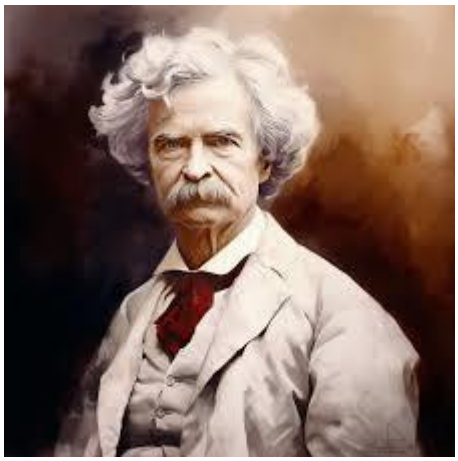
Mark Twain (a.k.a., Samuel Longhorne Clemens) was born in the little town of Florida, Missouri, on November 30, 1835, shortly after his family had moved there from Tennessee. When Twain was about four, his family moved again, this time to Hannibal, Missouri, a small town of about five hundred people.

Mark Twain's father was a lawyer by profession but was only mildly successful. He was, however, highly intelligent and a stern disciplinarian. Twain's mother, a southern belle in her youth, had a natural sense of humor, was emotional, and was known to be particularly fond of animals and unfortunate human beings. Although the family was not wealthy, Twain apparently had a happy and secure childhood.

Early Career

Mark Twain's father died when he was twelve years old and, for the next ten years, he was an apprentice printer and then a printer both in Hannibal and in New

York City. Hoping to find his fortune, he conceived a wild scheme of making a fortune in South America. On a riverboat to New Orleans, he met a famous riverboat pilot who promised to teach him the trade for five hundred dollars. After completing his training, Twain piloted riverboats along the Mississippi for four years. During this time, he became familiar with the towns along the mighty River and became acquainted with the characters who would later inhabit many of his novels, especially *Tom Sawyer* and *Huck Finn.*



When the Civil War began, Twain's allegiance tended to be Southern due to his Southern heritage, and he briefly served in the Confederate militia. Twain's brother Orion convinced him to go west on an expedition, a trip which became the subject matter of a later work, *Roughing It*.

Writing Career

Even though some of his letters and accounts of traveling had been published, Twain actually launched his literary career with the short story "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," published in 1865. This story brought him national attention, and Twain devoted the major portion of the rest of his life to literary endeavors. In addition to *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, some of Twain's most popular and widely read works include novels such as *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), and *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894), as well as collections of short stories and essays, such as *The 1,000,000 Bank-Note and Other Stories* (1893), *The*

Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg and Other Essays (1900), and *What Is Man?* (1906).

Mark Twain, one of America's first and foremost realists and humanists, was born in 1835 during the appearance of Haley's Comet, and he died during the next appearance of Haley's Comet, 75 years later.

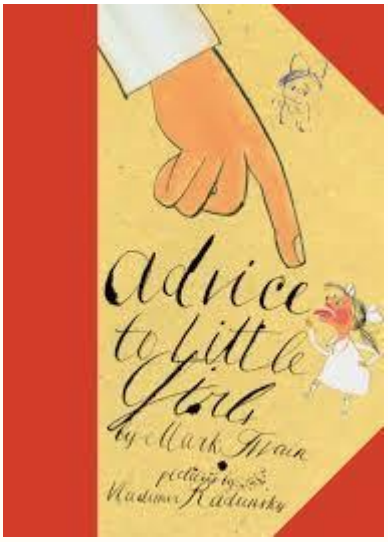
2.2.2 Summary

In the essay “Advice to Youth” by Mark Twain, the author provides humorous and satirical advice to young people. He starts by emphasizing the importance of obeying parents, as they usually have better judgment and can make life difficult if disobeyed. Twain also advises being respectful to superiors, strangers, and others, but suggests hitting someone with a brick if they offend you, as long as it was not intentional.

He discusses the importance of waking up early, jokingly suggesting that getting up with a lark (a bird) is beneficial, and with proper training, one can make the lark wake up at a later time. Twain then addresses the topic of lying, advising caution as lies are likely to be discovered. He acknowledges that lying is sometimes necessary but urges temperance and skillful execution, as a poorly crafted lie can have long-lasting negative consequences.

Twain points out the durability of lies compared to the fleeting nature of the truth, using examples from history. He cautions against spreading false rumors, except when it comes to slander, which he suggests can endure. He encourages young people to avoid feeble lies and instead choose to tell the truth outright.

The essay also touches on the importance of handling firearms responsibly, illustrating the potential dangers of careless behavior. Twain humorously suggests that old unloaded firearms can be more deadly than loaded ones, as they can be pointed and fired without aiming or taking any precautions.



Finally, he advises the young audience to read good books for personal improvement. He humorously recommends a limited selection of books, including religious and moral texts, but does so sarcastically, suggesting a narrow-minded approach to reading.

Overall, Twain's essay combines wit, irony, and satire to deliver unconventional advice while poking fun at societal norms and expectations.

2.2.3 Analysis

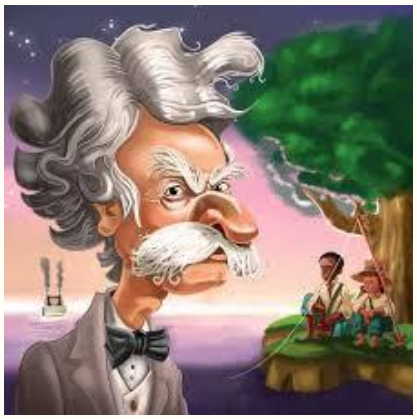
Mark Twain's "Advice to Youth" is a satirical piece that stands out for its clever use of humor and irony to convey its underlying message. Twain adopts a playful and witty tone throughout the text, which immediately grabs the reader's attention. His intention is not to offer sincere or practical advice, but rather to challenge societal norms and provoke thought.

The use of humor is a key aspect of the text. Twain presents exaggerated and outlandish suggestions to young people, which serve to highlight the absurdity of certain societal expectations and traditional wisdom. For example, his recommendation to hit someone with a brick if they offend you, or the notion that a feeble lie can be more lasting than an average truth. These absurd statements are

intentionally crafted to elicit laughter and invite the reader to question the validity of conventional advice.

Irony is another crucial element in Twain's satirical approach. By intentionally contradicting common wisdom and offering unconventional advice, he highlights the hypocrisy and flaws in societal expectations. For instance, he sarcastically suggests that young people should always obey their parents when they are present because parents think they know better, even though the reader understands the importance of independent thinking and individual judgment.

Through his ironic and humorous style, Twain pokes fun at authority figures, challenging the notion that adults always possess superior wisdom. He encourages young people to question and think for themselves, rather than blindly following the advice of their elders. By subverting traditional notions of authority, Twain promotes individuality and critical thinking.



The text's clever use of language adds to its appreciation. Twain's witty phrasing and clever wordplay contribute to the overall satirical effect. He employs rhetorical devices such as **exaggeration, sarcasm, and irony** to convey his message effectively. The humorous anecdotes and examples he provides further engage the reader and make the text memorable.

Ultimately, "Advice to Youth" prompts readers to reflect on the nature of advice itself and the expectations placed on young individuals. Twain's satirical

approach encourages critical thinking, questioning of authority, and the importance of individual judgment. The text's humor, irony, and thought-provoking statements make it an enjoyable and insightful piece of literature.

2.2.4 Significance of Title

The title of the text, "Advice to Youth," immediately establishes the purpose and intended audience of the piece. It suggests that the text will offer guidance, instruction, or counsel specifically directed towards young people. The title sets up an expectation that the content will provide valuable and meaningful advice for the target audience.

However, the significance of the title lies in the ironic contrast between the expected sincerity of the advice and the actual content of the text. Instead of offering genuine and practical guidance, Mark Twain presents exaggerated, absurd, and contradictory recommendations. The title, therefore, serves as a tool for irony and satire.

By using a straightforward and seemingly sincere title, Twain lures the reader into expecting genuine advice. This contrast between the title and the content creates a sense of surprise and humor when readers encounter the unconventional suggestions within the text. Twain's intention is to subvert the traditional expectations associated with advice-giving, challenging the notion that all advice should be taken seriously and followed without question.

The ironic significance of the title also aligns with the overall satirical nature of the text. Twain uses humor and irony to critique societal norms, challenge authority, and provoke thought. By presenting unconventional and exaggerated advice under the guise of a straightforward title, Twain undermines conventional wisdom and encourages readers to question established norms and think for themselves.

In this way, the title "Advice to Youth" serves as a clever and effective tool to engage the reader, create an initial expectation, and then subvert those expectations through the satirical content of the text. It sets up a contrast between the anticipated sincerity and the actual satirical nature of the advice, highlighting Twain's intention to challenge conventional wisdom and provoke critical thinking.

2.2.5 Literary Devices

Irony:

Irony is a literary technique that involves using language to convey a meaning that is the opposite of its literal interpretation. Mark Twain employs irony in “Advice to Youth” to criticize societal norms and expectations. He presents exaggerated and absurd advice that goes against common sense and challenges conventional wisdom.

One example of irony in the text is Twain’s advice on how to handle a person who offends you. He suggests not resorting to extreme measures but instead watching for an opportunity to hit the person with a brick. This advice is intentionally absurd and contradicts the expected norm of resolving conflicts peacefully and without violence. By presenting such extreme and impractical solutions, Twain highlights the ridiculousness of instigation, revenge and an apology, making it prominent that one cannot be respectful to another just because he is elder to him. Both the older one and the younger one are answerable for the offence caused as instigation is also an offence. Just like the older one can apologize after instigating, the younger one can also apologize immediately after hitting the person with a brick because of that same instigation.

Sarcasm:

Sarcasm is a form of irony that involves using mocking or bitter language to convey contempt or ridicule. Throughout the text, Twain employs a sarcastic tone to highlight the absurdity of certain societal expectations and authority figures.

For instance, Twain sarcastically advises young people to always obey their parents when they are present because, in his ironic view, parents always know better. He undermines the authority of parents by suggesting that it is more profitable to humor their supposed superiority rather than acting on one’s own judgment. This sarcastic advice challenges the assumption that parents are always right and suggests a more critical and independent approach to decision-making.

Another example of sarcasm can be seen in Twain’s discussion of lying. He sarcastically refers to lying as a “gracious and beautiful art” and encourages young

people to practice it diligently, albeit with temperance and precision. This sarcastic advice undermines the moral virtue of honesty in a society where older people can resort to lying for their selfish profit. To survive in such a society, it is necessary that children start learning the art of lying from a very young age so that years of study, thought, practice and experience can make lying faultless, graceful and profitable.

Through the use of irony and sarcasm, Twain exposes the absurdities and contradictions in societal expectations and authority figures. He challenges conventional wisdom and encourages readers to question and think critically about the advice they receive. The irony and sarcasm in the text serve as satirical devices that provoke thought, highlight societal shortcomings, and entertain the reader with their humorous and exaggerated nature.

Parallelism:

The use of parallelism in “Advice to Youth” serves several significant purposes. Parallelism is a rhetorical device that involves the repetition of grammatical structures, phrases, or ideas to create a pattern and emphasize certain points. In this text, parallelism is used to convey Twain’s satirical message, enhance the comedic effect, and emphasize the subversion of traditional advice.

Firstly, parallelism helps to reinforce the satirical nature of the text. Twain presents a series of exaggerated and absurd statements, and the use of parallel structure draws attention to the absurdity by repeating similar patterns. This creates a humorous effect and highlights the irony in the usual advice given to children which

is supposed to be ‘ didactic and instructive’. For example, Twain advises young people to “be respectful to your superiors, if you have any, also to strangers, and sometimes to others.” The repetition of the phrase “be respectful” through parallel structure emphasizes the sarcastic and exaggerated nature of the advice.

Secondly, parallelism enhances the comedic effect of the text. The repeated patterns and structures create a rhythm and predictability that can be humorous when the content being repeated is unexpected or absurd. Twain’s use of parallelism helps to create a playful and witty tone, engaging the reader and amplifying the comedic impact of his unconventional advice.

Furthermore, parallelism in “Advice to Youth” serves to emphasize the subversion of traditional advice and societal expectations. By using parallel structures to present unconventional ideas, Twain draws attention to the contrast between his advice and the expected norms. This contrast highlights the irony and challenges the conventional wisdom that young people are often presented with. It prompts readers to question the validity of conventional advice and encourages them to think critically about societal expectations.

Overall, the use of parallelism in “Advice to Youth” contributes to the satirical tone, enhances the comedic effect, and emphasizes the subversion of traditional advice. It is a rhetorical device that helps convey Twain’s message in a memorable and impactful way, engaging the reader and prompting them to question societal norms and expectations.

Innuendo:

Innuendo is the use of indirect or subtle suggestions, hints, or insinuations. Twain employs innuendo to criticize societal expectations and norms by presenting them in a sly and suggestive manner. For example, when he advises the youth to “watch your chance and hit [someone] with a brick” if they are in doubt about the person’s offense, it is an exaggerated and absurd suggestion that implies the folly of resorting to violence instead of seeking resolution through peaceful means. The

innuendo here lies in the suggestion that hitting someone with a brick is an appropriate response to an offense.

Paradox:

Paradox refers to a statement or situation that appears self-contradictory or contrary to common sense but may contain a hidden truth or deeper meaning. Twain employs paradox in “Advice to Youth” to challenge conventional wisdom and expose the absurdity of certain societal expectations. For instance, when he advises the youth to “never handle firearms carelessly” and then goes on to describe the dangers of even unloaded firearms, it creates a paradoxical situation. The paradox lies in the notion that even unloaded firearms can be deadly, highlighting the inherent risks associated with their careless handling.

2.2.6 Sum up

A Bunch of Advice

The text is Twain’s address to the young minds and bodies who are at the cusp (point) of facing the world and instructional blueprint to tackle what it puts in front of them.

It is blatantly clear that the write has been urged to share his wisdom and had taken the opportunity to pen a unique strategy for the youth of follow.

He believes youth is the stage where the people are like clay and start to cement their habits, values, and character that would last for their entire lives.

Obedience to Parents

The first pearl of wisdom is to be obedient to one’s parents but only when they can observe you. It helps in keeping them satiated and serves well for the future. He asks them to be respectful to others, to a point.

Also, if someone hurts or insults you, then bide your time for the most opportune moment to hit back. He advises against extreme and quick reactions.

He clarifies that being explosive and belligerent is outdated and primitive so use guile and subtly to exact revenge with people.

Punctuality

Next, he advises to get into a good routine in terms of sleep and develop a habit of waking up early. But, he finds it even more impressive if one can train a bird to give a wakeup call as late as possible in the morning.

That way one can sleep longer and still be considered disciplined. He goes on to instruct young people to develop the art and skills of lying with immaculate proficiency.

He informs that lies are immortal and outlive even truths of the age. However, if a lie is told without perfection it results in irreparable damage to an individual's reputation especially a young person. He does not ask youth to stick with honesty always but only in cases when they cannot lie flawlessly.

Guns and Ammunition

Next, he moves to the issue of using guns and ammunition. He asks youth to stay clear of such dangerous weapons which in hands of the untrained tyro can wreak more havoc than witnessed in wars.

He also advises young people to delve into books and add to their reservoir of knowledge. However, he warns them against choosing books without careful deliberation and thought. He encourages them to read works on religion, spirituality, morality, etc like Robertson's sermons, etc.

Ending

He ends the text on a sarcastic note. He envisages that once young people have completely developed their personalities and characters according to his advice, they will be shocked to see how similar they end up becoming to the rest of the people.

2.2.7 Important Quotes and Explanation:

"Always obey your parents, when they are present."

This quote exemplifies Twain's use of irony. The implication is that one might behave differently when parents are not around, subtly mocking the inconsistency in children's behavior and the superficiality of parental authority.

"Be respectful to your superiors, if you have any, also to strangers, and sometimes to others."

Twain's advice here highlights the arbitrary nature of social hierarchies and respect. By saying "if you have any," he suggests that the concept of 'superiors' can be questionable. Adding "sometimes to others" pokes fun at the conditional nature of politeness and respect in society.

"Now as to the matter of lying. You want to be very careful about lying; otherwise you are nearly sure to get caught."

This quote is a direct satire on moral teachings about honesty. Instead of advocating for truthfulness, Twain humorously advises caution to avoid getting caught, thus critiquing the often hypocritical moral instructions given to youth.

"If at first you don't succeed, try again. Then quit. No use being a fool about it."

Twain's twist on the famous motivational saying underscores his cynicism about persistence. This quote suggests practicality over idealism, advocating for knowing when to give up instead of blindly persevering.

"Work is a necessary evil to be avoided."

Here, Twain satirizes the commonly glorified notion of hard work. By calling it a "necessary evil," he points to the often unpleasant nature of labor and challenges the romanticization of industriousness.

"Never handle firearms carelessly. The majority of people have caused themselves more injury than they have done good by using firearms carelessly."

Twain uses this advice to touch on the serious topic of gun safety with a touch of his characteristic humor. It's a rare moment in the essay where his advice borders on earnest, though still wrapped in satire.

2.2.8 Glossary

1. Anesthesia (noun) - insensitivity to pain, especially through medical intervention
2. Beseechingly (adverb) - asks urgently; beg with urgency
3. Didactic (adjective) - instructive; educational, usually in a condescending way
4. Diligence (noun) - hard work or effort
5. Elegance (noun) - the quality of being graceful and stylish
6. Eminence (noun) - fame; elevated standing in a profession; prestige
7. Inestimable (adjective) - too great to measure
8. Meddle (verb) - interfere or intervene
9. Precepts (noun) - rules intended to regulate behavior; principles
10. Satire (noun) - use of humor, irony, exaggeration or ridicule to criticize people
11. Slander (noun) - false and damaging statements about someone's reputation
12. Tedious (adjective) - tiresome; boring; monotonous
13. Temperate (adjective) - moderate; restrained

2.2.9 Check Your Progress

Short Questions

1. What is the primary purpose of Mark Twain's "Advice to Youth"?
2. What does Mark Twain suggest about obedience in his essay?
3. How does Mark Twain approach the topic of lying in his advice?
4. What is Mark Twain's ironic suggestion regarding respect for elders?
5. What humorous advice does Mark Twain give about personal hygiene?
6. What does Mark Twain say about handling firearms?

7. What advice does Mark Twain give regarding reading habits?

8. Which literary device is predominantly used in "Advice to Youth"?

9. Describe the tone Mark Twain uses in "Advice to Youth."

10. Why does Mark Twain advise against throwing stones at animals?

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the use of satire in Mark Twain's "Advice to Youth."
2. Discuss the theme of obedience in "Advice to Youth."
3. Examine the structure of "Advice to Youth." How does Twain's choice of words and arrangement of ideas contribute to the overall effectiveness of his satire?

4. How does Mark Twain address the concept of morality in "Advice to Youth"? Compare his satirical advice on lying and respect for elders with traditional moral teachings.

5. Discuss the relevance of Mark Twain's "Advice to Youth" in today's society. Are his observations still applicable? Provide examples to support your argument.

6. Consider the literary devices used by Twain in "Advice to Youth." How do irony, exaggeration, and understatement work together to enhance the satirical nature of the essay?

7. Evaluate Twain's perspective on education as implied in "Advice to Youth." How does he suggest young people should approach learning and intellectual development?

8. Analyze the tone of "Advice to Youth." How does Twain's playful and irreverent tone affect the reader's perception of the advice being given?

9. What does "Advice to Youth" reveal about Mark Twain's views on human nature and societal norms? Use specific examples from the text to support your analysis.

10. Discuss the impact of Twain's "Advice to Youth" on the reader. How does his unconventional approach to giving advice challenge the reader's preconceived notions about youth and adulthood?

Self-Assessment Questions:

RALPH WALDO EMERSON: THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

2MARKS

1.What is the central theme of Emerson's essay The American Scholar?

Answer: The central theme of Emerson's essay is the need for American intellectual independence and self-reliance, advocating for scholars to develop original thought and contribute uniquely to American culture.

2. What is the central theme of Emerson's essay The American Scholar?

Answer: The central theme of Emerson's essay is the need for American intellectual independence and self-reliance, advocating for scholars to develop original thought and contribute uniquely to American culture.

3. Examine the relationship between Emerson’s ideas in The American Scholar and his views on nature.

Answer: Emerson’s ideas in The American Scholar reflect his transcendental belief in nature as a source of inspiration and insight. He sees nature as a key influence that should inform the scholar’s understanding and creativity.

4. What does Emerson suggest is the primary duty of a scholar?

Answer: Emerson suggests that the primary duty of a scholar is to develop original thought, contribute new ideas to the intellectual discourse, and advance knowledge in a meaningful way.

5. Compare Emerson's view of the scholar with that of a traditional academic model.

Answer: Emerson's view of the scholar emphasizes independence and originality, while a traditional academic model often focuses on adherence to established knowledge and methodologies. Emerson's model advocates for more creative and self-directed scholarship.

5 MARKS

1. Describe the main argument Emerson makes about the role of the scholar in society. How does he define the scholar's purpose?

2. Summarize Emerson's views on the relationship between nature and the scholar's intellectual development.

3. Analyze the structure of Emerson's essay. How does he use rhetoric to persuade his audience of his views on scholarship?

4. Based on Emerson's ideas, suggest ways in which contemporary scholars could improve their engagement with both their field and society.

8 MARKS

1. Assess Emerson's concept of intellectual independence. Do you think it is still relevant today? Justify your position with examples.

2. Examine how Emerson uses metaphors and imagery in "The American Scholar" to convey his ideas. What impact do these literary devices have on the reader's understanding?

3. Critique the effectiveness of Emerson's call for a new intellectual approach in "The American Scholar." What are the strengths and weaknesses of his argument?

4. How can the ideas presented in "The American Scholar" influence current debates on the role of education in personal and societal development? Provide a detailed analysis.

MARK TWAIN- ADVICE TO YOUTH

2 MARKS

1. What is the central theme of Twain's "Advice to Youth"?

Answer: The central theme is the importance of adhering to societal norms and moral values while navigating youth.

2. List two pieces of advice Twain gives to youth in his essay.

Answer: Twain advises against lying and advises not to drink alcohol.

3. What does Twain suggest about the influence of societal expectations on youth behavior?

Answer: Twain suggests that societal expectations play a crucial role in guiding and shaping youth behavior towards moral and ethical conduct.

4. How can Twain's advice on avoiding lies be applied in a modern educational setting?

Answer: In a modern educational setting, students can apply Twain's advice by promoting honesty in academic work and fostering a culture of trust and integrity.

5. Evaluate the relevance of Twain's advice on avoiding lies in today's digital age.

Answer: Twain's advice remains relevant as honesty is crucial in maintaining credibility and trust, especially in the digital age where information is widely shared and scrutinized.

5 MARKS

1. Describe the role of authority in Twain's advice to youth. How does Twain view authority figures?

2. Illustrate how Twain’s advice on lying can be applied to personal integrity in a professional setting.

3. Evaluate the effectiveness of Twain's advice. Do you think his recommendations are practical? Why or why not?

4. Compare Twain's advice on self-discipline with another piece of literature or philosophy. What are the similarities and differences?

8 MARKS

1. Evaluate the relevance of Twain’s advice in today’s society. Do you think his suggestions are still applicable, or have societal values shifted significantly?

2. Discuss Twain's views on self-control and discipline. How does he suggest young people should manage their impulses and desires?

3. Summarize the main points of Twain's "Advice to Youth." What key pieces of advice does Twain offer?

Unit III

Drama

UNIT – III DRAMA

Content of Unit- III

Edward Albee – *The Zoo Story*

Course Objectives:

1. Analyze the play through multiple academic lenses, including queer theory, absurdism, and existentialism.
2. Students will be able to discuss the play's themes and consider multiple interpretations.
3. Identify current and historical developments in studies of British drama
4. Be able to develop an ability to analyze and assess social, moral, ethical and aesthetic values
5. To introduce students to major movements related to drama through the study of selected texts
6. To create literary sensibility in students and expose them to artistic and innovative use of language by writers and to various worldviews
7. To enhance literary and linguistic competence of students.

SECTION 3.1: *THE ZOO STORY* – EDWARD ALBEE

3.1.1 Introduction to Edward Albee

Edward Albee (born March 12, 1928, Washington, D.C., U.S.—died September 16, 2016, Montauk, New York) was an American dramatist and theatrical producer best known for his play Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (1962), which displays slashing insight and witty dialogue in its gruesome portrayal of married life.

Albee was the adopted child of a father who had for a time been the assistant general manager of a chain of vaudeville theatres then partially owned by the Albee family. At the time of Albee's adoption, though, both his parents were involved with

owning and showing saddle horses. He had a difficult relationship with his parents, particularly with his mother, whom he saw as distant and unloving. Albee grew up in New York City and nearby Westchester county. He was educated at Choate School (graduated 1946) and at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut (1946–47). He wrote poetry and an unpublished novel but turned to plays in the late 1950s.

Among Albee's early one-act plays, The Zoo Story (1959), The Sandbox (1959), and The American Dream (1961) were the most successful and established him as an astute critic of American values. But it is his first full-length play, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (film 1966), that remains his most important work. In this play a middle-aged professor, his wife, and a younger couple engage one night in an unrestrained drinking bout that is filled with malicious games, insults, humiliations, betrayals, savage witticisms, and painful, self-revealing confrontations. *Virginia Woolf* won immediate acclaim and established Albee as a major American playwright.

It was followed by a number of full-length works—including *A Delicate Balance* (1966; winner of a Pulitzer Prize), which was based in part on his mother's witty alcoholic sister, and *Three Tall Women* (1994; Pulitzer Prize). The latter play deals with Albee's perceptions and feelings about his mother and is a remarkable portrait achieved by presenting the interaction of three women, who resemble each other, at different stages of life. Among his other plays are Tiny Alice (1965), which begins as a philosophical discussion between a lawyer and a cardinal; Seascape (1975; also winner of a Pulitzer Prize), a poetic exploration of evolution; and *The Play About the Baby* (1998), on the mysteries of birth and parenthood.

Albee continued to dissect American morality in plays such as The Goat; or, Who Is Sylvia? (2002), which depicts the disintegration of a marriage in the wake of the revelation that the husband has engaged in bestiality. In *Occupant* (2001), Albee imagines the sculptor Louise Nevelson being interviewed after her death. Albee also expanded *The Zoo Story* into a two-act play, called *Peter and Jerry* (2004). (The play was re-titled *At Home at the Zoo* in 2009.) The absurdist *Me, Myself, & I* (2007) trenchantly analyzes the relationship between a mother and her twin sons.

In addition to writing, Albee produced a number of plays and lectured at schools throughout the country. He was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 1996. A compilation of his essays and personal anecdotes, *Stretching My Mind*, was published in 2005. That year Albee also received a Tony Award for lifetime achievement.

3.1.2 Background of *The Zoo Story*

Edward Albee wrote *The Zoo Story* in less than three weeks in 1958, and originally titled it Peter and Jerry. Although Albee is now widely considered to be among America's greatest living playwrights, this was his first foray into drama writing. It was rejected by producers in New York and was first staged at the Schiller Theater in West Berlin in 1959.

The one-act play revolves around a conversation between Peter, a middle-class publishing executive, and Jerry, an eccentric transient. They chat cordially in Central Park, but their discussion gradually descends into violence. In a 2011 interview, Albee admitted that he was more interested in Jerry's perspectives than Peter's, which is why the play is structured around Peter's reactions to Jerry's odd behavior. "He was the more interesting person, the more complex person," Albee commented. "An outsider is always more interesting than an establishment figure" (Wallenberg).

The Zoo Story was first performed in the United States in 1960 at the Provincetown Playhouse. It was very well-received critically, and Albee was credited with bringing the techniques of the European Theater of the Absurd to American drama. The popularity of *The Zoo Story* laid the groundwork for the success of other Albee plays over the next few years, including *The Sandbox* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Although Albee's dramatic style evolved greatly over his long career, he always remained fascinated with the characters and ideas he addressed in *The Zoo Story*. In 2004, he wrote *Home life*, a one-act prequel to *The Zoo Story*. Homelife depicts Peter's marriage to his wife, Ann, and ends as Peter leaves

for Central Park for his fateful meeting with Jerry. Albee, who still retained full control over his plays, stopped granting professional theatre companies permission to perform *The Zoo Story* at this time. Any professional performance had to include Home life as a first act. The double-act show is titled Edward Albee's At Home at the Zoo. This move was extremely controversial in the theatre community because *The Zoo Story* had, at this point, been a classic work for decades. (Non-professional and college companies are still allowed to perform *The Zoo Story* as a single act.)

3.1.3 Summary

Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story* is a long one act play in which "nothing happens" except conversation—until the violent ending. Shorn of much of the richness of Albee's utterly arresting language, and his astonishing nuances of psychological attack and retreat, the play can be described as follows:

A man named Peter, a complacent publishing executive of middle age and upper-middle income, is comfortably reading a book on his favorite bench in New York's Central Park on a sunny afternoon. Along comes Jerry, an aggressive, seedy, erratic loner. Jerry announces that he has been to the (Central Park) Zoo and eventually gets Peter, who clearly would rather be left alone, to put down his book and actually enter into a conversation. With pushy questions, Jerry learns that Peter lives on the fashionable East Side of the Park (they are near Fifth Avenue and 74th Street), that the firm for which he works publishes textbooks, and that his household is female-dominated: one wife, two daughters, two cats, and two parakeets. Jerry easily guesses that Peter would rather have a dog than cats and that he wishes he had a son. More perceptively, Jerry guesses that there will be no more children, and that that decision was made by Peter's wife. Ruefully, Peter admits the truth of these guesses.

The subjects of the Zoo and Jerry's visit to it come up several times, at one of which Jerry says mysteriously, "You'll read about it in the papers tomorrow, if you don't see it on your TV tonight." The play never completely clarifies this remark. Some critic think, because of statements Jerry makes about the animals, that he

may have released some from their cages, while others think Jerry is talking about a death which has not yet happened, which might be headlined “Murder Near Central Park Zoo.”

The focus now turns to Jerry, who tells Peter that he walked all the way up Fifth Avenue from Washington Square to the Zoo, a trip of over fifty blocks. Adding Washington Square to Jerry’s appearance and behavior, Peter assumes that Jerry lives in Greenwich Village, which in 1960, the year the play was first produced, was the principal “bohemian” section of Manhattan. Jerry says no, that he lives across the Park on the (then slum-ridden) West Side, and took the subway downtown for the express purpose of walking back up Fifth Avenue. No reason is given for this but Jerry “explains” it in one of the most quoted sentences of the play: “sometimes a person has to go a very long distance out of his way to come back a short distance correctly.” It is possible that Jerry saw his trip up Fifth Avenue, which gradually improves from the addicts and prostitutes of Washington Square to such bastions of prosperity as the famous Plaza Hotel, as a symbolic journey through the American class system to the source of his problem—not millionaire’s row but the affluent, indifferent upper middle class.

Without any prompting from Peter, Jerry describes his living arrangements: a tiny room in a rooming house, with a very short list of possessions; some clothes, a can-opener and hotplate, eating utensils, empty picture frames, a few books, a deck of pornographic playing cards, an old typewriter, and a box with many unanswered “Please!” letters and “When?” letters. Jerry’s building is like something out of Dante’s *Inferno,* with several different kinds of suffering on each floor, including a woman Jerry has never seen who cries all the time, a black “queen” who plucks his eyebrows “with Buddhist concentration” and hogs the bathroom, and a disgusting landlady whom Jerry describes vividly. Jerry also reveals the loss of both parents—his mother to whoring and drinking and his father to drinking and an encounter with “a somewhat moving city omnibus”—events that seem to have had little emotional effect on him. Jerry’s love life is also discussed: an early and very intense homosexual infatuation and, at present, one-night stands with nameless women whom he never sees again.

It is clear in this section of the play that Jerry is trying to make Peter understand something about loneliness and suffering—not so much Jerry's own pain, which he treats cynically, but the pain of the people in his building, the Zoo animals isolated in their cages, and more generally the societal dregs that Peter is more comfortable not having to think about. Peter is repelled by Jerry's information but not moved except to exasperation and discomfort. Desperate to communicate with Peter or at least to teach him something about the difficulties of communication, Jerry comes up with "The Story of Jerry and the Dog." It is a long, disgusting, and eventually pathetic tale of his attempt to find some kind of communication, or at least relationship, with the vile landlady's vile dog (the hound who guards the entrance to Jerry's particular hell). Jerry fails to reach the dog, though he goes from trying to kill it with kindness to just plain trying to kill it; the two finally achieve mutual indifference, and Jerry gains free entry to the building without being attacked, "if that much further loss can be said to be gain."

Jerry also fails to reach Peter, who is bewildered but not moved by this story and who prepares to leave his now-disturbed sanctuary for his comfortable home. Desperately grasping at one last chance, Jerry tickles Peter, then punches him on the arm and pushes him to the ground. He challenges Peter to fight for "his" bench, but Peter will not. Jerry produces a knife, which he throws on the ground between them. He grabs Peter, slapping and taunting him ("fight for your manhood, you pathetic little vegetable") until Peter, at last enraged, picks up the knife. Even then, as Albee points out, "Peter holds the knife with a firm arm, but far in front of him, not to attack, but to defend." Jerry says,"So be it," and "With a rush he charges Peter and impales himself on the knife."

Peter is paralyzed. Jerry *thanks* Peter and hurries him away for his own safety, reminding Peter to take his book from "your bench . . . my bench, rather." Peter runs off, crying "Oh, my God!" Jerry echoes these words with "a combination of scornful mimicry and supplication," and dies.

Portions of Albee's dialogue and stage directions have been included in this summary in an attempt to indicate the huge importance of Albee's incisive use of language and psychology in the play. The play resides, in fact, not in the physical actions of the plot (except the killing at the end) but in the acuteness (not to mention

the shocking quality) of the language, in the range of kinds of aggression shown by Jerry—from insult and assault to the subtlest of insinuations—and even in the symbolism which becomes more apparent near the end of the action.

3.1.4 Analysis

The whole play is set near a bench in New York City's Central Park.

Peter, a clean-cut man in his mid-forties, sits on the bench, reading and smoking a pipe. He is approached by Jerry, a carelessly dressed man characterized by his “great weariness” (1). Without any provocation, Jerry states that he is coming from the zoo, and asks Peter to confirm that he is going north.

Peter complies, clearly uninterested in conversation. Nevertheless, Jerry continues to talk to him, and warns that Peter will probably get cancer from the pipe he is smoking. As Jerry expounds on this prognosis, he cannot find the word he is looking for. Peter suggests ‘prosthesis’, which leads Jerry to the conclusion that Peter is educated.

Jerry asks Peter if they can talk. Peter reluctantly agrees, and has to insist on his willingness when Jerry notices his reluctance. Jerry immediately tells Peter again that he has come from the zoo. Though Jerry converses awkwardly and seems to be ignoring Peter's small-talk, Peter makes his best effort to stay amiable. We learn that Peter has a wife, two daughters, and two parakeets, and that he seems to enjoy a normal upper-middle class life. Jerry asks whether Peter would prefer having sons, and Peter admits that he would. However, he quickly becomes offended when Jerry insinuates that Peter cannot have any more children, without any evidence on which to base that assumption.

Peter soon realizes that he has let Jerry get under his skin, and he forces himself to calm down. Jerry confides that he rarely talks to other people, but that he loves to know everything about people he does talk to. This admission makes Peter distinctly uncomfortable.

The conversation turns to Peter’s pets; Jerry implies that Peter has been emasculated by his wife and daughters' insistence on having cats instead of dogs.

Jerry then subjects Peter to a series of rapid-fire questions about where he lives, his job, his income, and his favorite authors. We learn that Peter is an executive at a textbook publishing house, where he earns a handsome salary. He lives on the Upper East Side. Jerry gently mocks him, asking if he reads both Baudelaire and J.P. Marquand.

Jerry seems reluctant to disclose similar information about himself, but Peter infers that he lives in Greenwich Village – a neighborhood that was a refuge for bohemians at the time Albee wrote the play.

Jerry's residency there would help explain his strange behavior, but Jerry explains that he actually lives on the Upper West Side in a tiny, run-down apartment. He proceeds to give a long, unflattering description of his neighbors, a large Puerto Rican family and a gay African-American man. His apartment is mostly furnished with junk, including two empty picture frames. When Peter asks why he lives in such an unpleasant place, Jerry explains that he is too poor to live elsewhere.

After some prodding, Jerry finally volunteers some information about himself. He is completely alone in life. His mother abandoned him and his father when Jerry was ten years old, and she died in Alabama shortly thereafter. Not long after her death, his father committed suicide by walking in front of a bus. After that, Jerry moved in with his dour, straight-laced aunt, who died the day he graduated high school.

It is only at this point that the men introduce themselves formally to one another, and volunteer their names.

Peter asks again about the picture frames, wondering whether Jerry might a girlfriend whose picture could be placed in one. Jerry responds that he has never had sex with any woman more than once, although he did have an ongoing relationship with another boy when he was a teenager. The men banter briefly about the set of pornographic playing cards that Jerry admits to keeping in his apartment, but Jerry changes the subject, insisting he would rather tell Peter about his trip to the zoo.

But instead of talking about the zoo, Jerry describes his landlady, a drunken, idiotic woman who is constantly trying to seduce him. He usually evades the

seduction by convincing her that they slept together the day before and that he is not ready to do so again. Because of her drunkenness, she believes him.

Jerry promises that he will tell Peter about the zoo soon, but first wants to tell the story of his landlady's dog. Jerry reminds Peter that Peter has chosen to be there, and can leave any time. Peter uncomfortably agrees to hear the story, and Jerry launches into it.

Jerry relates "The Story of Jerry and the Dog" with great animation (12). Ever since he moved into his apartment, he and his landlady's dog have been at odds. The dog would chase Jerry with great enthusiasm and has bitten him several times, even though it is old and in poor health. Jerry had tried to befriend the dog by feeding it hamburgers, but the dog always ate the hamburgers and then chased Jerry anyway.

Eventually, Jerry decided to kill the dog. He needed rat poison into a hamburger patty, which he then fed to the dog. Later that night, his landlady informed him that the dog was deathly ill, and Jerry began to regret his actions. He actually began to hope the dog would survive, so he could learn how the incident might affect their relationship.

Sure enough, the dog recovered, and Jerry returned one day from the movies to find it in its usual spot. With great emotion, he confesses to Peter that he became so obsessed with the animal because he believes he could learn to get along with people better by learning first to relate to animals.

Since the poisoning, the dog has stopped chasing Jerry; they simply leave each other alone. Jerry concludes his story by meditating on the nature of love and cruelty.

Jerry's story deeply disturbs Peter, who tearfully asks him why Jerry is sharing such detail. At first, Jerry is confused that Peter did not understand the point of the story, but he gradually realizes that Peter's conventional lifestyle prevents him from doing so. Jerry then wonders whether Peter is confused or annoyed by him.

Peter tries to excuse himself and leave, but Jerry begs him to stay and tickles him. Peter laughs hysterically, and the moment lightens the mood, making him less frightened of Jerry.

Jerry insists Peter give him as much space as possible on the bench, and then begins to tell the story of what happened at the zoo. He had gone there to observe how people and animals interact with each other.

However, he interrupts his own story to demand more space on the bench. When Peter does not give him what he wants, Jerry begins to punch Peter. Though Peter initially insults Jerry, calling him crazy, he soon begins to argue over his space just as vehemently as Jerry is demanding is. Peter insists that he sits in this spot every Sunday, and does not feel obligated to cede space to Jerry.

The men argue, and Peter threatens to call for the police, although Jerry points out that they are probably too busy chasing down the gay men who have sex in the park to deal with such a small issue. Peter puts this to the test, and calls out. It turns out that Jerry is right – no one responds to Peter's cries. Jerry taunts Peter for getting so worked up over and possessive about the bench.

Peter eventually realizes the absurdity of the situation, and tries to leave. However, Jerry pulls a knife on him, and insists that Peter fight for the bench. Horrified by this sudden turn of events, Peter refuses to fight. Jerry tosses the knife on the ground, and demands that Peter pick it up. Peter complies, and holds the weapon out to keep Jerry away. But Jerry charges him, impaling himself on the blade.

At first, Jerry hyperventilates and cries out in agony, but he soon adopts a calm affect, thanking Peter for what he has done. Peter weeps in shock as Jerry wipes the fingerprints off the knife and urges Peter to run away before someone comes and arrests him. Before Peter leaves, Jerry reminds him not to forget his book. Grabbing the book, Peter dashes off as Jerry dies.

Critical Analysis:

The opening minutes of *The Zoo Story* are mostly focused on characterization. Considering that the play is centered around only two characters, however, this is quite important. Although Albee only gives the audience a small amount of information about Peter and Jerry, the details he chooses to include are

carefully chosen. They tell us what we need to know about the play's characters, and establish the contrasts between them.

Albee's directions about costumes and acting are quite precise. For a reading experience, they can be useful since they give the audience hints about what to expect from the characters. Peter's costume — which includes tweeds, a pipe, and horn-rimmed glasses — suggests that he is a stereotypical intellectual, perhaps a professor. Of course, as we later find out, he is actually a businessman. The fact that Peter chooses to dress like a member of a different profession in his free time implies that there might be some truth to Jerry's later speculation that he is unhappy with his job. Albee's note that Peter's "dress and his manner suggest a man younger" is also salient (1). Again, that contrast suggests that Peter is unhappy with himself, and is trying to be someone else. This interpretation certainly helps to understand his quick reaction when Jerry suggests he cannot have children - such an assumption draws attention to his age, and perhaps to the true personality he works to disguise even from himself. And of course, this desire to look "younger" foreshadows Peter's childish reaction when Jerry invades his personal space at the end of the play.

Albee's initial description of Jerry also provides valuable insight into the character. In Peter's description, Albee emphasized the physical details of the costume; in Jerry's description, the character's actual appearance is emphasized less than is the sense that he has been beaten down in life by "a great weariness" (1). In many ways, he lacks the luxury to redefine himself as Peter has. The dialogue of *The Zoo Story* will emphasize that Peter and Jerry come from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and Albee's stage directions convey this right away by describing the characters' attitudes rather than their physical appearances. Indeed, Albee even notes that Jerry should not be dressed poorly; instead, he seems to hope that the differences between Peter and Jerry will be conveyed by acting rather than by costumes.

Although Albee's stage directions minimize the class and education differences between Peter and Jerry, these differences are a very important component of the characters' dynamic. Early in the play, Jerry confronts Peter about their differences in background by observing that Peter is probably educated, based

on his vocabulary and his reading habits. He further pushes social boundaries by asking Peter about his salary. Indeed, many of Jerry's breaches in etiquette are directly related to this difference in class. By confronting Peter about his income, Jerry makes him self-conscious and forces him to acknowledge his privilege. One can understand this play's arc as a movement towards awareness; Jerry wants Peter to see himself the way that others (like Jerry) see him, not as the man he dresses himself up to be.

Even in the opening minutes of the play, observant audience members will notice Peter's evolving attitude toward Jerry. Peter frequently becomes annoyed by Jerry's overbearing behavior. Each time, he immediately quells his irritation by reminding himself that it is illogical to become upset by Jerry's conversational jabs. Yet each time Peter becomes upset, his reactions become more extreme. His attitude changes quickly from amusement to fury. Although Jerry's behavior suggests that he is mentally ill, Peter's rapid mood changes suggest that he may not entirely stable himself. Further, it is possible to think that Jerry is far more deliberate than he seems. In other words, he might not be asking random questions, but in fact asking questions designed to irritate and anger the man he believes Peter to be. Peter's social etiquette requires him to be compliant and polite. Jerry knows this, and in fact makes Peter insist that he wants to talk. He forces Peter to invite the confrontation, which Peter does not because he wants it, but because he feels required to. So Jerry has engineered a situation by exploiting Peter's gentility, precisely so he can then poke holes in that gentility.

The first pages of *The Zoo Story* establish the animal motif that will appear throughout the play. Jerry questions Peter extensively about his pets, as Jerry clearly believes that a person's relationship with animals reveals important information about that person's character. He expounds further on this connection later. However, the play also suggests that humans have animalistic potential within. As the story continues, Jerry and Peter reveal their own animalistic sides, until it becomes clear that the play's title is a double entendre. It refers not only to Jerry's visit to the Central Park Zoo, but also to Jerry and Peter's interaction. People, Albee seems to suggest, are nothing more than animals, and the city, which keeps them in close contact, is another kind of zoo. In a situation like this, different types of animals

are sure to cause trouble for one another if they are allowed to interact; this is one way to understand the action of the play. Jerry has been let into a cage with a totally different type of animal, and it is his instinct to then wreak havoc for that more privileged beast.

Early critics frequently compared *The Zoo Story* with the work of Samuel Beckett. In fact, when *The Zoo Story* was first performed in Berlin in 1960, it was part of a double bill with a Beckett one-act play — Krapp's Last Tape. Indeed, there are a number of important similarities between *The Zoo Story* and Beckett's best-known work, Waiting for Godot. Both plays chronicle the relationship between two antagonistic characters who are forced to spend time together, and more importantly, both plays are absurdist in style. Absurdism is closely associated with existential philosophy. In a typical absurdist story, characters must grapple with the meaninglessness of their circumstances — and by extension, of life in general. Absurdist plots are often driven by the emotions the characters experience as they recognize and accept that their lives are meaningless.

Beckett's work lends itself well to an absurdist interpretation. In Waiting for Godot, the characters are cartoonish and exaggerated, and their predicament is contrived to make a philosophical point. *The Zoo Story*, on the other hand, is much more realistic in its approach — although it should be noted that realism and absurdism are not mutually exclusive. Realism is a style, and absurdism is a philosophical orientation. Peter and Jerry have quotidian nuanced personalities and quotidian back stories, and the play's plot, which revolves around an awkward conversation between strangers, is drawn from a common situation of urban life. It could be said, then, that Albee's work is innovative because it imports an absurdist outlook to the realist dramatic tradition. That it does this with such seeming ease and naturalness is a testament to its greatness.

Albee continues to develop the vast cultural and socioeconomic gap between Peter and Jerry. Although they live near each other and come from the same broad cultural background, Jerry's difficult life seems to have psychologically stunted him, leaving him unable to forge close relationships or hold a conventional job. If the play is indeed about the growth of Peter's awareness, then his attempts to understand someone like Jerry are crucial towards that development.

It is telling that one of Peter's first questions is why Jerry does not simply move out from his tiny apartment. Peter's own background colors his perception of Jerry, and it does not occur to him that Jerry might lack the financial resources or the emotional resolve to improve his life. Peter's cultural background also informs his guess about Jerry's neighborhood; his stereotypes about Greenwich Village and bohemians lead him to make assumptions about Jerry. When Jerry's description of his living situation completely upends Peter's expectations, we realize that Peter's worldview is essentially blinkered, despite the fact that he is ostensibly more worldly than Jerry.

Jerry's list of his possessions efficiently reveals much about his personality and life. Many of the objects in Jerry's apartment — the can-opener, the small amount of dishware, the pornography — connote that he is not only single, but lonely. He clearly does not interact often with people, and eats most of his meals alone. Of course, Jerry established this in the previous section when he explained that most of his interactions with others are superficial, but these details provide objective evidence of what might otherwise be a designed self-assessment. Provided he is telling the truth, his social isolation is overwhelming.

The objects in Jerry's apartment also betray a sense of whimsy. The empty picture frames and the "sea-rounded rocks" from his childhood have no practical purpose, but they suggest that Jerry maintains a strong sense of nostalgia for his early life, despite how traumatic it was. Jerry is not simply a crazy, lonely man. He clearly has a sentimental, emotional side that makes the tragedy of his life greater, and the strangeness of his behavior more unsettling.

The empty picture frames are especially notable because they can be interpreted in several different ways. They could imply that Jerry has lost people who are important to him. However, they could also indicate hope for the future: Jerry might be saving the frames for pictures of the friends and family he hopes to later meet. Peter also notices the significance of the two empty frames, and asks Jerry about it. Jerry demurs about their deeper significance, only commenting that he has no pictures to put in them. The audience is left to determine why he bothers to keep the frames. Such ambiguity is a hallmark of work considered absurdist.

Jerry's account of his life informs Peter and the audience of a tragic past; however, it also shows that Jerry has a very literary sensibility and sees the world in poetic terms. When Peter asks about the picture frames, he immediately launches into an account of his life story. His monologue is rich with wordplay and figurative languages. He compares his family life to a vaudeville show, and uses his mother's death as an opportunity to relate his views about death in general. He conceives of death as "part[ing] with the ghost" (9). This is most likely a reference to the separation of body and spirit. Although the word ghost usually refers to a supernatural apparition, it can also refer to a person's soul – in fact, the word comes from the German geist, which refers to the mind or the spirit. Much as some of the objects show Jerry's nostalgic side, this speech and others reveal a poetic element to his character.

Jerry's brief question about Peter's literary tastes provides further insight into both men's respective personalities and worldviews. Jerry assumes that Peter reads both Baudelaire and J.P. Marquand — that he is engaged with both high and low culture. (It should be noted that some modern editions of *The Zoo Story* replace J.P. Marquand with Stephen King, presumably so the audience will understand that Jerry is referring to a popular genre author.) Peter confirms that he reads both authors, but his fumbling answer suggests that he is more concerned about being diplomatic than he is about confessing passion for literature. Jerry, who asked the question, seems to have much stronger opinions about art, which reinforces the critical, literary sensibilities that he revealed in his description of his apartment.

This distinction could help to explain Jerry's purpose, which by this point seems far more deliberate than his initial musings suggested. Jerry clearly suffers from mental instability, but his approach to Peter suggests a deliberateness of purpose, not the ramblings of a nutcase. The fact that he continues to ask questions about areas in which Peter's life is different than his suggests that he is trying to unsettle Peter, to force the latter man to confront his pre-conceived notions and then suffer in the face of them. At this point in the play, we may not know Jerry's exact objective, but we begin to understand that he picked Peter precisely because the man seemed so different than him, and now wishes to exploit those differences to achieve his effect.

It is worth questioning why Peter and Jerry introduce themselves to each other so late in the play. Because *The Zoo Story* is so short, it may not seem like much time has passed since the beginning, but the truth is that we do not learn their names until one-third of the way through. Further, in performance, many of the speeches take longer to speak than they do to read. And yet this late introduction serves the purpose of downplaying the men's individuality. Albee's choice suggests that Peter and Jerry are everymen, meant to embody qualities that every person has to a greater or lesser extent. One could extend this interpretation to mean that they are both potential versions of one another, or to suggest that we tend to see one another superficially, in terms of our outward characteristics rather than in terms of our individual personalities.

Either way, the delayed introduction also signals a turning point in Jerry and Peter's relationship. After some resistance from Peter, they have finally both conceded that they are having a substantive, meaningful conversation that warrants an introduction. Now, Jerry's real game begins.

As *The Zoo Story* approaches its midpoint, Albee addresses a taboo topic: homosexuality. Albee himself is gay, and although he generally does not discuss his sexuality in public, he has never hidden the fact of his preference. Those who are familiar with his work are generally aware of his sexuality. Homosexuality is only discussed once in the text, when Jerry mentions his childhood relationship with another boy. Because he swiftly adds that he has since that time only had sex with women, modern readers might be tempted to write off Jerry's dalliance as a minor detail. But according to the critic Robert Zaller, the moment would have been so shocking to an audience in 1960 that it might well have colored their interpretation of the whole play. Certainly, when Jerry forces Peter to stab him at the end of the play, the moment is full of phallic significance, thereby suggesting that Jerry's entire purpose has been somehow a reflection of repressed desires. In this way, the *The Zoo Story* can be seen as an allegory about homosexuality.

The sexual undertones of *The Zoo Story* offer a wide variety of interpretations. Zaller describes the play as a "suppressed gay love story." He writes that Peter and Jerry's conversation reflects a mutual attraction, and they consummate their relationship the only way that their repressive culture will allow them to – through

violence. Jerry's allusion to Freud on p. 2 supports this interpretation. At the very least, it shows that Freud's theories, many of which dealt with sexuality and repression, were at the forefront of Albee's mind when he wrote the play. Freud wrote extensively about sexual symbolism and the sublimation of sexuality into violence. By referring to Freud early in the play, Albee invites audiences to apply Freud's theories to this relationship.

The critic John M. Clum also sees *The Zoo Story* as a homosexual love story set deep in the closet of a repressive society. He notes that Albee portrays homosexual love as an innocent pleasure of adolescence, free of the tensions and misogyny of heterosexual relationships. Jerry speaks of his childhood fling affectionately, but seems tortured by his attempts at heterosexual relationships that followed. This interpretation is important because it ties the play's sexual themes to its exploration of urban alienation in general. Zaller argues that audiences who interpret *The Zoo Story* as being about "urban anomie" are misguided, since the play is exclusively about sexuality. Clum, on the other hand, acknowledges that Albee's play addresses many aspects of urban life — not just the sexual. The themes of alienation parallel and enhance those of urban alienation.

In this section, Jerry and Peter's conversation turns briefly to the pornographic playing cards Jerry mentioned earlier in the play. Like the rest of Jerry's possessions, the playing cards indicate a sense of quirkiness and whimsy. The fact that Jerry keeps suggestive playing cards instead of books or magazines hints at a certain nostalgia for childhood; it also indicates a lack of seriousness about sex (with women, at least). Jerry himself acknowledges that the cards are childish, and points out that for many men, sexual fantasy is more gratifying than actual sex. Again, this fits well with the interpretation of *The Zoo Story* as a homosexual allegory. For a gay man in 1960, fantasy would have been a much more attainable of gratification than real sex. But even if one downplays the sexual interpretation, Jerry's attitudes about the cards suggests that he is more comfortable with an imitation of life than with actual life. After all, the latter makes him feel like a loser and a failure, while suggestive cards allow him to concoct his own fantasy. He is able to be of importance in his own mind, rather than an irrelevant cog in the machinery of an uncaring city.

In this section, Jerry comes very close to telling Peter the eponymous zoo story. Both men seem to find the Central Park Zoo a more comfortable topic than sexuality is. However, *The Zoo Story* is a classic MacGuffin – it drives the plot, but hardly matters. The characters spend the entire play pursuing it, but we never hear the complete story because Jerry always becomes distracted when he begins to tell it. Often, stories that use a MacGuffin are about the journey the characters experience rather than the end goal. Similarly, Albee's play is not about an 'event' but rather about the tragedy of this strange relationship.

The fact that Jerry never tells the complete zoo story is another reason why this play tends to draw comparisons with Waiting for Godot. In Beckett's play, Vladimir and Estragon wait endlessly for a character named Godot, whose significance is never explained. Although the plot of that play revolves around the absent Godot, Beckett is really more concerned with showcasing Vladimir and Estragon's thoughts, feelings, and interactions with each other. Albee's approach is very similar; *The Zoo Story* is nothing more than a plot device that provides structure and forward motion to the interaction between Peter and Jerry. And of course, by doing so with a suggestion of animals, it reminds us of the alienation Albee wants us to feel about these men who show progressively more of their animal natures instead of their civilized faces.

Jerry's story about his neighbor's dog is the culmination of the animal motif that runs throughout *The Zoo Story*. Earlier in the play, Jerry showed great fascination with Peter's pets. He inferred a great deal about the power dynamic in Peter's marriage based on the fact that he has cats instead of dogs. Here, Jerry once again observes a parallel between humans' relationships with animals and their relationships with each other. "If you can't deal with people," Jerry explains, "you have to make a start somewhere. With animals" (17).

It makes sense, then, that Jerry subjects animals to a great deal of personification. Personifying animals is central to his worldview, since he views them as substitutes for human company. This personification is evident in the language that Jerry uses to tell Peter about the dog. Throughout the lengthy story, Jerry ascribes human emotions, such as jealousy and resentment, to the animal. Jerry also expects the dog to understand his motivations for poisoning it, although he

admits himself that this is silly. To some extent, his reliance on the personification of animals reveals the extent of his loneliness and desperation for human contact.

Because Jerry views relationships with animals as fundamentally similar to those between humans, his interaction with his neighbor's dog reveals much about his approach to social interaction in general. In fact, there are a number of striking parallels between the dog story and Jerry's conversation with Peter. For example, Jerry experiences many abrupt shifts in mood and attitude throughout the dog story. With little natural transition, he shifts from hoping to befriend the dog to aggressively engineering the dog's death. This manic rhythm foreshadows the aggression he will show toward Peter when they fight over space on the park bench. Further, it parallels the abrupt mood shifts Jerry has already displayed in their conversation thus far. As with the dog, Jerry's friendliness to Peter hides a short temper.

A poignant drive for connection and intimacy informs Jerry's relationships with both the dog and Peter. The conversation between Peter and Jerry is itself a desperate bid by Jerry for companionship, which Peter obliges only because he cannot think of a polite way to excuse himself. Jerry's aggression and subsequent suicide can be best understood as a response Peters' rejection, manifest when Peter refuses to share the bench with him. His murderous impulse towards the dog is a similar response to what he feels when what he considers a friendly overture (sharing the bench) is rejected.

And yet it is difficult to understand Jerry's entire goal as simply a desire for friendship, considering how aggressive and intimidating he is to Peter from the beginning. Certainly, one could see in their short relationship an allegory for homosexuality, as previously discussed. From this vantage, the quick anger could be a reflection of the emotions that society requires gay men to repress. (See the previous section of Analysis for a more in-depth discuss of this interpretation.)

However, one could also see Jerry's entire purpose as deliberate and almost self-fulfilling. The saddest part of the dog story comes at the end, when the dog no longer wants to bite him, but also has little desire to engage with him at all. It has become positively civil. Though Jerry will not get bitten any longer, he will also not be acknowledged as someone worthy of attention. In many ways, this could be worse

for a depressed man; it is arguably better to be acknowledged and reviled than to be simply ignored an anonymous loser in the big city. Certainly, Peter has been defined primarily by civility from the play's beginning. One could argue that Jerry identified Peter as this type of person when he saw him, and has deliberately, if unconsciously, confronted him in order to challenge this level of civility. If this is so, if Jerry understands the pain of being treated with uncaring civility, then it could be argued that his entire purpose is to engineer his death, to force this symbol of the civilized world to literally kill him, rather than starving him of intimacy and a slow, lonely death. He is taking a last stand, rather than fading away.

That Albee's play supports such myriad interpretations despite its simple setting is a testament to its great theatricality. And perhaps the apex of its theatricality is Jerry's long story, which on stage takes quite some time and is positively thrilling to observe. It is not meant to be read but rather seen, which is even more apparent when one considers Albee's stage directions for Peter's non-verbal reactions. Though terse, they are nonetheless important to examine. Peter's mood shifts along with Jerry's during the story. Peter listens attentively, and his moods shift from disgust to outrage to contemplation to ultimate fascination. If nothing else, Jerry is actually engaging him here, not merely prompting civil, polite replies.

In fact, Peter's emotions in this section can be interpreted a microcosm of his reaction to Jerry more generally. The disgust and anger he felt at the beginning of the story were due to being approached by someone of questionable mental stability from the lower classes; however, as Peter got to know Jerry, these emotions gave way to serious interest in Jerry's life story. Although the men never have any overtly romantic interactions, Peter's changing attitude reinforces Zaller's interpretation of *The Zoo Story* as a seduction narrative.

Jerry's death at the end of *The Zoo Story* represents a culmination of all the play's main themes. Although Jerry's death may seem sudden, it is in fact foreshadowed throughout the play, and is the logical result of his personality and behavior. In telling Peter his life story, Jerry reveals that he is poor, socially isolated, and haunted by a traumatic past — three factors that, then as now, put individuals at risk for suicide. He also demonstrates rapid mood swings and a high level of impulsiveness. These qualities are evident most prominently in the dog story, in

which Jerry rapidly shifted from liking the dog to wanting to murder it, but they manifest throughout the story, including when he insists that Peter fight him for space on the bench.

There are a variety of possible explanations for Jerry's choice to involve Peter in his suicide. Social isolation and alienation being the dominant forces of Jerry's life, they might be his prime motivation for wanting to die. And yet even so, it is interesting that he feels compelled to involve someone else in the act. Certainly, this inclusion could be the result of a unconscious desire, one that he might not have the strength to carry through himself. The Freudian undertones in the sexual and aggressive themes could support this interpretation. But as previously noted in the Analysis, Jerry's entire approach seems far more deliberate than an unconscious impulse would explain.

A more interesting interpretation of this choice involves his lack of social intimacy. By forcing another person to participate in the act, Jerry is achieving the profound intimacy that has so often eluded him in the past. Further this intimacy has a sexual undertone, considering that he eagerly runs towards Peter, who holds out a knife, a clearly phallic symbol. Jerry reveals familiarity with Sigmund Freud's work at the beginning of the play, and the phallic symbolism of his suicide fits closely with Freud's ideas about repressed sexuality sublimating into violence. There is also a subtle double entendre when Jerry proclaims that he "came unto" Peter (26). Although some readers might write this off as unintentional, Jerry is instructed to laugh quietly after saying this, suggesting that Albee is aware of the word's sexual connotation.

There is another explicit reference to homosexuality when Jerry refers to the "queens" – that is, gay men who meet for anonymous sex in Central Park. When Peter threatens to call the police, Jerry observes that the police will be too busy trying to stop these assignations to answer Peter's call. This was a real — and very common — phenomenon at the time; indeed, it was so well-known that criminals targeted gay men in Central Park for muggings because they knew that these men would be reluctant to report the mugging to the police (Rosenzweig & Blackmar 479).

Robert B. Bennet argues that Jerry's death is not a sexual act, but rather a Christ-like sacrifice (55). This interpretation is largely based on Jerry's prostrate

position at the end of the play, and on the quasi-biblical phrasing he uses in his final words to Peter: “I came unto you . . . and you have comforted me. Dear Peter” (26). In this interpretation, Jerry’s suicide is not a result of his personal history or his circumstances, but rather an act of martyrdom. He sacrifices himself to teach Peter an unforgettable lesson about the importance of human connection in the alienating urban environment. If we accept this interpretation, then the play becomes primarily about Peter's awakening to the world outside of his carefully constructed life of civility and politeness.

Jerry’s death also ties into the animal motif that appears throughout the play. The act of violent savagery reinforces Albee’s suggestion that people are more animalistic than they initially appear. The short piece of *The Zoo Story* that the audience hears before Peter and Jerry begin to fight also relates to the animal motif. Jerry repeats his opinion that observing “the way animals exist with each other, and with people, too” can lend insight on human interaction (21). From this vantage, then Jerry's lesson to Peter is less about intimacy than it is about the true nature of humanity.

More enlightening, though, is Jerry’s observation that he could not get an accurate understanding of how animals interact because “everyone [was] separated by bars from everyone else, the animals for the most part from each other, and always the people from the animals.” This point might be the key to understanding Jerry’s alienation — the urban environment of New York (or any large city) physically and psychically compartmentalizes people, preventing them from interacting each other. Albee drives home this connection by comparing both Peter and Jerry to animals at the end of the play; Jerry is described as a “fatally wounded animal” in the stage directions, and as he dies, Jerry reassures Peter that despite his emotional distance, Peter is an animal and not a vegetable (26).

The scholar Mary N. Nilan blames the socioeconomic disparity between Peter and Jerry for their ultimate failure to connect. She argues that Peter and Jerry’s conversation is the ultimate failure – for Jerry, it is a last-ditch attempt to cure his loneliness. When the men fail to connect, he gives up and succumbs to a physical manifestation of his loneliness. She assigns responsibility to this failure to both Peter and Jerry, neither of which are willing to look beyond their own worlds and

attempt to understand the perspectives of those with different experiences. According to Nilan, this narcissism would have been especially noticeable in New York at the end of the 1950s – the city was deeply polarized economically. Albee's play, then, can be read as a critique of these attitudes.

One could certainly criticize a work like this for its lack of a clear message. The motifs and themes are prominent enough, and yet this short play invites so many interpretations that it is can seem strangely oblique. And yet familiarity with Albee's work (and that of his absurdist theatre peers) reveals that such ambiguity is exactly what he treasures. Albee insists that his plays come intuitively, their meanings fresh to him, rather than pre-decided. What is undeniable about *The Zoo Story* is the presence of a questioning, pained and certain authorial voice. What that voice is saying is not entirely clear, but that should be seen as a strength of the writing, rather than as a deficit.

3.1.5 Characters

Jerry

Jerry, the antagonist in *The Zoo Story,* confronts Peter while he is reading a book in Central Park and coerces him into partaking in an act of violence. Albee gives the following description of Jerry: "A man in his late thirties, not poorly dressed, but carelessly. What was once a trim and lightly muscled body has begun to go to fat; and while he is no longer handsome, it is evident that he once was." In contrast to Peter, Jerry lives in a four-story brownstone roominghouse on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, between Columbus Avenue and Central Park West. During the 1950s, this was a much poorer neighborhood than the East 70s, where Peter lives. Jerry is single and lives in one small room that is actually half a room separated from the other half by beaverboard.

Throughout the course of the play, Jerry tells Peter only what he wants Peter to know, and does not like to be asked questions or be judged. He makes a point of telling Peter very personal details of his life, like how his parents both died when he was a child and how he was a homosexual for a week and a half when he was fifteen and now only sees prostitutes. Peter finds Jerry's stories disturbing but

fascinating and it is only when they get very strange that Peter begins to question Jerry's intentions. Jerry uses all of his resources including his storytelling ability, his humor, and finally his violent aggression to make sure that Peter does not leave until he gets what he wants from him. In the end, Jerry resorts to physically attacking Peter so that Peter has to defend himself. Jerry sets it up so that he is able to impale himself on his own knife, while Peter holds it out in self-defense. In the end, Jerry uses Peter to get what he has planned to get from him all along.

Peter

Peter is the protagonist in *The Zoo Story* who after coming to Central Park to spend some time alone on his favorite bench to read a book on a Sunday afternoon, has his life forever changed by Jerry, who confronts him. Albee describes Peter as: "A man in his early forties, neither fat nor gaunt, neither handsome nor homely." Peter lives on Seventy-fourth Street between Lexington and Third Avenues, which was a rather wealthy neighborhood in Manhattan during the late 1950s. He is married, has two daughters, cats, and two parakeets. He holds an executive position at a small publishing house that publishes textbooks. These details about Peter's life all come out of the dialogue that he has with Jerry, and although at first they seem to be trivial facts, they serve an important function in establishing the two different worlds in which Peter and Jerry live.

When Jerry first confronts Peter at the beginning of the play, Peter is reluctant to have a conversation with Jerry and is obviously annoyed by him. However, Jerry's manner and the way he talks intrigues Peter and it is this intrigue that allows Jerry to pull him into his world. The beginning of the conversation seems to be controlled more by Peter, because Jerry must use different tactics to keep Peter interested and to recover when he offends him. However, it is Jerry's vivid descriptions of his life that mesmerize Peter and allow Jerry to gain control over the situation. By the end of the play, Peter has unwillingly allowed Jerry to use him as a pawn in Jerry's plan to end his own life. In the end, Jerry leaves Peter with an experience that will haunt him for the rest of his life. Although he is more educated and has had more social and economic advantages than Jerry, Peter is the weaker and more naive of the two men.

3.1.6 Literary Devices

Structure

The Zoo Story by Edward Albee is rather simple in structure. It is set in New York's Central Park on Sunday afternoon in the summer. The staging for the play, therefore, consists of two park benches with foliage, trees, and sky behind them. The place never changes and the action of the play unfolds in a linear manner, from beginning to end, in front of the audience. Everything happens in the present, which gives the play its immediacy and makes the events that unfold even more shocking. As an audience member, watching the play makes one feel as if one is witnessing a crime and is directly involved; this sense of involvement is achieved through the structure of the play.

Style

What makes *The Zoo Story* dense and difficult to define is the style in which it is written. It does not fit into the purely realistic nor the totally absurd genres that were both popular in 1958 when Albee wrote the play. The Theatre of the Absurd was a movement that dominated the French stage after World War II, and was characterized by radical theatrical innovations. Playwrights in this genre used practically incomprehensible plots and extremely long pauses in order to violate conservative audiences' expectations of what theatre should be. Albee took this absurd style and combined it with acute realism in order to comment on American society in the 1950s. With *The Zoo Story,* Albee points to French playwright Eugene Ionesco's idea that human life is both fundamentally absurd and terrifying; therefore, communication through language is equally absurd. Albee is also drawing from existential philosophy in *The Zoo Story*. Existentialism is concerned with the nature and perception of human existence, and often deals with the idea that the basic human condition is one of suffering and loneliness. Jerry and his position in American society are clearly examples of this point of view. Another literary style which began emerging around the time that *The Zoo Story* was written is postmodernism. Postmodernists continued to apply the fundamentals of modernism, including alienation and existentialism, but went a step further by rejecting traditional forms. Therefore, they prefer the anti-novel over the novel and, as in *The Zoo*

Story, the anti-hero over the hero. Although Albee does not belong solely in the realistic, absurdist, existential or postmodern literary genres, it is evident that all of these movements had an impact on *The Zoo Story* and Albee as a playwright.

Literary Devices

Albee used various literary devices in *The Zoo Story*. The first device is the anti-hero. An anti-hero, like a hero, is the central character of the play but lacks heroic qualities such as courage, physical prowess, and integrity. Anti-heroes usually distrust conventional values and, like Jerry, they often accept and celebrate their position as social outcasts. Along with the anti-hero, Albee uses satire and black humor in *The Zoo Story*. Satire employs humor to comment negatively on human nature and social institutions, while black humor places grotesque elements along side of humorous elements in order to shock the reader and evoke laughter in the face of difficulty and disorder. Albee uses both of these devices in *The Zoo Story* to comment on the way different social classes choose to view and ignore each other in American society; specifically, he highlights the way that in which members of the upper classes deal with members of the lower ones. This is illustrated with the character of Peter, who Albee uses as an example by having Jerry methodically bring him down to an animalistic level in order to show that he is just like everyone else. Another device that Albee uses in *The Zoo Story* is allegory. Allegory involves the use of characters, representing things or abstract ideas, to convey a message. Jerry's story about his landlady's dog could be seen as an allegory for his own inability to relate to others. In the end, Jerry says that he and the dog harbor "sadness, suspicion and indifference" for each other, which is similar to the relationships that Jerry has with other people. Some critics have argued that *The Zoo Story* is an allegory for Christian redemption. Jerry, as the Christ-like figure, martyrs himself to demonstrate the need for and meaningfulness of communication. This Christian

3.1.7 Important Quotations

"What I wanted to get at is the value difference between pornographic playing-cards when you're a kid, and pornographic playing-cards when you're older. It's that when you're a kid you use the cards as a substitute for real

experience, and when you're older you use real experience as a substitute for the fantasy."Jerry, p. 10

Many critics have noted *The Zoo Story*'s rich erotic subtext. However, Albee only addresses sex explicitly a few times in the play. Jerry's explanation of the pornographic playing cards is one of those instances. Here, Jerry observes the importance of fantasy in male sexuality. When he was a child, the cards allowed Jerry to imagine becoming an ideal man, surrounded by beautiful, subservient women. However, now that he has grown into an adult isolated from mainstream society, the cards are only a mocking reminder of what he cannot have. Mainstream society both entices and demeans him. This idea has special significance if one considers Jerry a closeted homosexual, as critics like Zaller have argued. In this case, living under repression, fantasy would provide his only erotic outlet. Either way, Jerry's nostalgia for childhood is unmistakable in this passage, which makes his otherwise aggressive behavior both more relatable and more nuanced.

"Fact is better left to fiction."Jerry, p. 12

Jerry speaks this line as a criticism of Peter, whose privileged lifestyle means that he only experiences the grittier aspects of life through fiction. However, this brief observation about truth and storytelling would have resonated strongly for Albee, who dedicated his life to presenting fiction in the form of drama. Jerry's comment initially seems like a paradox, but his point is that fiction can sometimes present deep truths about the human experience in a way that factual narratives cannot. Fiction generally allows the author more freedom to explore the depths of the characters' personalities – something that Albee does at length in *The Zoo Story*. In contrast, real events are often confusing, and can be interpreted in many different ways, which means that it can be hard to extract deep, universal truths from them. Because *The Zoo Story* exists on the line between stylized theatricality and grounded realism, this sentiment provides an interesting lens through which to understand Albee's ultimate purpose and approach.

"Sometimes it's necessary to go a long distance out of the way in order to come back a short distance correctly." Jerry, p. 12

Jerry provides this idea as the moral of his story about the dog. On the surface, this passage merely means that Jerry was able to befriend his landlady's dog only because he tried to kill it. However, the sentiment can also be applied to his relationship with Peter. Like the dog, Peter is at first unwilling to befriend Jerry. And as in the dog story, Jerry's relationship with Peter shifts from friendliness to violence relatively quickly. In the dog story, Jerry was ultimately able to "come back [the] short distance correctly" that is, to befriend the dog. If the passage is applied to his relationship with Peter, it would imply that Peter will eventually look back fondly on Jerry - or at least take the odd transient seriously.

And yet considering the context, the passage implies that 'correctness' is not necessarily enlivening or satisfying. At the end of Jerry's time with the dog, they practically ignore one another. As though in imitation of urban residents, they simply co-exist by relying on civility and politeness. For someone like Jerry, who desperately needs intimacy, this "short distance" is only a reminder of what he lacks in life. It is telling that he decides with Peter to go out in a blaze of glory rather than fade into a meaningless routine of politeness and civility.

> *"Now, here is what I had wanted to happen: I had tried to love, and I had tried to kill, and both had been unsuccessful by themselves. I hoped—and I don't really know why I expected the dog to understand anything, much less my motivations—I hoped that the dog would understand." Jerry, p. 17*

There are many parallels between Jerry's interactions with his landlady's dog and the ones he has with Peter. Jerry invites this comparison when he notes elsewhere in the text that people can use animals to learn how to get along with other people. Taken that way, this passage serves as Jerry's statement of purpose. He wants Peter to "understand" him, and he is willing to use extreme methods to achieve that end.

This passage also offers insight into Jerry's troubled personality. For Jerry, there seems to be a very thin line between love and hate, between friendliness and violence. He is a person with extreme emotions, who cannot occupy a middle ground between intimacy and enmity. In fact, it touches on Jerry's tendency to transform

emotional/sexual feelings into violent ones. When the dog rejects Jerry's attempts at friendship, then, the only alternative Jerry can see is to kill him. This foreshadows Jerry's violent response when Peter tries to leave at the end of the play.

> *"It's just that—it's just that if you can't deal with people, you have to make a start somewhere. With animals. Don't you see? A person has to find a way of dealing with something. If not with people—if not with people—something." Jerry, p. 17*

As Peter and the audience get to know Jerry, it becomes clear that Jerry is primarily motivated by loneliness. All of the decisions Jerry makes in The Zoo Story are driven by a primal drive to counteract his deep sense of isolation. His loneliness results not only from a lack of friends and family, but also from a deep intellectual loneliness, which he has built up over the years as he realized there is no one who truly understands and empathizes with him. Ironically, his attempts to rebuild his life consist of trying to explain himself and his thoughts to animals – beings that are even less capable of understanding him than a stranger like Peter. In a certain way, then, Jerry's quest is a futile and vicious circle. He works to find intimacy, and then redoubles his intensity when he fails, meaning that the next failure will be doubly intense for him. That such a process would end in violence seems almost inevitably tragic.

> *“I don’t know what I was thinking about; of course you don’t understand. I don’t live in your block; I’m not married with two parakeets, or whatever your set-up is. I am a permanent transient, and my home is the sickening rooming-houses... on the West Side of New York City, which is the greatest city in the world. Amen.” Jerry, p. 19*

Throughout The Zoo Story, the class difference between Peter and Jerry causes misunderstandings. Ultimately, the men can never quite communicate because of this distinction. Near the end of the play, from which this passage is taken, Jerry finally acknowledges this difference explicitly, and meditates on its effects. He suggests that despite Peter's best intentions, he is unable to empathize with Jerry as well as he could with someone of his own class. Of course, Jerry also contributes to this problem. Because he assumes that Peter is uninterested in him

and incapable of understanding his thoughts and experiences, Jerry makes little genuine effort to connect with Peter. While he does spend a great deal of time talking to Peter, Jerry does not attempt to present his observations and anecdotes in a way that Peter will find appealing or easy to comprehend. Instead, he is aggressive and judgmental from the beginning. Because of this aggression, Jerry is just as responsible for the communication gap as Peter is. Albee's ultimate point, then, seems to be that our world enforces distinctions that cannot be overcome, and which are doubly tragic when one endeavors futilely to overcome them nevertheless

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> *"People can't have everything they want. You should know that; it's a rule; people can have some of the things they want, but they can't have everything." Peter, p. 22*

Peter's short lecture comes when Jerry attempts to take his spot on the bench. There is a certain irony in the fact that Peter shows more confidence and moral certainty when arguing about space on a bench than he has previously shown over the course of the entire play. It is the rhetoric of the businessman, who assumes he has some insight into want and fairness. His rhetoric is particularly interesting when considered in the context of the class difference between the two men. Compared to Jerry, Peter seems to have everything a man could want, but he seems to believe that deprivation (at least in small amounts) is essential to the human experience. Jerry, who has encountered a great deal more disappointment than Peter, might well find this proclamation insensitive, which would explain why he responds with antagonistic insults.

Of course, Peter does not seem entirely happy, meaning he has a right to this sentiment. Not only could one argue he is a repressed homosexual (as some critics have), but the way in which his manner of dress conflicts with his actual profession suggests that he too is searching for greater meaning in his life. That the men constantly butt heads over their differences, rather than finding a way to sympathize over their shared discontent, allows the play to explore the nature of miscommunication.

> *"I'm on your precious bench, and you're never going to have it for yourself again."Jerry, p. 24*

As the argument over the bench escalates, Peter and Jerry become increasingly angry and antagonistic toward each other. However, Jerry's taunting transcends personal insult; it also resonates with the class difference between the two men, which has hovered over the action for the entire play. The sarcastic reference to Peter's "precious bench" is an attack on the middle class's petty materialism, and his threat that Peter will "never ... have it for yourself again" an ominous challenge to the status quo. In many ways, Jerry is deliberately playing on the great fear of the middle and upper class: that the alienated will one day rebel. In another way, he is merely asking in yet another ironically aggressive manner for those who have something to share that something with others, in a gesture of intimacy if not economy.

> *"You have everything in the world you want; you've told me about your home, and your family, and your own little zoo. You have everything, and now you want this bench. Are these the things men fight for? Tell me, Peter, is this bench, this iron and this wood, is this your honour? Is this the thing in the world you'd fight for? Can you think of anything more absurd?"Jerry, p. 24*

Here, Jerry spells out one of The Zoo Story's most important themes: the absurdity of life and the human experience. Jerry's ideas are based on those of other absurdist writers, such as Eugene Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, and Albert Camus. Each of these authors was deeply skeptical about whether human triumphs and suffering had meaning, and they were especially suspicious of the kind of capitalistic materialism that pervaded American culture when Albee wrote The Zoo Story in 1960. Peter and his conventional, upper middle-class lifestyle embody the petty, insignificant 'rat race' that absurdists tended to abhor. One of the play's master-strokes is that these ideas are grounded in Jerry's very real and relateable pain, his overwhelming desire to find intimacy in life. What is really tragic about the play is not that we are given to petty materialism; it is that we have traded compassion and transcendent connections for that materialism.

"I came unto you and you have comforted me. Dear Peter." Jerry, p. 26

Jerry's dying words to Peter have several possible interpretations. According to the critic Robert B. Bennet, Jerry's archaic, quasi-biblical phrasing sets him up as a martyr, an innocent victim of modern society's indifference to the less fortunate. (An alternate interpretation is that Jerry 'martyrs' himself to teach Peter a lesson about the importance of human connection.) However, other critics read this line as an erotic moment in a play rife with sexual subtexts. Robert Zaller points out that there is a double entendre when Jerry says that he "came unto" Peter – an interpretation that is reinforced by the stage direction that Jerry should laugh slightly when saying this. In this interpretation, the line is Jerry's last, desperate attempt to find the love and intimacy that was missing from so much of his life, and to battle with the repressive society that calls his love transgressive. No matter how one interprets the lines, they do reveal that Jerry's interactions with Peter are not the random ramblings of a madman, but instead do have a deliberate purpose.

3.1.8 Themes

Intimacy

In *The Zoo Story*, Albee introduces the audience to Jerry's unconventional ideas about what it means to be intimate with another person. For Jerry, intimacy is not just about friendship – it requires a fundamental sense of understanding and compassion between two people. This kind of intimacy does not necessarily need to be accumulated over time. He believes that it can be achieved simply by approaching a stranger like Peter and "get [ting] to know somebody, know all about him" . Jerry's ideas about intimacy fly in the face of established social norms, which do not often encourage this kind of mingling between strangers. His defiance of received ideas about personal space can be interpreted as a critique of the alienation imposed by modern, urban society. Especially considering that Peter represents this modern, polite society, intimacy also provides a way to understand the play's primary conflict.

Animals

Jerry frequently refers to animals in his conversation with Peter – indeed, he claims to be on his way home from the Central Park Zoo when they first meet. His focus on animals has two implications.

Firstly, Jerry sees animals as a solution to his social isolation. He understands that he has a problem 'getting along' with other people, and believes that he can resolve this by practicing interaction with animals. Ironically, the kind of companionship Jerry seeks is not the sort that animals can provide or even prepare him for. Jerry is looking for someone who can understand his iconoclastic opinions on modern society and empathize with his difficult past. These kinds of sophisticated interactions are only possible with people – but when Jerry attempts them with Peter, the men are unable to truly connect because of failures in communication.

Secondly, the frequent mention of animals also underlines a greater idea that humans have a capacity to be animalistic. Peter begins the play as a self-defined, civilized, polite, urban fellow. But through his responses to Jerry's provocations, he taps into his more aggressive tendencies and ultimately participates (however unwittingly) in a murder. By focusing on the limitations of animals, Jerry also suggests that humans have these limitations within ourselves.

Urban alienation

When *The Zoo Story* was written in 1958, the urban lifestyle that is familiar to modern audiences would have been a relatively new concept. The 1920s were the first decade in which more Americans lived in cities than in rural areas. As American cities continued to grow, people began to find that large cities ironically offered a weaker sense of community than small towns did. This social context helps explain Jerry's deep sense of loneliness (although it can also be attributed to his eccentric personality). This kind of individual alienation in an urban context was a popular topic for many modernist writers, including T.S. Eliot and John Dos Passos. By the 1950s, these themes had diffused into popular literature and would have been familiar to Albee's audience. Jerry's attempts to find intimacy are counteracted by the depersonalization of the urban landscape, which ties this theme directly to the play's central conflict.

Social class

One source of the awkwardness between Peter and Jerry is the vast difference in their life stories and their social class. While Peter enjoys a high salary and a stable family life, Jerry has no job and characterizes himself as a "permanent transient." This difference is not just a matter of how much money the men have; it

affects everything from their philosophical viewpoints to the way they perceive the world. Because the men's lives up to this point have been so radically different, they do not share common experiences and thus have trouble understanding each other. That social class distinctions could facilitate the tragedy of this play is a tragedy unto itself.

Failures in communication

In so many ways, Peter and Jerry are unable to bridge their differences to achieve any real communication. This communication failure occurs on both linguistic and philosophical levels.

On the linguistic level, the men have trouble conversing because they have different understandings of words and concepts. An example of this comes early in the play, when Jerry asks Peter about his family. When Peter tells Jerry that he has two daughters, Peter assumes this communicates that he is married. However, Jerry does not make this assumption, and Peter is confused when Jerry continues to task him about his family. Because the men come from such different socioeconomic backgrounds, they do not approach issues with the same definitions, and hence is their ability to achieve any real intimacy hampered.

There is also a deeper failure to communicate on a philosophical level; their opinions on life and its meaning are so different that the difference impedes their ability to connect with each other. For example, Peter states on p. 22 that people should not get everything they want; he believes that a certain amount of deprivation is essential to the human experience. Jerry, on the other hand, has experienced real suffering and misfortune, and therefore has a different viewpoint on the topic. The insensitivity of Peter's remark diminishes the tentative connection that the men have made. Ultimately, the play's tragedy results from the inevitable fact that Jerry will never find a way to communicate with a world that considers him an outsider, and refuses to try and see the world the way he does.

Capitalism and the American Dream

The 1950s is often considered the heyday of the American Dream. After World War II, the US economy boomed, and a middle-class lifestyle was more

attainable than ever before. However, many of the period's greatest authors were critical of the effect this capitalist ethic had on American culture. Many of Albee's contemporaries – such as Arthur Miller and Richard Yates – wrote scathing satires of American materialism. Albee shares their skepticism about the 'American Dream'. Through Jerry, an impoverished social outcast, Albee suggests that a middle-class existence is not as attainable as it seems - and that it may not even be desirable. Jerry is harshly critical of Peter's conventional lifestyle; he argues that family life has emasculated Peter, and that the bourgeoisie are so caught up in material success that they do not pay attention to the world around them. And yet perhaps the most scathing attack of all is how desperately Jerry seems to want to be included in this world anyway. One of his many contradictions is wanting to be embraced by a world he despises, and this is one of the many forces that lead him to such drastic action at the end of the play.

Alternative sexualities

The Zoo Story's frank discussion of homosexuality was extremely unusual for its time, and for this reason, many critics interpret the play as an allegory about the repression of taboo sexual desires. Albee himself is gay, and critics including Robert Zaller consider Jerry's loneliness – and desperate fumbling for intimacy with a male stranger – to be representative of the gay male experience in 1958. There are also erotic undertones to Peter and Jerry's interaction, even when sex is not being discussed explicitly. For example, many critics have pointed out the phallic resonance of Jerry's death, which occurs through a knife-wound in the abdomen.

Albee's portrayal of alternative sexuality is closely tied to his exploration of alienation. Because America had an extremely conservative culture where sexuality was concerned, people whose desires fell outside the mainstream were often marginalized. Although Jerry's loneliness is not entirely a product of his sexuality, it can be seen as illustrative of the challenges that people with alternative sexualities had to face at the time.

Absurdity and Reality

The first theme of *The Zoo Story* has to do with absurdity and reality. During the beginning of the play, Jerry initiates the conversation with Peter and carefully chooses topics with which Peter will be familiar, such as family and career. However,

Jerry soon begins to insert strange comments and questions into what is on the surface a conversation between two strangers trying to get to know each other. This is apparent during the moment when Jerry, assuming that Peter does not like his daughters' cats, asks if Peter's birds are diseased. Peter says that he does not believe so and Jerry replies:

"That's too bad. If they did you could set them loose in the house and the cats could eat them and die, maybe." These unreasonable and ridiculous, or absurd, moments in the play begin to shake Peter's sense of reality and place. However, Jerry is quick to counter these moments with genuinely pleasant, benign comments and interesting stories to keep Peter engaged. Throughout the play, as Jerry's stories continue, he is careful to control the conversation and manipulate Peter. By the end of the play, Jerry has managed to alter Peter's perception of reality to such an extent that Peter becomes involved in a physical fight over what he believes to be "his" park bench and in an act of self-defense helps Jerry kill himself. The reality of what has transpired then strikes Peter full force, and he runs off howling "Oh my God!"

Wealth and Poverty

The final major theme of *The Zoo Story* is wealth and poverty, and the illusions that are created between the social and economic classes. This theme is closely related to alienation and loneliness because Albee establishes the societal pressures of class as the cause of Jerry's suffering. The issue of class is brought up early in the play when Jerry is asking Peter about his family and his job, and then asks: "Say, what's the dividing line between upper-middle-middle class and lower-upper-middle class?" Obviously, Jerry belongs to neither of these classes, and by his own admission is simply being condescending. However, the illusions that Jerry has about Peter's life are very close to the truth, whereas to Peter Jerry's life is completely foreign. Critics have argued that Albee is condemning the wealthy classes for their false sense of security and their lack of knowledge or understanding of how the other half lives. This point of view seems to be very clear by the end of the play when Jerry has succeeded in bringing Peter down to a basic animal-like level of behavior. It is at this point that their classes become irrelevant and their similarities are seen as the truth. Whether wealthy or poor, the desire for contact and

love from others is equally strong. *The Zoo Story* shows what can happen when this need is not fulfilled.

3.1.9 Sum up

The entire play is set on a park bench in Central Park. One Sunday afternoon, Peter, an upper-middle-class family man and publishing executive in his mid-forties, is reading a book on a bench. Jerry, a sloppily dressed transient in his late thirties, approaches and announces that he is coming from the Central Park Zoo. Despite Peter's apparent reluctance to chat, Jerry strikes up a conversation. Jerry's forward personality quickly begins to annoy Peter – he points out that Peter will likely get cancer from smoking, and implies that Peter is emasculated because he has cats instead of dogs.

Jerry continues to ask Peter questions about his life, his job, and his interests. When Peter finally begins to return Jerry's questions, Jerry tells him about his miserable apartment in a flophouse on the Upper West Side. He describes his unsavory neighbors and the junk that comprises his possessions – including two empty picture frames. When Peter asks him about the picture frames, Jerry explains that he is completely alone in life. His parents died when he was young, and his only significant romantic relationship was a short liaison he had with another boy when he was a teenager.

Jerry promises to tell Peter about his trip to the zoo, but is sidetracked into telling Peter about his landlady, a drunken woman who constantly propositions him. When she got a dog, Jerry tried to befriend it, but the dog responded only by attacking him. After repeated and repudiated attempts at friendship, Jerry decided to murder the dog by feeding it a poisoned hamburger patty. Although this sickened the dog, it eventually recovered and began to simply leave him alone.

Peter finds this story extremely disturbing, and wonders why Jerry told it to him. Jerry explains that he tries to befriend animals as a gateway to befriending other people.

Peter tries to excuse himself, but Jerry tickles him to keep him from leaving. He then tries to force Peter to move from the bench, and punches him when he

refuses. Although Peter initially realizes that Jerry's behavior is absurd, he gradually becomes more possessive of the bench.

Jerry pulls a knife and insists the men fight for it. This shocks Peter, who refuses to fight. As a gesture of peace, Jerry gives the knife to Peter, who holds the knife out to protect himself. Suddenly, Jerry charges Peter and impales himself on the knife.

Although he is initially hysterical, Jerry soon calms down and accepts his death. He even thanks Peter, using his last energy to wipe Peter's fingerprints off the knife handle so that Peter will not be accused of his murder. Peter takes his book and dashes off before passers-by notice that Jerry is dying.

3.1.10 Glossary

1. Anticipate - looking forward to with excitement
2. Beaverboard - a cheap material used to create partitions in buildings
3. Catholicity - open-mindedness
4. Consolation - comfort taken after a disappointing or sad event
5. Dour - sullen; unhappy
6. Falsetto - a very high-pitched way of speaking or singing
7. Flabbergasted - shocked; bewildered
8. Hotplate - an appliance used for heating food; hotplates are often banned in apartments because they pose a fire hazard
9. Imbecile - an unintelligent person
10. Impotence - weakness; often used in reference to a man's inability to perform sexually
11. Malevolence - ill will; evil intent
12. Misanthropic -resentful or distrusting of humankind
13. Omnibus - an antiquated term for a bus
14. Patronize - to condescend or talk down to someone, often in an ostensibly kind manner

15. Prosthesis - an artificial body part
16. Queen - a slur for male homosexuals, now somewhat antiquated
17. Vacate - to leave permanently
18. Vaudeville - a popular type of theatre in early 20th-century America; a typical vaudeville performance often consisted of short musical and comedy acts
19. Vivid - lifelike
20. Whimsy - fanciful behavior

3.1.11 Check Your Progress

Short Questions:

1. How does The Zoo Story criticize modern capitalist society?
2. What happens at the end of "The Zoo Story"?
3. Why is the play titled The Zoo Story?
4. What is Jerry's purpose in Edward Albee's The Zoo Story?
5. In Edward Albee's The Zoo Story, why did Jerry end his life in a strange way?
6. What is the significance of Jerry's knife and Peter's book in The Zoo Story?
7. How does the landlady treat Jerry in The Zoo Story?
8. In "The Zoo Story," what does Jerry hope will happen in Peter's future?
9. Why does Jerry share his life story with Peter in The Zoo Story?
10. In "The Zoo Story," why does Peter stay with Jerry in the park for the entire play?
11. Why does Jerry attempt to love the dog in The Zoo Story?
12. How does the animal story relate to the actors' existence in "The Zoo Story"?
13. Why does Jerry suggest Peter will get mouth cancer in "The Zoo Story"?

Essay Questions:

1. The characters in The Zoo Story frequently refer to the play's New York setting. What does Albee accomplish by so heavily emphasizing the setting?

2. What is the symbolic significance of Jerry's death?
3. What does The Zoo Story say about capitalism?
4. Analyze how Peter's attitude about the bench changes over the course of the play.
5. Discuss Albee's depiction of homosexuality in The Zoo Story.
6. What role do animals play in The Zoo Story?
7. Compare and contrast Peter and Jerry's personalities.
8. Do Peter and Jerry represent certain values or ways of thinking?
9. How is one to understand Jerry's strange behavior? Why does he act the way he does
10. Jerry never gets around to telling Peter the titular zoo story. Why is that?

Self-Assessment Question :

EDWARD ALBEE: THE ZOO STORY

2 MARKS

1. What is the setting of the play "The Zoo Story"?

Answer: Central Park, New York City.

2. What does Jerry want to discuss with Peter?

Answer: Jerry wants to discuss his own life and personal dissatisfaction with Peter.

3. What is the significance of the zoo in Jerry's life?

Answer: The zoo symbolizes Jerry's feelings of entrapment and his desire for personal connection.

4. How does Peter react to Jerry's story about the dog?

Answer: Peter is uncomfortable and disturbed by Jerry's story and behavior.

5. In what way does Jerry's interaction with Peter reveal his own personal struggles?

Answer: It reveals Jerry's deep sense of alienation and his need to assert his own identity.

6. How might Peter's initial passive demeanor influence the play's development?

Answer: Peter's passivity allows Jerry's confrontational behavior to escalate, driving the play's conflict.

7. Analyze the role of social norms in "The Zoo Story."

Answer: Social norms are challenged by Jerry's actions and confrontations, exposing the superficiality and limitations of societal expectations.

8. What is the significance of the final confrontation between Jerry and Peter?

Answer: The final confrontation represents the culmination of Jerry's need to break free from isolation and Peter's unwillingness to confront his own discomfort.

5MARKS

1. Describe the setting of The Zoo Story. What are the key locations and what do they symbolize?

2. Compare and contrast the characters of Jerry and Peter. How do their backgrounds and motivations influence their actions and the play's outcome?

3. Examine the use of symbolism in The Zoo Story. How does Albee use symbols to deepen the thematic content of the play?

4. Illustrate how the play's central conflict reflects broader social or existential issues. Provide specific examples from the text.

5. Discuss the role of communication and miscommunication in the play. How do these elements affect the relationship between Jerry and Peter?

8marks

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of the play's climax in The Zoo Story. How does it impact the resolution of the play's central conflict?

2. Apply psychological theories to analyze the behavior of Jerry and Peter. How do these theories help in understanding their actions and motivations?

3. Discuss the role of social class and isolation in The Zoo Story. How do these elements influence the characters' interactions?

4. Identify the main characters in The Zoo Story and summarize their key traits and motivations.

5. Examine the symbolic elements in The Zoo Story. What do the zoo and the characters’ actions symbolize within the context of the play?

Unit IV

Short Story

UNIT – IV SHORT STORIES

CONTENT OF UNIT- IV

- Washington Irving - Rip Van Winkle
- Edgar Allan Poe - The Purloined Letter
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman - The Yellow Wallpaper
- O. Henry -The Gift of the Magi

UNIT OBJECTIVES

- Develop the ability to read and interpret literary texts with a critical eye.
- Identify and discuss various literary devices and techniques used by authors.
- Understand the historical and cultural contexts in which these stories were written and how they influence the narratives.
- Compare and contrast the societal issues addressed in each story and their relevance today.
- Improve written and oral communication skills through essays, discussions, and presentations.
- Articulate well-supported arguments and analyses based on textual evidence.
- Foster an appreciation for different literary styles and genres.
- Encourage a lifelong interest in literature and its role in reflecting and shaping society.

SECTION 4.1: RIP VAN WINKLE - WASHINGTON IRVING

4.1.1 Introduction to Washington Irving

Washington Irving was one of the most famous American authors of the nineteenth century. While he is primarily remembered for short stories such as “Rip van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” he also penned an extensive biography of George Washington.

Born in New York City, Irving was the eighth child in his family. Both of his parents emigrated from England to New York twenty years earlier, and his father

became a merchant to support the family.1 As Irving grew up, he found that the things that gave him the most joy in life were reading, drawing, and writing.2 At the age of nineteen, he began to pursue his passions by writing essays in his brother's newspaper The Morning Chronicle. By 1819, he made the bold decision to try to make a living through writing alone. Irving felt that he was unsuited for any other form of occupation, and that he was determined to succeed in making a name for himself through writing literature. If he did not succeed, however, he would be willing to take on other forms of employment in order to survive.3

Thankfully for him, the gamble paid off after the publication of the essays included in The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon throughout 1819 and 1820. As one reviewer put it, Irving's series of short stories helped to demonstrate his unique sense of humor and style, best demonstrated by "Rip van Winkle."4 The Sketch Book gained Irving attention not just in the United States, but also in England. One Englishman described Irving's writings as being kind and affectionate, personally favoring the "Essay on Rural Life in England."5

By the 1850s, Irving decided to write a biography of George Washington. In the early nineteenth century, biography was an increasingly popular literary genre and the much-admired Washington was an ideal subject. Previous biographies of Washington had been written by Mason Locke Weems (who invented the cherry tree myth) and Chief Justice John Marshall, but given Irving's recent literary reputation, a biography of George Washington by him would be very likely to sell.6

In 1853, Irving began his research about Washington. He utilized two important sources to craft the biography—The Writings of George Washington, and a series of George Washington's letters acquired through the State Department.7

After two years of research, Irving began writing his Washington biography at his home in Sunnyside, New York. In his preface, Irving explained that he had long wanted to write a biography of Washington, though ill health as well as his many travels to Europe delayed the project.8 According to Irving, he sought to write in a narrative style that also rigorously grounded itself in historical facts.9

Irving published the biography in multiple volumes between 1855 and 1859. The work dealt with subjects including George Washington's military exploits, presidency, and his personal life. Irving's creative style rendered a highly readable account of Washington's life centered on exploring the great man as a human being.

Some reviewers argued that by exploring Washington's military and personal life in a realistic manner, Irving was able to transform Washington from a demigod figure into a subject far more approachable and understandable to the average reader. The historian George Bancroft lauded Irving for writing both with the qualities of good historian and with narrative tone that made the events portrayed seem natural.10 Another historian, William H. Prescott, after reading the fourth volume, congratulated Irving for making Washington into someone that people could relate to.11 Irving had managed to establish himself not just as a successful fiction writer, but also a successful historian.

Irving died the same year that he released the final installment of the biography. Many were shocked and saddened by his passing. Flags were held at half-mast at the news of his passing, and many paused and reflected on his achievements as a literary figure.

Washington Irving today is primarily remembered for his short stories that took a humorous look at American history and culture. His biography of George Washington, by contrast, also demonstrated his keen ability for presenting history in a professional and engaging. It became one of the most important biographies of the nineteenth century, and it still serves as one of most famous depictions of Washington's life.

4.1.2 Summary

An introduction explains that this tale was found among the papers of a man named Diedrich Knickerbocker, a historian of the Dutch settlers of New York. Knickerbocker, however, was less interested in getting his history from books than from other people's stories. The narrator insists that Knickerbocker's greatest attribute was his accuracy, and that the truth of the story to come is assured.

Rip Van Winkle lives in a small Dutch village along the Hudson River in the shadow of the Catskill Mountains (spelled here Kaatskill). Rip is a good-natured man, though inclined to avoid work. His wife considers him a terrible husband, yet he is beloved throughout the village. He does odd jobs for others and plays games with the children. He is attentive to everyone else's business but his own, which frustrates his wife constantly. His small farm is chaotic and poorly managed, and the soil produces less and less yearly. The state of his children reflects his general disinterest in taking care of his own responsibilities, and his son looks to be inheriting his father's traits.

Rip's idleness is mirrored in both his dog, Wolf, and the company he keeps at the village inn, where other men sit and chat about the issues of the day without much enthusiasm. The schoolmaster, Derrick Van Bummel, reads whatever news comes their way and the landlord of the inn, Nicholas Vedder, steers opinion through his pipe smoke exhalations.

One evening, Rip rests in the wilderness after squirrel hunting with his dog. He sees a stranger, dressed in old-fashioned Dutch clothes, climbing the hill toward Rip and lugging a keg on his shoulder. The stranger gestures to Rip to help, which Rip does, though stunned by the man's appearance. Hearing what he believes is thunder, Rip follows the stranger through a ravine into a hollow, where he sees more strange-looking men dressed in similarly outdated clothing joylessly playing a kind of bowling called nine-pins. They remind Rip of a painting of old Flemish men belonging to the village parson. The sound that Rip believed to be thunder turns out to be the sound of the balls being rolled toward the pins. The players stop playing at his approach and fill their cups with liquor from the keg. They drink and return to their game, even as Rip is awed and unnerved by their appearance. Eventually, Rip tries the liquor and finds it to his liking. After more than a few drinks, he falls asleep.

Upon waking, Rip finds himself where he first saw the man with the keg. He worries that he has slept there all night and anticipates a scolding from his wife. He notices that his well-loved gun is gone, and in its place are the rusted, ruined pieces of what was once a rifle. Unable to call his dog to him, he is determined to revisit the scene of the previous evening's encounter. Stiff upon rising, he wanders through the

woods again, but the way is blocked, and he can't find the hollow. Unhappy about losing his dog and the prospect of seeing his wife again, he heads home.

Arriving back in his village, he notes that people are wearing a different style of clothing than he is used to, and those who acknowledge him all seem to stroke their chins. Stroking his own, Rip finds a foot-long grey beard. As he moves through the village, he finds it altered: bigger, more populated, full of children he doesn't know and names he doesn't recognize over doors and on businesses. He begins to fear that the drink has confused him to the extent that he can't recognize his own village or is somehow in a different village. Making his way to his house, he finds it in ruins with a strange dog skulking around that growls at him. The house is empty, and it appears as though no one has lived there for quite some time.

Hoping to find some remnant of familiarity, he goes to the inn, but even that is altered. It is now The Union Hotel, with a flagpole replacing the large tree that stood outside the inn he frequented. The flag that flies atop the flagpole is an American flag, and the portrait on the inn of King George has been replaced with a portrait of George Washington. Instead of the group of idle men lounging outside the door, there is a bustling crowd, including one man talking loudly about political concerns, of which Rip understands nothing.

Rip's strange appearance and unfamiliarity draw attention from the crowd. As they inquire about which side he voted for in the election, Rip has no idea what anyone is talking about. One man, seeing Rip's old rifle, accuses Rip of planning to stir up trouble. When Rip, flustered, cries that he is just a simple man, an inhabitant of the village, and loyal to the king, there is an uproar that takes some time to settle down. When Rip finally asks after his friends at the tavern, he is told of their fates: two dead, one in congress. It is also revealed that Nicholas Vedder has been dead for 18 years, indicating Rip has been gone for at least that long. Dismayed, Rip asks if anyone knows Rip Van Winkle. A few in the crowd point out a young man, and as Rip considers him, he realizes that this young man looks just like him at the age he fell asleep. Someone asks what his name is, and he is at a loss, confused by this twin version of himself, his age, and the changed world around him.

At this, the crowd begins to believe that this old man has lost his wits, before a young woman is heard shushing her baby, whose name is apparently Rip. When asked her name and her father's name, it is revealed that she is Rip's daughter, and she explains that he disappeared 20 years ago and hasn't been seen since. When asked, she tells Rip that Dame Van Winkle recently died. Rip exclaims that he is her father, and then looks around to ask if anyone remembers him. An elderly woman recognizes him by name, and asks about his prolonged absence. As Rip tells his story, the crowd is skeptical. The village, however, agrees to let Peter Vanderdonk decide whether or not the story is reasonable. Vanderdonk is the oldest person in the village and knows the history of the area as well as the folklore. He describes the surrounding mountains as being inhabited by strange creatures. He also claims that Hendrick (Henry) Hudson and his crew, legendary explorers of the area, come back every 20 years to visit and make sure the land is still in good order. In fact, Vanderdonk's father had once seen them, dressed in their old-fashioned clothing, playing nine-pins. Vanderdonk himself says that he once heard the thundering of their bowling balls one summer afternoon. This wise testimony seems to validate Rip's story in the eyes of the townspeople.

Rip moves in with his daughter and her husband, whom Rip recognizes as one of the children he used to play with in his youth. He resumes his idle ways, now old enough to do so without criticism. He takes walks and sits outside the hotel, telling stories about the time before the war and learning more about how the world has changed in his absence. Soon, everyone in town knows the tale by heart.

A note appended to the end of the story comes from Knickerbocker insisting that every word of the story is true. He has spoken to Rip Van Winkle himself and seen a document verifying the veracity of the story, so the reader has no reason whatsoever to doubt it.

A postscript is included, supposedly from notes made by Knickerbocker about the indigenous folklore of the region concerning both the spirits that manifest the weather and those that live in the Catskill Mountains.

4.1.3 Analysis

"Rip Van Winkle" is one of the most famous stories of *The Sketchbook of* Geoffrey Crayon. It is one of the few that take place in America, although it is believed to be a retelling of an Old World folktale. The setting of the tale, in the Catskills by the Hudson, gives the story a fairly precise location that grounds it in America.

The passages that begin and end the story frame it to separate it from the other sketches. Here our narrator is no longer Crayon but Diedrich Knickerbocker, who is quite adamant in vouching for the authenticity of the tale, which serves not to satisfy the reader but instead to make the reliability of the tale and its narrator even more ambiguous. This distance of Crayon from the tale touches on the theme of veracity in storytelling and its importance.

The story itself is an escapist fantasy; Rip Van Winkle is an ineffectual male hero who cannot support his farm or family. Instead of facing the consequences of his idleness and facing his wife, who certainly makes the problem worse instead of better, he sleeps for twenty years. Finally, he is of such an age that his idleness is excusable and allowed. This makes him an antithesis to the American dream. He has no ambition, he does not work hard for himself, and he does not rise above where he began. He just likes to chat and have friends.

He also sleeps through what was the defining moment of American history, and upon waking, he does not even care. This develops him as the American anti-hero, for he takes no part in the country's founding or history. His story makes sense as more of an Old World story, one that the Dutch settlers, in their relatively old village, can retell. The story also shows that great historical events are often less important than the daily happenings in an individual's life. The only oppressor Rip Van Winkle cares about having overcome is his wife.

Dame Van Winkle is certainly the antagonist in this story. She is constantly berating Rip Van Winkle, whom everyone else in the neighborhood adores. She is a completely flat character—we only ever see her worst side, except for the one comment made after she has died that she always kept the house in good order. Her criticism of her husband, if far too strong, is nevertheless deserved. He has

completely failed in his role as husband, father, and breadwinner, leaving his family in near ruin. The husband is an extreme form of deadbeat and the wife an extreme form of nagging and henpecking, a state of affairs which appears to be a lesson and warning for Irving's male and female readers alike. The husbands should learn to be more industrious and attentive, and the wives should learn to be less antagonistic and more understanding lest they drive their husbands further away.

Rip's night in the woods symbolizes the fantasy of escape through one's imagination, which is in itself a form of storytelling. Once he is freed of his duties to his family, he becomes the town storyteller, and it is this story which has freed him from his domestic duties—he literally and figuratively dreamed them away. In this way the imagination, or one's creative life, is presented as a way to deal with the less pleasing duties of everyday life. At the same time, it is not without its dangers. Although Van Winkle finds a happy ending, he is very close to being labeled insane or dangerous and being thrust out of the town.

4.1.4 Themes

Tyranny can be overcome in different ways.

One of the main preoccupations of the story is the act of overcoming tyrants, both real and perceived. Whether the person in question is a king, an overbearing ship's captain, or a wife, the characters in the story are trying to remove themselves from what they believe to be that person's tyranny. For instance, Rip Van Winkle is working to overcome his wife's many demands and the tyranny the narrator believes she imposes. Rip does not fight back when his wife yells at him, but he also does not do what she asks. He simply disappears and either wanders away or helps others. The work gets done or it does not. Rip gets what he wants, which is to be left alone.

Furthermore, the citizens of the town have, in Rip's absence, fought a revolutionary war against the king of England. They have overthrown a government that they felt did not have their best interests at heart and have begun, as the narrative points out, holding elections for local office. They have chosen to make their own destiny, to succeed or fail on their own terms, and it all began with ousting a man they viewed as a tyrant.

Though the strange men in the woods are also involved with a tyrant, their situation differs from those of Rip and the villagers, as the strange men remained loyal to their tyrant and were themselves overcome. Historical record suggests that when Henry Hudson attempted to extend his exploration of the area by sailing further west, there was a mutiny involving most of his crew. Those who sided with Hudson were abandoned in the Catskills, doomed to joylessly reappear every twenty years as spirits. It is these unfortunate loyalists to Hudson that Rip encounters in the forest. Tyranny, within the story, is never rewarded.

Work is not a man's worth.

Throughout the story, Rip Van Winkle is not a man who considers his responsibilities important, but the story does not consider this a blemish on Rip's character. Instead of tending his farm or helping with chores, he would rather wander or fish or help others. In a place and time where effort is directly related to food and shelter, Rip seems dangerously derelict in his duties as a husband and father. In the modern view, Rip seems to be a person who has always wanted to be retired, even as a young man. He does not want to have to bother with conforming to society's expectations, nor does he want to have to do what he doesn't want to. His long nap, then, enables him to skip twenty years of adulthood and its responsibilities.

By sleeping through this period in his life, he arrives back in the village as an elder, someone from whom nothing is expected. He is no longer shirking his duties, as those duties have fallen to the next generation. He is able to assume the rewards of a long life without having lived one. He can tell stories and play with the town's children, which is what he has always been best equipped to do. Rather than being a useless husband and father, it is clear that Rip has always been suited to be a town elder, everyone's friendly uncle who can laugh and joke and tell stories while sitting in the sun with a pipe in his mouth while everyone else takes care of business. The narrator considers this to be a reasonable situation for Rip, and refuses to hold the idleness of his younger self against him.

History doesn’t necessarily reflect what happened.

Rip’s story is so fantastical and unlikely that it might be easily dismissed as preposterous, not just by the villagers who clamor to hear his tale throughout the

years but by the reader as well. That being said, the question of whether Rip's story is true or not is immaterial. Rip claims it happened, and whether others believe it or not, by telling his story over and over again, by incorporating it into the story of the town and its inhabitants, it becomes part of the area's history. "Rip Van Winkle," then, is a narrative about how stories and history aren't necessarily one and the same but can ultimately blend to the point where it's hard to differentiate one from the other.

The narrator insists on the truth of Rip's story by claiming to be relating it faithfully. In the postscript to the story, however, it is revealed that the narrator knows Rip personally, which might serve to reinforce its authenticity but might also force the reader to reconsider how much the narrator can be trusted. Nevertheless, by repeating the story, by insisting on its truth, eventually the story stands on its own as part of the accepted version of events, regardless of whether or not it actually happened.

4.1.5 Sum up

The story of Rip Van Winkle was found among the papers of the late Diedrich Knickerbocker, an old gentleman from New York who was especially interested in the histories, customs, and culture of the Dutch settlers in that state. It is set in a small, very old village at the foot of the Catskill Mountains, which was founded by some of the earliest Dutch settlers. Rip lived there while America was still a colony of Great Britain.

Rip Van Winkle is descended from gallant soldiers but is a peaceful man himself, known for being a kind and gentle neighbor. His single flaw is an utter inability to do any work that could turn a profit. It is not because he is lazy—in fact, he is perfectly willing to spend all day helping someone else with their labor. He is just incapable of doing anything to help his own household. He also is well-known for being an obedient, henpecked husband, for Dame Van Winkle has no problem shouting insults into the neighborhood and tracking him down in the village to berate him. All the women and children in the village love him and side with him against his wife, and even the dogs do not bark at him.

Indeed, when he tries to console himself and escape from Dame Van Winkle, he often goes to a sort of philosophical or political club that meets on a bench outside of a small inn. Here the more idle men actually gossip and tell sleepy stories about nothing, every once in a while discussing “current” events when they find an old newspaper. Nicholaus Vedder is the landlord of the inn and the leader of the group. He never speaks but makes his opinions clear based on how he smokes his pipe. Even here, Van Winkle cannot escape from his wife, who berates everyone for encouraging his idleness.

His indolence is probably to be blamed for his farm’s bad luck, so Dame Van Winkle has more than a little cause to berate him—which she does, morning, noon, and night. As the years pass, things continue to get worse, and his only recourse is to escape to the outdoors. His one companion in the household is his dog Wolf, who for no good reason is just as badly treated by the petticoat tyrant Dame Van Winkle.

On one trip to the woods, Van Winkle wanders to one of the highest points in the Catskills. Fatigued from the climb, he rests, and soon the sun has started to set. He knows he will not be able to get home before dark. As he gets up, he hears a voice call his name. A shadowy figure seems to be in need of assistance, so he approaches the man, who looks very strange. He is short and square, with thick bushy hair and a grizzled beard, dressed in the antique Dutch fashion. He asks Van Winkle for help climbing higher with a keg. They reach an amphitheatre in the woods, where a collection of similarly odd-looking men are bowling, which makes the environs sound like it is thundering. Although they are involved in pleasurable pursuits, they are silent and grim.

The man starts to serve drinks from the keg and gestures to Van Winkle to help. He eventually takes a drink for himself. It tastes delicious, and he goes back for more and more until he is quite drunk and lies down to pass out.

When he wakes up in the morning, he is anxious about what Dame Van Winkle will say about his late return. He reaches for his gun but finds that it is now rusty and worm-eaten—perhaps the men tricked him and replaced his gun. Wolf also is gone and does not respond to Van Winkle’s calls. He gets up and feels quite stiff. When he tries to retrace his steps, the amphitheatre appears to have become an

impenetrable wall of rock, and some of the natural features of the area have changed.

Van Winkle returns to the village but recognizes nobody, which is strange for a small village, and he notices that everyone is strangely dressed. They look surprised to see him, too, and he realizes that his beard has grown a foot longer. The children hoot at him and the dogs bark. The village itself has grown larger. He begins to think he must be going crazy, for the natural scenery is the only thing that is recognizable. The flagon must have made him lose his mind.

At his house, he finds it in complete disrepair and abandoned. His wife and children are not there. The inn where he used to meet his friends has disappeared, and where there used to be a picture of George III there is now one of a certain George Washington. The new group of people at the new hotel there is full of completely different people, and their discussions are more argumentative than he remembers. The crowd asks him questions, especially about what political party he belongs to. He is confused and says he is still a loyal subject of the king. They declare him a traitor and a Tory. When he says he has just come looking for his friends, they tell him that Nicholaus Vedder has been dead for eighteen years and Van Bummel is now in Congress.

Rip Van Winkle becomes still more distressed and confused when he asks if they know Rip Van Winkle and the townspeople point out a different lazy-looking man. He begins to think he is crazy. A familiar woman approaches, and he finds out enough to decide that she is his daughter. She explains that her father went out with his gun one day twenty years ago and was never heard from since. Rip Van Winkle tells everyone that for him it has only been one night, which makes them think he is crazy, too. The one piece of good news is that Dame Van Winkle recently passed away.

Peter Vanderdonk, the town's oldest inhabitant, vouches for Rip Van Winkle and says that he has heard tales passed down about the ghosts of Hendrick Hudson and his men appearing once every twenty years; they bowl and keep a guardian eye on the region that Hudson explored. The tale seems to fit with Rip's experience. Rip goes to live with his daughter, who is married to a cheerful farmer. He lives much

happier than he ever was with Dame Van Winkle. Also, he is now old enough for his idleness to be socially acceptable, and he returns to the hotel and is again well-loved in the village. He eventually learns about the Revolutionary War and everything else that has passed, but the only yoke of government that he cares about having thrown off is that of Dame Van Winkle.

Knickerbocker closes the story with an impassioned declaration of its veracity on personal examination. He also gives a brief history of the magic and fables associated with the Catskills, suggesting that even the Indians tell of similar experiences in the area in their own stories and myths.

4.1.6 Check Your Progress

Short Questions

1. Describe Rip Van Winkle's personality.
2. What task does Rip Van Winkle set out to do when he goes into the mountains?
3. What changes in the village does Rip Van Winkle notice after waking up from his long sleep?
4. How does Rip Van Winkle's wife affect his life before his long sleep?
5. What role does the American Revolution play in the story of "Rip Van Winkle"?

Essay Questions

1. Examine the theme of change and continuity in "Rip Van Winkle." How does Irving use Rip's long sleep to comment on societal changes and the passing of time?
2. Discuss the character of Rip Van Winkle as an anti-hero. How does his personality contrast with the traditional heroic qualities? What does this suggest about Irving's views on American identity and individualism?
3. Analyze the role of folklore and myth in "Rip Van Winkle." How does Irving incorporate elements of legend and fantasy into the story, and what effect does this have on its themes and messages?

4. Explore the significance of the setting in "Rip Van Winkle." How do the Catskill Mountains contribute to the story's atmosphere and thematic development? How does the setting reflect Rip's internal journey?
5. Discuss the portrayal of gender roles in "Rip Van Winkle." How are male and female characters depicted, and what does this reveal about societal attitudes and family dynamics in the late 18th and early 19th centuries?

SECTION 4.2: THE PURLOINED LETTER- EDGAR ALLAN POE

4.2.1 Introduction to Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe was born January 19, 1809, and died October 7, 1849; he lived only forty years, but during his brief lifetime, he made a permanent place for himself in American literature and also in world literature. A few facts about Poe's life are indisputable, but, unfortunately, almost everything else about Poe's life has been falsified, romanticized, slanderously distorted, or subjected to grotesque Freudian interpretations. Poe, it has been said at various times, was a manic depressive, a dope addict, an epileptic, and an alcoholic; moreover, it has been whispered that he was syphilitic, that he was impotent, and that he fathered at least one illegitimate child. Hardly any of Poe's biographers have been content to write a straight account of his life. This was particularly true of his early biographers, and only recently have those early studies been refuted. Intrigued with the horror and mystery of Poe's stories and by the dark romanticism of his poetry, his early critics and biographers often embroidered on the facts of his past in order to create their own imaginative vision of what kind of man produced these "strange" tales and poems. Thus Poe's true genius was neglected for a long time. Indeed, probably more fiction has been written about this American literary master than he himself produced; finally, however, fair and unbiased evaluations of his writings and of his life are available to us, and we can judge for ourselves what kind of a man Poe was. Yet, because the facts are scarce, Poe's claim to being America's first authentic neurotic genius will probably remain, and it is possible that Poe would be delighted.

Both of Poe's parents were professional actors, and this fact in itself has fueled many of the melodramatic myths that surround Poe. Poe's mother was a teenage widow when she married David Poe, and Edgar was their second son. Poe's father had a fairly good reputation as an actor, but he had an even wider reputation as an alcoholic. He deserted the family a year after Poe was born, and the following year, Poe's mother died while she was acting in Richmond, Virginia.

The children were parceled out, and young Poe was taken in as a foster-child by John Allan, a rich southern merchant. Allan never legally adopted Poe, but he did try to give him a good home and a good education.

When Poe was six years old, the Allans moved to England, and for five years Poe attended the Manor House School, conducted by a man who was a good deal like the schoolmaster in "William Wilson." When the Allans returned to America, Poe began using his legal name for the first time.

Poe and his foster-father often quarreled during his adolescence and as soon as he was able to leave home, Poe enrolled at the University of Virginia. While he was there, he earned a good academic record, but Mr. Allan never allowed him the means to live in the style his social status demanded. When Poe tried to keep up with his high-living classmates, he incurred so many gambling debts that the parsimonious Mr. Allan prevented his returning for a second year of study.

Unhappy at home, Poe got money somehow (probably from Mrs. Allan) and went to Boston, where he arranged for publication of his first volume of poetry, *Tamerlane and Other Poems* (1827). He then joined the army. Two years later, when he was a sergeant-major, he received a discharge to enter West Point, to which he was admitted with Mr. Allan's help. Again, however, he felt frustrated because of the paltry allowance which his foster-father doled out to him, so he arranged to be court-martialed and dismissed.

Poe's next four years were spent in Baltimore, where he lived with an aunt, Maria Clemm; these were years of poverty. When Mr. Allan died in 1834, Poe hoped that he would receive some of his foster-father's fortune, but he was disappointed. Allan left him not a cent. For that reason, Poe turned from writing poetry, which he

was deeply fond of — despite the fact that he knew he could never live off his earnings — and turned to writing stories, for which there was a market. He published five tales in the *Philadelphia Saturday Courier* in 1832, and because of his talent and certain influential friends, he became an editorial assistant at the *Southern Literary Messenger* in Richmond in December 1835.

The editor of the *Messenger* recognized Poe's genius and published several of his stories, but he despaired at Poe's tendency to "sip the juice." Nevertheless, Poe's drinking does not seem to have interfered with his duties at the magazine; its circulation grew, Poe continued producing stories, and while he was advancing the reputation of the *Messenger,* he created a reputation of his own — not only as a fine writer, but also as a keen critic.

Poe married his cousin, Virginia Clemm, in 1836, when she was fourteen years old. He left the *Messenger* the following year and took his aunt and wife to New York City. There, Poe barely eked out a living for two years as a free-lance writer. He did, however, finish a short novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym,* and sold it to the *Messenger,* where it was published in two installments. *Harper's* bought out the magazine in 1838, but Poe never realized any more money from the novel because his former boss had recorded that the *Narrative* was only "edited" by Poe.

Poe continued writing, however, and finally in May 1839, he was hired as a co-editor of *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine.* He held this position for a year, during which he published some of his best fiction, including "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "William Wilson."

Because of his drinking, Poe lost his job the following year. This was unfortunate because his *Tales of the Grotesque,* which had been published several months earlier, was not selling well. Once again, Poe and his wife found themselves on the edge of poverty, but Poe's former employer recommended Poe to the publisher of *Graham's*, and once again Poe found work as an editor while he worked on his own fiction and poetry.

In January 1842, Poe suffered yet another setback. His wife, Virginia, burst a blood vessel in her throat. She did recover, but Poe's restlessness began to grow, as did the frequency of his drinking bouts, and he left *Graham's* under unpleasant circumstances. He attempted to found his own magazine and failed; he worked on cheap weeklies for awhile and, in a moment of despair, he went to Washington to seek out President Tyler. According to several accounts, he was so drunk when he called on the President that he wore his cloak inside out.

Shortly afterward, Poe moved his family to New York City and began working for the *Sunday Times.* The following year was a good one: James Russell Lowell praised Poe's talent and genius in an article, and Poe's poem "The Raven" was published and received rave reviews. Seemingly, Poe had "made it"; "The Raven" was the sensation of the literary season. Poe began lecturing about this time and, shortly afterward, a new collection of his short stories appeared, as well as a collection of his poetry.

Most biographers agree that Poe died of alcoholism — officially, "congestion of the brain." However, in 1996, cardiologist R. Michael Benitez, after conducting a blind clinical pathologic diagnosis of the symptoms of a patient described only as "E.P., a writer from Richmond," concluded that Poe died not from alcoholic poisoning, but from rabies. According to Dr. Benitez, Poe had become so hypersensitive to alcohol in his later years that he became ill for days after only one glass of wine. Benitez also refutes the myth that Poe died in a gutter, stating that he died at Washington College Hospital after four days of hallucinating and shouting at imaginary people.

4.2.2 Summary

Of all of Poe's stories of ratiocination (or detective stories), "The Purloined Letter" is considered his finest. This is partially due to the fact that there are no gothic elements, such as the gruesome descriptions of dead bodies, as there was in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." But more important, this is the story that employs most effectively the principle of ratiocination; this story brilliantly illustrates the concept of the intuitive intellect at work as it solves a problem logically. Finally, more than with most of his stories, this one is told with utmost economy.

"The Purloined Letter" emphasizes several devices from "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and adds several others. The story is divided into two parts. In the first part, Monsieur G —— , Prefect of Police in Paris, visits Dupin with a problem: A letter has been stolen and is being used to blackmail the person from whom it was stolen. The thief is known (Minister D ——) and the method is known (substitution viewed by the victim, who dared not protest). The problem is to retrieve the letter, since the writer and the victim, as well as Minister D —— , have important posts in the government; the demands he is making are becoming dangerous politically. The Prefect has searched Minister D —— 's home thoroughly, even taking the furniture apart; he and his men have found nothing. Dupin's advice is that they thoroughly re-search the house. A month later, Monsieur G —— returns, having found nothing. This time, he says that he will pay fifty thousand francs to anyone who can obtain the letter for him. Dupin invites him to write the check; when this is done, Dupin hands the Prefect the letter without any further comment.

The second half of "The Purloined Letter" consists of Dupin's explanation, to his chronicler, of how he obtained the letter. One of his basic assumptions is an inversion of one of the aphorisms that was introduced in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue"; the case is so difficult to solve *because* it appears to be so simple. Beyond that, Dupin introduces the method of psychological deduction. Before he did anything else, he reviewed everything he knew about Minister D —— . Then, he reviewed what he knew about the case. With this in mind, Dupin tried to reconstruct the Minister's thinking, deciding that he would very likely have hidden the letter in plain sight. Using this theory, Dupin visited Minister D —— and found the letter in plain sight but boldly disguised. He memorized the appearance of the letter, and he left a snuffbox as an excuse to return. Having duplicated the letter, he exchanged his facsimile for the original during a prearranged diversion. Retrieving his snuff-box, he departed. His solution introduces into detective fiction the formula of "the most obvious place."

Dupin is, of course, the original eccentric but brilliant detective. He seems to be a very private person, though one with connections and acquaintances in many places. He prefers the darkness and the evening; darkness, he feels, is particularly conducive to reflection. He prefers to gather his information and to ponder thoroughly

before any action is taken. He talks little; an hour or more of contemplative silence seems common. And, of course, he is an expert in the psychology of people of various types; indeed, he seems to be learned in a number of areas — mathematics and poetry, for example.

The Prefect, Monsieur G —— , is a contrast to Dupin. Whereas Dupin is primarily concerned with the psychological elements of the case, G —— is almost wholly concerned with physical details and evidence. G —— talks much and says little. Dupin considers things broadly, while G —— 's point of view is extremely narrow. Anything G —— does not understand is "odd" and not worth considering; for Dupin, that is a matter for investigation. G —— believes in a great deal of physical activity during an investigation, while Dupin believes in a maximum of thought and a minimum of physical exertion. Though Dupin says that the Paris police are excellent within their limitations, it is clear that G —— 's limitations are quite severe.

The personality of the unnamed narrator, the Dupin-chronicler, lies between these two extremes. Though he shares some of Dupin's tastes — silent contemplation in darkness, for example — and has some understanding of Dupin's methods, he seems psychologically closer to G —— than to Dupin. He seems to be a rather ordinary person with rather ordinary views and ideas. Thus, his assumptions and his interjections are often erroneous; he assumes, for example, that if the police have not been able to find the letter after their search, then it must be elsewhere. In his argument with Dupin about mathematicians, the narrator takes the common view and attitude toward mathematicians, a position that Dupin explicitly suggests is idiocy. In other words, the narrator is a mediator between Dupin and the reader. His reactions are similar to those of the reader, though he is somewhat less astute than the reader, so that the reader can feel superior to him. Naturally, such a narrator guides our attitudes toward Dupin, G —— , and the case. He is, for example, in awe of Dupin's abilities and methods; while the reader may maintain a more critical distance, he is guided in that direction to some degree. Finally, such a narrator determines the amount of information which a reader receives and guides the attention of the reader to the information received. In this case, the narrator tells us everything, but only as he receives it; because he did not witness the case being solved, the reader doesn't either.

The idea that the reader is a participant in the investigation of a crime and thus should be given all the information on which the detective bases his conclusions is quite modern. In "The Purloined Letter," the reader has little chance to participate, first because little information about Minister D —— 's character is given in the first half of the story, and, second, because there is no indication of any activity by Dupin until the second half. Poe's purpose was not to invite reader participation, but rather to emphasize rationality, stressing logical thinking as the means of solving problems. Consequently, Dupin's exposition of his thought processes are the most important part of the story. Without this highlighting of the logical investigation and solution of a problem, the detective story may never have developed; it would certainly be very different if it had. However, with this method and approach established, it became logical, and rather easy, to evolve the idea of the reader as a participant.

Attempting to determine the psychology of the criminal is an honorable tradition in detective fiction. The particular methods that are used change as more is learned about human beings, their behaviors, and their motivations; they also change, perhaps even more, as psychological theories change. Thus, much of Poe's — or Dupin's — psychology, especially the explanations, seems dated. For instance, the boy whom Dupin uses as an example arranges his face so it is as similar to the other person's expression as possible; this is supposed to give rise to thoughts and feelings that are similar to those of the other person. In the sense that outward expressions — facial expressions, clothes, and so on — are thought to influence the way a person feels, this idea is somewhat still current; however, that effect is thought to be general rather than specific, and we no longer believe that we can gain much knowledge of another person in this way. In addition, it is probably true that certain habits of thinking are likely to contribute to a person's success in a field; however, the distinctions are by no means as rigid as Poe made them seem, nor are the qualities so narrow. Although the principles that Dupin works from are rather outdated, his method is direct. This method is, of course, applicable to other kinds of problems posed in detective fiction; whenever the detective can learn and apply some knowledge of the criminal's psychology, he is closer to the solution of the crime.

Other details in "The Purloined Letter" reveal the story's era — the political system in France, Dupin's comments about poetry, mathematics, and the sciences in particular. Nevertheless, the story still reads well, and the details are overshadowed by the sweep of the puzzle and the story. Even if the story were not still interesting reading, "The Purloined Letter" would be of prime historical importance for it establishes the method of psychological deduction, the solution of the most obvious place, and the assumption that the case that seems simplest may be the most difficult to solve. Whether one is interested in good reading or has a historical interest in detective fiction, "The Purloined Letter" provides both.

4.2.3 Analysis

Along with “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” “The Purloined Letter” establishes a new genre of short fiction in American literature: the detective story. Poe considered “The Purloined Letter” his best detective story, and critics have long identified the ways in which it redefines the mystery genre—it turns away from action toward intellectual analysis, for example. As opposed to the graphic violence of “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” which features bodily mutilation and near decapitation by a wild animal, “The Purloined Letter” focuses more dryly on the relationship between the Paris police and Dupin, between the ineffectual established order and the savvy private eye. When the narrator opens the story by reflecting upon the gruesome murders in the Rue Morgue that Dupin has helped to solve, Poe makes it clear that the prior story is on his mind. Poe sets up the cool reason of “The Purloined Letter” in opposition to the violence of “The Murders in the Rue Morgue.” The battered and lacerated bodies of “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” are replaced by the bloodless, inanimate stolen letter. However, just as the Paris police are unable to solve the gory crime of passion in “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” they are similarly unable to solve this apparently simple mystery, in which the solution is hidden in plain sight.

Poe moves away from violence and action by associating Dupin’s intelligence with his reflectiveness and his radical theories about the mind. This tale does not have the constant action of stories like “The Cask of Amontillado” or “The Black Cat.” Instead, this tale features the narrator and Dupin sitting in Dupin’s library and

discussing ideas. The tale's action, relayed by flashbacks, takes place outside the narrative frame. The narrative itself is told through dispassionate analysis. The intrusions of the prefect and his investigations of the Minister's apartment come off as unrefined and unintellectual. Poe portrays the prefect as simultaneously the most active and the most unreflective character in the story. Dupin's most pointed criticisms of the prefect have less to do with a personal attack than with a critique of the mode of investigation employed by the police as a whole. Dupin suggests that the police cannot think outside their own standard procedures. They are unable to place themselves in the minds of those who actually commit crimes. Dupin's strategy of solving crimes, on the other hand, involves a process of thinking like someone else. Just as the boy playing "even and odd" enters his opponent's mind, Dupin inhabits the consciousness of the criminal. He does not employ fancy psychological theories, but rather imitates the train of thought of his opponent. He succeeds in operating one step ahead of the police because he thinks as the Minister does.

This crime-solving technique of thinking like the criminal suggests that Dupin and the Minister are more doubles than opposites. The revenge aspect of the story, which Dupin promises after the Minister offends him in Vienna, arguably derives from their threatening similarity. Dupin's note inside the phony letter, translated "So baneful a scheme, if not worthy of Atreus, is worthy of Thyestes," suggests the rivalry that accompanies brotherly minds. In the French dramatist Crébillon's early-eighteenth-century tragedy *Atrée et Thyeste* (or *Atreus and Thyestes*), Thyestes seduces the wife of his brother, Atreus. In retaliation, Atreus murders the sons of Thyestes and serves them to their father at a feast. Dupin implies here that Thyestes deserves more punishment than Atreus because he commits the original wrong. In contrast, Atreus's revenge is legitimate because it repays the original offense. Dupin considers his own deed to be revenge and thereby morally justified.

4.2.4 Themes

Love and Hate

Poe explores the similarity of love and hate in many stories, especially "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "William Wilson." Poe portrays the psychological complexity of these two supposedly opposite emotions, emphasizing the ways they enigmatically blend into each other. Poe's psychological insight anticipates the theories of

Sigmund Freud, the Austrian founder of psychoanalysis and one of the twentieth century's most influential thinkers. Poe, like Freud, interpreted love and hate as universal emotions, thereby severed from the specific conditions of time and space.

The Gothic terror is the result of the narrator's simultaneous love for himself and hatred of his rival. The double shows that love and hate are inseparable and suggests that they may simply be two forms of the most intense form of human emotion. The narrator loves himself, but when feelings of self-hatred arise in him, he projects that hatred onto an imaginary copy of himself. In "The Tell-Tale Heart," the narrator confesses a love for an old man whom he then violently murders and dismembers. The narrator reveals his madness by attempting to separate the person of the old man, whom he loves, from the old man's supposedly evil eye, which triggers the narrator's hatred. This delusional separation enables the narrator to remain unaware of the paradox of claiming to have loved his victim.

Self vs. Alter Ego

In many of Poe's Gothic tales, characters wage internal conflicts by creating imaginary alter egos or assuming alternate and opposite personalities. In "William Wilson," the divided self takes the form of the narrator's imagined double, who tracks him throughout Europe. The rival threatens the narrator's sense of a coherent identity because he demonstrates that it is impossible for him to escape his unwanted characteristics. The narrator uses the alter ego to separate himself from his insanity. He projects his inner turmoil onto his alter ego and is able to forget that the trouble resides within him. The alter ego becomes a rival of the self because its resemblance to the self is unmistakable. Suicide results from the delusion that the alter ego is something real that can be eliminated in order to leave the self in peace. In "The Black Cat" the narrator transforms from a gentle animal lover into an evil cat-killer. The horror of "The Black Cat" derives from this sudden transformation and the cruel act—the narrator's killing of his cat Pluto—which accompanies it. Pluto's reincarnation as the second cat haunts the narrator's guilty conscience. Although the narrator wants to forget his murder of Pluto, gallows appear in the color of his fur. The fur symbolizes the suppressed guilt that drives him insane and causes him to murder his wife.

The Power of the Dead over the Living

Poe often gives memory the power to keep the dead alive. Poe distorts this otherwise commonplace literary theme by bringing the dead literally back to life, employing memory as the trigger that reawakens the dead, who are usually women. In “Ligeia,” the narrator cannot escape memories of his first wife, Ligeia, while his second wife, the lady Rowena, begins to suffer from a mysterious sickness. While the narrator’s memories belong only to his own mind, Poe allows these memories to exert force in the physical world. Ligeia dies, but her husband’s memory makes him see her in the architecture of the bedroom he shares with his new wife. In this sense, Gothic terror becomes a love story. The loving memory of a grieving husband revives a dead wife. “Ligeia” breaks down the barrier between life and death, but not just to scare the reader. Instead, the memory of the dead shows the power of love to resist even the permanence of death.

4.2.5 Sum up

In a small room in Paris, an unnamed narrator, who also narrates “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” sits quietly with his friend, C. Auguste Dupin. He ponders the murders in the Rue Morgue, which Dupin solved in that story. Monsieur G——, the prefect of the Paris police, arrives, having decided to consult Dupin again. The prefect presents a case that is almost too simple: a letter has been taken from the royal apartments. The police know who has taken it: the Minister D——, an important government official. According to the prefect, a young lady possessed the letter, which contains information that could harm a powerful individual. When the young lady was first reading the letter, the man whom it concerned came into the royal apartments. Not wanting to arouse his suspicion, she put it down on a table next to her. The sinister Minister D—— then walked in and noted the letter’s contents. Quickly grasping the seriousness of the situation, he produced a letter of his own that resembled the important letter. He left his own letter next to the original one as he began to talk of Parisian affairs. Finally, as he prepared to leave the apartment, he purposely retrieved the lady’s letter in place of his own. Now, the prefect explains, the Minister D—— possesses a great deal of power over the lady.

Dupin asks whether the police have searched the Minister’s residence, arguing that since the power of the letter derives from its being readily available, it

must be in his apartment. The prefect responds that they have searched the Minister's residence but have not located the letter. He recounts the search procedure, during which the police systematically searched every inch of the hotel. In addition, the letter could not be hidden on the Minister's body because the police have searched him as well. The prefect mentions that he is willing to search long and hard because the reward offered in the case is so generous. Upon Dupin's request, the prefect reads him a physical description of the letter. Dupin suggests that the police search again.

One month later, Dupin and the narrator are again sitting together when the prefect visits. The prefect admits that he cannot find the letter, even though the reward has increased. The prefect says that he will pay 50,000 francs to anyone who obtains the letter for him. Dupin tells him to write a check for that amount on the spot. Upon receipt of the check, Dupin hands over the letter. The prefect rushes off to return it to its rightful owner, and Dupin explains how he obtained the letter.

Dupin admits that the police are skilled investigators according to their own principles. He explains this remark by describing a young boy playing "even and odd." In this game, each player must guess whether the number of things (usually toys) held by another player is even or odd. If the guesser is right, he gets one of the toys. If he is wrong, he loses a toy of his own. The boy whom Dupin describes plays the game well because he bases his guesses on the knowledge of his opponent. When he faces difficulty, he imitates the facial expression of his opponent, as though to understand what he thinks and feels. With this knowledge, he often guesses correctly. Dupin argues that the Paris police do not use this strategy and therefore could not find the letter: the police think only to look for a letter in places where they themselves might hide it.

Dupin argues that the Minister D—— is intelligent enough not to hide the letter in the nooks and crannies of his apartment—exactly where the police first investigate. He describes to the narrator a game of puzzles in which one player finds a name on a map and tells the other player to find it as well. Amateurs, says Dupin, pick the names with the smallest letters. According to Dupin's logic, the hardest

names to find are actually those that stretch broadly across the map because they are so obvious.

With this game in mind, Dupin recounts the visit he made to the Minister's apartment. After surveying the Minister's residence, Dupin notices a group of visiting cards hanging from the mantelpiece. A letter accompanies them. It has a different exterior than that previously described by the prefect, but Dupin also observes that the letter appears to have been folded back on itself. He becomes sure that it is the stolen document. In order to create a reason for returning to the apartment, he purposely leaves behind his snuffbox. When he goes back the next morning to retrieve it, he also arranges for someone to make a commotion outside the window while he is in the apartment. When the Minister rushes to the window to investigate the noise, Dupin replaces the stolen letter with a fake. He justifies his decision to leave behind another letter by predicting that the Minister will embarrass himself when he acts in reliance upon the letter he falsely believes he still possesses. Dupin remarks that the Minister once wronged him in Vienna and that he has pledged not to forget the insult. Inside the fake letter, then, Dupin inscribes, a French poem that translates into English, "So baneful a scheme, if not worthy of Atreus, is worthy of Thyestes."

4.2.5 Check Your Progress

Short Questions

1. What is the primary reason the letter is valuable and sought after in "The Purloined Letter"?
2. How does Prefect G— first attempt to find the purloined letter, and why does he fail?
3. Describe the strategy Dupin uses to discover the location of the letter.
4. What is the significance of the method Dupin uses to retrieve the letter from Minister D—?
5. How does Dupin's approach to solving the case differ from that of Prefect G?

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the character of C. Auguste Dupin in "The Purloined Letter." How does Poe portray Dupin's intellectual abilities, and what methods does he use to solve the case? Compare his deductive reasoning to that of other famous literary detectives.
2. Discuss the theme of appearance versus reality in "The Purloined Letter." How does Poe play with the reader's and characters' perceptions to build suspense and create a surprising resolution?
3. Examine the role of the police and the prefect in "The Purloined Letter." How does Poe critique the methods and limitations of official law enforcement through their portrayal?
4. Explore the significance of the stolen letter itself. What does the letter symbolize in the context of the story, and how does its value extend beyond its physical form?
5. Consider the story's exploration of power and intelligence. How do the interactions between Dupin and Minister D— reflect a battle of wits? What does the story suggest about the nature of power and the importance of intellectual superiority?

SECTION 4.3: THE YELLOW WALLPAPER - CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN

4.3.1 Introduction to Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, known as Charlotte Perkins Stetsman while she was married to her first husband, was born in Hartford, CT in 1860. Young Charlotte was observed as being bright, but her mother wasn’t interested in her education, and Charlotte spent lots of time in the library.

Charlotte married Charles Stetsman in 1884, and her daughter was born in 1885. She suffered from serious postpartum depression after giving birth to their daughter, Katharine. Her battle with postpartum depression and the doctors she dealt with during her illness inspired her to write "The Yellow Wallpaper."

The couple separated in 1888, the year that Perkins Gilman wrote her first book, *Art Gems for the Home and Fireside.* She later wrote "The Yellow Wallpaper" in 1890, while she was in a relationship with Adeline Knapp, and living apart from her legal husband. "The Yellow Wallpaper" was published in 1892, and in 1893 she published a book of satirical poetry*, In This Our World,* which gained her fame.

Eventually, Perkins Gilman got officially divorced from Statesman, and ended her relationship with Knapp. She married her cousin, Houghton Gilman, and claimed to be satisfied in the marriage**.**

Perkins Gilman made a living as a lecturer on women's issues, labor issues, and social reform**.** She toured Europe and the U.S. as a lecturer, and founded her own magazine, *The Forerunner.*

4.3.2 Summary

"The Yellow Wallpaper" opens with the story's unnamed narrator, who expresses her thoughts in the form of journal entries, marveling at the grandeur of the house and grounds her husband has taken her to for the summer. She feels, however, that there is "something queer" about the place and explains that her case of "nervous depression" is what prompted their stay there. The narrator complains that her husband John, who is also her doctor, belittles both her illness and, more generally, her perspective. Her treatment, known as the "rest cure," requires that she refrain from virtually any form of activity, even working and writing. Despite these instructions, she feels that activity, freedom, and interesting work would help her condition and has begun keeping a secret journal in order to "relieve her mind." The narrator continues her journal entry by describing the house and gardens, both of which are beautiful yet clearly impacted by the estate's years of emptiness. In the nursery on the top floor, however, she finds the yellow wallpaper, with its strange, formless pattern, to be particularly disturbing.

As the first few weeks of the summer pass, the narrator succeeds at hiding her journal, thus keeping her true thoughts from John. While she longs for more stimulating company and complains about John's patronizing, controlling ways, she takes a new interest in the oddly-menacing wallpaper. John worries about her

fixation, and he refuses to repaper the room so as not to give in to her nervousness. The narrator's imagination, however, has awakened, and she reflects on her history of having an overactive mind. She goes on to describe the bedroom again, which she says must have been a nursery for young children due to the fact that the paper is torn off the wall in spots, there are scratches and gouges in the floor, and the furniture is heavy and fixed in place. Just as she begins to see a strange sub-pattern behind the main design of the wallpaper, John's sister Jennie, who serves as a housekeeper and nurse for the narrator, interrupts her writing.

As the Fourth of July passes, the narrator reports that her family has just visited, leaving her more tired than ever. John threatens to send her to Weir Mitchell, the real-life physician under whose care author Charlotte Perkins Gilman suffered. The narrator is alone most of the time and says that she has become almost fond of the wallpaper; studying the pattern has become her primary form of entertainment. As her obsession grows, the sub-pattern of the wallpaper becomes clearer. It begins to resemble a woman "stooping down and creeping" behind the main pattern, which at nighttime looks like the bars of a cage. Soon the wallpaper dominates the narrator's imagination. Mistaking the narrator's fixation for tranquility, John thinks she is improving. On the contrary, she sleeps less and less and believes that she can smell the paper all over the house. The sub-pattern now clearly resembles a woman who is trying to escape from behind the main pattern. The narrator sees her shaking the bars at night and creeping around during the day, when the woman is able to leave the wall.

Suspecting that John and Jennie know of her obsession, she resolves to destroy the paper once and for all, peeling much of it off during the night. While left alone the next day, she goes into something of a frenzy, biting and tearing at the paper in order to free the trapped woman whom she sees struggling from inside the pattern. By the end, the narrator is hopelessly insane, convinced that there are many women creeping around and that she herself has come out of the wallpaper. She creeps endlessly around the room, smudging the wallpaper as she goes. When John breaks into the locked room and sees the full horror of the situation, he faints in the doorway so that the narrator has "to creep over him every time!"

4.3.3 Analysis

Self-expression can be a key to self-discovery.

Throughout the course of the story, John, Jennie, and the isolation of the nursery prevent the narrator from engaging with the world around her in a meaningful way. Her husband frequently ignores her requests and opinions, such as which room to stay in or even the validity of her illness, and Jennie's presence removes any need for the narrator to engage with others. This forced silence drives the narrator to record her thoughts in a secret journal, the text of which makes up the entirety of the story. Being able to express her truest thoughts, uninhibited by social expectations, plays a key part in opening her mind to just how oppressive her situation truly is.

Right from the beginning, the narrator makes it clear that she privately "disagree[s] with [John's] ideas" about how to treat her illness and hides her writing to avoid "heavy opposition" from him. This level of secrecy, along with the fact that John believes writing will exacerbate her restless condition, establishes women's self-expression as something punishable due to the threat it poses to patriarchal power structures. Continuing to write in her journal, however, is only the first rebellious step in the narrator's journey to self-discovery. As her days trapped in the nursery drag on, her depression worsens and her imagination awakens. The act of writing, in addition to offering her some psychological relief, allows her to identify the images in the wallpaper more clearly and process the concepts they represent. The self-expression she achieves through her journal eventually translates into physical self-expression, tearing down the yellow wallpaper in an ironically manic moment of self-discovery.

Patriarchal systems and perspectives restrict women's opportunities.

Patriarchal values, or structures which position men as primary figures of authority at the expense of women, dominate the narrator's world. This dynamic becomes evident almost immediately as the reader discovers that John has complete control over the treatment of her illness. He assumes that he knows what is

best for her, and this point of view oppresses her sense of personal agency. The narrator even goes so far as to ask “But what is one to do?” in response to her husband’s strict instructions, suggesting that the male-centered structures of her culture have conditioned her to feel powerless to change her situation. The guilt she feels regarding her inability to effectively carry out the roles of mother and caretaker, which she expresses when mentioning her baby, also reflects her internalization of the Victorian notion that those are the only opportunities available to women.

The way in which John speaks to the narrator throughout the story also highlights the pervasiveness and oppressiveness of patriarchal values. Almost every time he speaks to her, he does so in an infantilizing way, talking down to her as if she was beneath him. He calls her “a blessed little goose” and “[gathers her] up in his arms” to carry her upstairs to her bed like a child. This attitude, along with the symbolic fact that John forces the narrator to stay in the house’s nursery, highlights the way in which an imbalance of power can stunt growth and personal development. The narrator remains like the helpless child John views her as until the end of the story where she dismantles the wallpaper in the nursery and, symbolically, reclaims her agency.

Outward appearances do not always reflect reality.

As “The Yellow Wallpaper” progresses, John and Jennie believe that the narrator’s condition is improving. She often sleeps during the day, and she presents a calmer outward demeanor around others. This appearance, as the reader knows from the narrator’s journal, is merely a front that she puts on for her husband. In reality, her mind continues to spiral, her obsession with the wallpaper growing more and more intense. Gilman’s use of dramatic irony to highlight the disconnect between the narrator and her husband also works to illuminate Victorian misunderstandings regarding mental illness. In an era which readily labeled women who strayed from social norms as hysterical, disparities between public perception and reality ran rampant, harming women like the narrator in the process.

The misunderstanding between the narrator and John begins almost immediately as he trivializes her illness. His refusal to genuinely acknowledge her condition, which is most likely a form of postpartum depression, reflects the

assumption that outward appearances are in fact an accurate representation of reality. The gendered power dynamics at play in their relationship further exacerbates the damage which this assumption inevitably causes. John's prescription of the "rest cure," while putting the narrator in a position to appear more at ease, does the opposite and aggravates her more. By the end of the story, the effects of John's dismissiveness, long apparent to both the narrator and the reader, finally express themselves outwardly. The narrator's manic acts of destruction, which are also a manifestation of her own internal misconceptions, reveal the true suffering that her calm façade once hid.

4.3.4 Themes

Women's Role in Marriage

Women were expected to be subordinate to their husbands and completely obedient, as well as take on strictly domestic roles inside the home. Upper middle class women, like the narrator, may go for long periods of time without even leaving the home. The story reveals that this arrangement had the effect of committing women to a state of naïveté, dependence, and ignorance.

John assumes he has the right to determine what's best for his wife, and this authority is never questioned. He belittles her concerns, both concrete and the ones that arise as a result of her depression, and is said so brush her off and "laugh at her" when she speaks through, "this is to be expected in marriage" He doesn't take her concerns seriously, and makes all the decisions about both of their lives.

As such, she has no say in anything in her life, including her own health, and finds herself unable to even protest.

Perkins Gilman, like many others, clearly disagreed with this state of things, and aimed to show the detrimental effects that came to women as a result of their lack of autonomy.

Identity and Self-Expression

Throughout the story, the narrator is discouraged from doing the things she wants to do and the things that come naturally to her, like writing. On more than one occasion, she hurries to put her journal away because John is approaching.

She also forces herself to act as though she's happy and satisfied, to give the illusion that she is recovering, which is worse. She wants to be a good wife, according to the way the role is laid out for her, but struggles to conform especially with so little to actually do.

The narrator is forced into silence and submission through the rest cure, and desperately needs an intellectual and emotional outlet. However, she is not granted one and it is clear that this arrangement takes a toll.

The Rest Cure

The rest cure was commonly prescribed during this period of history for women who were "nervous." Perkins Gilman has strong opinions about the merits of the rest cure, having been prescribed it herself. John's insistence on the narrator getting "air" constantly and his insistence that she do nothing that requires mental or physical stimulation is clearly detrimental.

The narrator is also discouraged from doing activities, whether they are domestic- like cleaning or caring for her baby- in addition to things like reading, writing, and exploring the grounds of the house. She is stifled and confined both physically and mentally, which only adds to her condition.

Perkins Gilman damns the rest cure in this story, by showing the detrimental effects on women, and posing that women need mental and physical stimulation to be healthy, and need to be free to make their own decisions over health and their lives.

4.3.5 Sum up

"The Yellow Wallpaper" is one of the defining works of feminist literature. Writing about a woman's health, mental or physical, was considered a radical act at the time that Perkins Gilman wrote this short story. Writing at all about the lives of women was considered at best, frivolous, and at worst dangerous. When you take a look at The Yellow Wallpaper analysis, the story is an important look into the role of women in marriage and society, and it will likely be a mainstay in the feminist literary canon.

4.3.6 Check Your Progress

Short Questions

1. What is the narrator's initial reaction to the yellow wallpaper, and how does her perception of it change over time?
2. How does the narrator's husband, John, view her condition and her treatment?
3. Describe the symbolic significance of the yellow wallpaper in the story.
4. What are some of the activities the narrator is forbidden to do, and how do these restrictions affect her mental state?
5. How does the story "The Yellow Wallpaper" address themes of gender roles and women's autonomy?

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the psychological progression of the narrator in "The Yellow Wallpaper." How does her confinement and the prescribed "rest cure" contribute to her mental deterioration? Use specific examples from the text to support your analysis.
2. Discuss the role of the yellow wallpaper as a symbol in the story. What does it represent in terms of the narrator's mental state and her perception of her own confinement? How does the symbolism evolve throughout the narrative?
3. Examine the theme of gender roles in "The Yellow Wallpaper." How does Gilman portray the relationship between the narrator and her husband, John?

4. Consider the use of setting in "The Yellow Wallpaper." How does the physical setting of the room, including the barred windows and the locked door, reflect the themes of imprisonment and control in the story?
5. Explore the narrative style of "The Yellow Wallpaper." How does the first-person perspective affect the reader's understanding of the narrator's mental state and the overall impact of the story?

SECTION 4.4: THE GIFT OF THE MAGI – O. HENRY

4.4.1 Introduction to O. Henry

O. Henry was an American writer whose short stories are known for wit, wordplay and clever twist endings. He wrote nearly 600 stories about life in America. He was born William Sidney Porter on September 11, 1862, in Greensboro, North Carolina. His father, Algernon Sidney Porter, was a medical doctor. When William was three his mother died and he was raised by his grandmother and aunt. He left school at the age of 15 and then had a number of jobs, including bank clerk. In 1896 he was accused of embezzlement. He absconded from the law to New Orleans and later fled to Honduras. When he learned that his wife was dying, he returned to US and surrendered to police. Although there has been much debate over his actual guilt, he was convicted of embezzling funds from the bank that employed him, he was sentenced to 5 years in jail. In 1898 he was sent to the penitentiary at Columbus, Ohio.

While in prison he began writing short stories in order to support his young daughter Margaret. His first published story was "Whistling Dick's Christmas Stocking" (1899). He used a pseudonym, Olivier Henry, only once and changed his pen name to O. Henry, not wanting his readers to know he was in jail. He published 12 stories while in prison. After serving 3 years of the five-year sentence, he was released for good behavior. He moved to New York City in 1902 and wrote a story a week for the New York World, and also for other publishers. His first collection of stories was "Cabbages and Kings" (1904). The next collection, "The Four Million" (1906), included his well-known stories "The Gift of the Magi", "The Skylight Room" and "The Green Door". One of his last stories, "The Ransom of Red Chief" (1910), is

perhaps the best known of his works. Among its film adaptations are Ruthless People (1986) with Danny DeVito and Bette Midler, The Ransom of Red Chief (1998), The Ransom of Red Chief (1911) and Business People (1963) (aka "Business People") by director Leonid Gaidai, starring Georgiy Vitsin and Yuriy Nikulin

In his lifetime O. Henry was able to see the silent film adaptations of his stories; *The Sacrifice (1909), Trying to Get Arrested (1909) and His Duty (1909).* His success brought the attendant pressure, and he suffered from alcohol addiction. His second marriage lasted 2 years, and his wife left him in 1909. He died of cirrhosis of the liver, on June 5, 1910, in New York, New York.

O. Henry is credited for creation of The Cisco Kid, whose character alludes to Robin Hood and Don Quixote. *The Arizona Kid (1930) and The Cisco Kid (1931)* are among the best known adaptations of his works.

4.4.2 Summary

The story begins the day before Christmas with a young woman named Della sitting at home counting her savings. The home she lives in with her husband, Jim, is a cheap, furnished rental apartment. When they first moved in Jim was earning more money, but the couple has fallen on hard times and now live in poverty. Della has been putting money aside after buying groceries for many months. She is sad and anxious because despite her efforts, she has not saved enough money. She had been hoping to buy Jim something special for Christmas with her savings. Della begins to cry on her couch as she realizes she does not have enough money to buy Jim a Christmas present.

After she stops crying, Della cleans up her face and looks out the window lost in thought. She suddenly catches a glimpse of herself in the dingy mirror on the wall and gets an idea. She lets down her long brown hair and looks at it for a little while. Della’s hair, notable for its beauty, is her prized possession. She puts on her old coat and hat and visits a shop that buys and sells hair. The shopkeeper, Madame Sofronie, agrees to cut and buy Della’s hair. Della spends the rest of the day going around the city looking for the perfect gift for Jim. His prized possession is a gold pocket watch that has been passed down through his family. She wants to buy him a

nice chain to go with it, something special and rare. Eventually, she finds the perfect platinum chain. It costs all the money she got from selling her hair, plus most of her savings. Della goes home feeling very excited to give Jim his present.

When Della gets home, she tries to style her new haircut as best she can. She worries that Jim will be angry and will no longer think she is pretty. When Jim sees Della has cut her hair, he gets a strange look on his face. Not knowing what it means, Della goes to him and quickly explains that she sold her hair to buy him a Christmas present. In response, Jim hugs her and tells her he loves her no matter what her hair looks like. He then gives her a Christmas present: a set of jeweled tortoiseshell combs she'd once admired in a shop window. Della loves the present, but she bursts into tears when she realizes she is unable to use Jim's thoughtful gift. As Jim comforts her, she reassures him her hair will grow back quickly. She then excitedly gives him the platinum watch chain. Jim laughs and reveals he sold his prized watch to pay for the combs. The narrator concludes the story by praising the couple for their selfless gifts of love, calling them even wiser than the three wise magi who brought gifts to the baby Jesus on the first Christmas Eve.

4.4.3 Analysis

It is Christmas Eve. Della bemoans her meager savings of $1.87, accumulated through months of scrimping at the grocery, butcher, and vegetable vendor. She collapses onto her worn sofa in tears.

Della is a young woman in a relationship with Jim Dillingham Young, with whom she lives in an inexpensive apartment that costs only eight dollars per week and doesn't have a functioning doorbell. No longer weeping, Della remains unsure about whether she will be able to get Jim a satisfactory Christmas gift.

She suddenly recalls the pier-glass—a slender mirror positioned between the apartment's windows—and stands before it, allowing her hair to cascade down to its full extent.

The narrator then details the couple's most cherished possessions: Della's lengthy, brown hair that reaches past her knees and Jim's gold watch, a family heirloom from his grandfather.

These items are like King Solomon's riches and the Queen of Sheba's jewels. Della dashes outside and down the stairs to a hair salon operated by Madame Sofronie.

After a short interaction, during which Madame Sofronie assesses Della's hair, Della sells the hairdresser her beautiful tresses for 20 dollars. For two hours, Della searches for the ideal gift for Jim.

She ultimately chooses a modest platinum chain for his watch, likening the watch's unadorned and valuable nature to Jim's similarly unpretentious yet valuable character. Della goes back home to style her hair in curls and get dinner ready while awaiting Jim. She whispers a prayer, hoping that Jim will still consider her beautiful despite her shorter hair.

As Jim walks through the door, he stops short, gazing at Della's hair with a blank expression. Della approaches Jim, explaining that she cut and sold her hair to purchase his Christmas gift. Jim's gaze lingers, and Della reiterates that her hair is gone—but her love for him remains boundless.

At last, Jim embraces Della and tosses a wrapped gift onto the table. He assures her that no haircut could lessen his affection for her, but he was taken aback because of the present he got her. Della unwraps the package, revealing a stunning set of tortoiseshell combs she has long wanted for her hair.

She squeals with delight before breaking into tears, and Jim consoles her before she recalls her own gift for him. She produces the watch chain and requests to see Jim's watch so she can attach the chain.

Jim sinks into the couch with a grin, suggesting they set their gifts aside for now because they're too precious to use immediately. But then he confesses that he sold the watch to acquire the set of combs for Della. They opt to enjoy dinner, and the narrator concludes the tale with a brief reflection on the magi, who were wise men who pioneered the tradition of giving Christmas presents.

The narrator likens Jim and Della to the magi, asserting that, of all the gift-givers in the world, this couple has the most wisdom.

4.4.4 Themes

Value vs. Materialism

"The Gift of the Magi" focuses on two young lovers who have very little in terms of material possessions. The story's opening emphasizes their impoverished circumstances—the worn-out couch, the absence of a mirror, the cheap apartment, and the non-functioning doorbell.

Despite this, the narrator notes that Jim always comes home to be "greatly hugged. Which is all very good." Della and Jim's financial situation doesn't seem to impact their warm home life, as the emotional significance of their relationship surpasses their material shortcomings.

When Della discovers the chain for Jim's watch (which is "simple and chaste in design" but valuable in its essence alone), she draws a parallel between the chain and Jim, who possesses inner worth despite his modest earnings.

The narrator likens Jim's watch and Della's hair to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, an allusion highlighting the significance of these items to the couple, even if they aren't truly analogous to a vast collection of treasures and jewels. This comparison thus illustrates the inherently subject nature of value. The narrator clarifies this notion by stating, "Eight dollars a week or a million a year—what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer."

Love

Della's primary concern is that her savings, accumulated through frugality, are insufficient to purchase a fitting Christmas gift for Jim. In her view, the main hindrance poverty presents to her happiness is the constraint it places on expressing her love.

Following the story's unexpected conclusion, Jim reclines on the couch and grins, even after discovering that their presents are now pointless. The significance lies not in the gifts themselves, but in the act of giving: both Jim and Della now know that they would willingly forfeit their most cherished belongings for one another. Their love thus prevails over all else. Instead of mere objects, they gave each other the gift of love.

Sacrifice

Della and Jim begin with only two cherished belongings: Della's beautiful hair and Jim's gold watch. To overcome their financial constraints and offer a meaningful Christmas gift to one another, each relinquishes the item they hold dearest.

However, these sacrifices end up being somewhat pointless, as the purchased gifts cannot be utilized.

It could be argued that they end up even more impoverished than they were at the beginning of the story, but the narrator implies that their relationship has gained value through their selflessness and sacrifice. This, in turn, suggests that a gift's value lies in the intention, generosity, and sacrifice behind it, not in its material worth.

Beauty

"The Gift of the Magi" juxtaposes the concepts of inner beauty and worth with outward appearances. The story starts with a portrayal of dreary surroundings while still suggesting that Della and Jim lead a warm domestic life. As Della scrutinizes the watch chain, she thinks about its external appearance and its true value, comparing both to Jim's appearance and value. Neither the watch chain nor Jim has much in the way of external embellishment, but they possess remarkable inner qualities.

Della is also concerned that Jim might not find her attractive once she sells her hair. However, when he sees her and recovers from the shock of her new haircut, he reassures her that no "haircut or shave or shampoo [...] could make me like my girl any less." With this in mind, the story suggests that there are more important things in life and love than superficial beauty.

4.4.5 Sum up

O. Henry’s most famous story, “The Gift of the Magi,” translated and reprinted every Christmas around the world, was written in three hours to meet a deadline that O. Henry had ignored for several days. The plot alone—a young woman sells her long beautiful hair to buy her husband a fob chain for his prized watch, only to discover that he has sold his watch to buy a set of tortoiseshell combs for her vanished hair—is sufficient to make the story a classic about the spirit of Christmas.

However, it is also O. Henry's avuncular storytelling voice and his use of a scenic film style that makes it so accessible and irresistible. The story opens on a scene right out of a pantomimed melodrama of the young woman, Della, in her modest apartment crying because she has no money to buy her husband a Christmas gift; that is, until she thinks of the brilliant yet terrifying idea of selling her long beautiful hair to a wig maker.

When the young husband comes home and sees his wife with her hair cropped off, the reader has no way of knowing that the peculiar expression on his face is not shock at her changed appearance but rather bemused recognition that she will be unable to use the gift he has purchased for her. When she opens the combs, the reader sighs at Della's grand but seemingly worthless sacrifice. When she gives him the watch fob, Jim flops down on the couch, puts his hands under the back of his head and smiles, telling her simply that he sold the watch to get the money to buy her the combs. The story then ends with O. Henry's little homily about the wise magi, who invented the act of giving Christmas presents, suggesting that the two "foolish children" of his "uneventful chronicle" who unwisely sacrificed for each other the "greatest treasures of their homes" are indeed the wisest of all, for "they are the magi."

4.4.6 Check Your Progress

Short Questions

1. What motivates Della to sell her hair in "The Gift of the Magi"?
2. How does Jim react when he first sees Della with her hair cut?
3. What is the significance of the title "The Gift of the Magi"?
4. How does the story illustrate the theme of love and sacrifice?
5. What is the primary setting of "The Gift of the Magi"?

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the theme of sacrifice in "The Gift of the Magi." How do the actions of Jim and Della reflect the deeper meaning of love and selflessness? Provide examples from the text to illustrate your points.

2. Discuss the use of irony in "The Gift of the Magi." How does O. Henry's use of situational irony enhance the story's overall impact and message? What effect does the ironic twist have on the reader?
3. Examine the portrayal of economic hardship in "The Gift of the Magi." How does O. Henry depict the financial struggles of Jim and Della, and what does this reveal about their characters and their relationship?
4. Consider the symbolic significance of the gifts exchanged between Jim and Della. What do the watch chain and the hair combs represent in the context of their relationship and the story's themes?
5. Explore the narrative style and tone of "The Gift of the Magi." How does O. Henry's use of a third-person omniscient narrator contribute to the story's sentimental and moralistic qualities? How does the narrator's voice affect the reader's perception of the characters and their actions?

Self-Assessment Question:

WASHINGTON IRVING: RIP VAN WINKLE

1. What is the significance of Rip Van Winkle's long sleep?

Answer: Rip sleep symbolizes the transition from the pre-Revolutionary to the post-Revolutionary America and the changes in society.

2. Describe the men Rip encounters in the mountains.

Answer: They are mysterious figures dressed in old-fashioned Dutch clothing, and they are playing ninepins.

3. How does the story of Rip Van Winkle reflect Irving's views on American independence?

Answer: The story reflects a nostalgic view of the pre-Revolutionary past while also acknowledging the inevitability and sometimes disorienting nature of change.

4. What is the ultimate message of "Rip Van Winkle"?

Answer: The story conveys a message about the passage of time, the inevitability of change, and the persistence of personal identity despite societal transformation.

5. In which country is "Rip Van Winkle" set?

Answer: The United States (specifically the Catskill Mountains).

6. What event causes Rip Van Winkle to fall asleep?

Answer: Rip Van Winkle falls asleep after drinking liquor with mysterious men in the mountains.

7. How does Rip Van Winkle's interaction with the villagers after his awakening reveal changes in his character?

Answer: Rip is initially confused and disoriented, but his eventual acceptance of the new world reflects his adaptability and the passage of time.

8. How would Rip Van Winkle's experience be different if he had stayed awake for twenty years? Answer: He would have witnessed the changes in society directly and perhaps adapted to them rather than experiencing a sudden and bewildering transition.

9. Do you think Rip Van Winkle's character is ultimately sympathetic or unsympathetic? Justify your answer.

Answer: Rip can be seen as sympathetic due to his passive nature and the unfair treatment he endures, but his lack of personal growth and responsibility may also make him appear unsympathetic.

10. Analyze how the character of Rip Van Winkle is a reflection of the pre- and post-Revolutionary American society.

Answer: Rip embodies the colonial lifestyle, and his disorientation upon awakening illustrates the drastic societal shifts from colonial to post-Revolutionary America.

5 MARKS

1. Describe the main events that occur in Rip Van Winkle's life before he encounters the mysterious group of men in the mountains.

2. Analyze the symbolism of the mountains in the story. What do they represent in Rip's life and in the broader context of American society?

3. Discuss the role of the supernatural elements in the story Rip Van Winkle.

4. Compare and contrast the pre- and post-revolutionary societies depicted in the story. How does Rip's character change as a reflection of these societal shifts?

5. Explain how Washington Irving uses the character of Rip Van Winkle to reflect the social and political changes in America after the Revolutionary War.

8 MARKS

1. Critique the narrative structure of "Rip Van Winkle." How does the story's structure affect the reader's understanding of Rip's transformation and the story's themes?

2. Explain the significance of Rip Van Winkle's long sleep in the context of the American Revolution.

3. Compare and contrast Rip Van Winkle's life before and after his sleep. What does this transformation reveal about the impact of historical and social changes on individuals?

4. Discuss how Rip Van Winkle's story can be related to contemporary issues of personal and societal change.

5. Imagine Rip Van Winkle were to wake up in a different historical period. Write an essay exploring how his character might react to the changes and challenges of that new era.

EDGAR ALLAN POE: THE PURLOINED LETTER CHARLOTTE

2 MARKS

1. Who is the narrator of The Purloined Letter?

Answer: The narrator of The Purloined Letter is C. Auguste Dupin.

2. What is the primary object that is stolen in the story?

Answer: The primary object stolen in the story is a letter.

3. How does Dupin describe his method of solving the case?

Answer: Dupin describes his method as one of "ratiocination," which involves reasoning and intuition rather than conventional investigation methods.

4. What is the significance of the letter being in plain sight?

Answer: The letter being in plain sight signifies that it is hidden in a location where no one would think to look, demonstrating the theme of appearances versus reality.

5. Evaluate Dupin's success in solving the case. Was his approach effective?

Answer: Dupin's success in solving the case was due to his effective use of unconventional thinking and intuition. His approach proved effective as he recovered the letter that others had failed to find.

6. Interpret the symbolism of the purloined letter. What does it represent?

Answer: The letter represents power, secrets, and manipulation.

7. List the clues that lead Dupin to solve the mystery. What is their significance?

Answer: Clues include the letter's size, the torn corner, and the Minister's behavior.

8. How does the story's portrayal of detective work relate to Poe's broader ideas about human nature?

Answer: Poe highlights the power of human reason and intellect.

9. What is the significance of the letter in the story?

Answer: It contains secrets that could compromise the Queen's reputation.

10. How does the story's portrayal of deception relate to real-life situations?

Answer: Deception can be used to manipulate others and hide secrets.

5 MARKS

1. Describe the primary plot of "The Purloined Letter."

2. How does Dupin's approach to solving the case differ from that of the police?

3. Evaluate the role of intelligence and deductive reasoning in the story.

4. Discuss the theme of appearance versus reality in "The Purloined Letter." How does Poe illustrate this theme through the characters and plot?

5. Critically evaluate Dupin's method for recovering the letter. Do you find it effective or overly complex? Justify your answer with examples from the text.

8 MARKS

1. Explain the significance of the purloined letter in the story. How does its theft and recovery drive the plot and reveal character traits?

2. Analyze the use of symbolism in "The Purloined Letter." What does the letter symbolize within the context of the story, and how does it relate to the characters and themes?

3. Discuss the role of the setting in "The Purloined Letter." How does Poe use the physical environment to enhance the story's suspense and mystery?

4. Critique the resolution of "The Purloined Letter." Do you think Poe's solution to the mystery is satisfactory? Justify your answer with references to the story.

5. Analyze how Poe uses the concept of misdirection and deception in "The Purloined Letter." Provide examples from the text and discuss their effectiveness.

PERKINS GILMAN: THE YELLOW WALLPAPER

2 MARKS

1. Who is the protagonist of the story "The Yellow Wallpaper"?

Answer: The unnamed narrator is the protagonist of the story "The Yellow Wallpaper"

2. Explain the central theme of the story?

Answer: The oppression of women and the dangers of isolation.

3. What is the significance of the yellow wallpaper in the story?

Answer: It represents the narrator's growing obsession and descent into madness.

4. Give the role of the narrator's husband in the story?

Answer: He is a symbol of patriarchal oppression and control.

5. How does the story's portrayal of oppression relate to Gilman's broader ideas about feminism?

Answer: Gilman highlights the need for women's empowerment and equality.

6. Develop the theme of isolation in the story. How is it presented?

Answer: Isolation is presented through the narrator's confinement and lack of social interaction.

7. Dissect the relationship between the narrator and her husband. What is its significance?

Answer: The relationship represents the oppressive dynamics between men and women.

8. Measure the impact of the narrator's isolation on her mental state. What changes occur?

Answer: Isolation leads to increased obsession, hallucinations, and loss of identity.

9. Interpret the symbolism of the yellow wallpaper. What does it represent?

Answer: The wallpaper represents the narrator's growing obsession and entrapment.

10. List the ways in which the narrator's mental state deteriorates throughout the story. What is their significance?

Answer: The narrator's mental state deteriorates through increased obsession, hallucinations, and loss of identity.

5 MARKS

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of the narrator's husband as a symbol of patriarchal oppression. How does he contribute to the story's themes?

2. Describe the setting of the story and its significance to the narrator's experience.

3. Synthesize the story's portrayal of isolation with Gilman's broader ideas about feminism. How does the story contribute to feminist discourse?

4. Analyze the narrator's relationship with her husband. What power dynamics are at play?

5. Create a visual representation of the yellow wallpaper. What symbolism would you include?

8 MARKS

1. Analyze the narrator's relationship with her husband. How does he contribute to her growing mad ness?

2. Examine the use of symbolism in the story. How does the yellow wallpaper represent the narrator's growing obsession and entrapment?

3. Synthesize the story's portrayal of mental health with modern understandings of depression and anxiety. What insights can you gain?

4. Assess the significance of the story's ending. What does it reveal about the narrator's mental state, and what message do you think Gilman conveys?

5. Discuss how the story's themes of isolation and oppression relate to Gilman's broader ideas about feminism. What connections can you make?

O HENRY- THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

2 MARKS

1. Who are the main characters in "The Gift of the Magi"?

Answer: The main characters are Della and Jim.

2. What is the central theme of "The Gift of the Magi"?

Answer: The central theme is self-sacrifice and love.

3. Why is the story titled "The Gift of the Magi"?

Answer: The title refers to the wise men (Magi) from the Bible who brought gifts, symbolizing the selfless love Della and Jim show in their gift-giving.

4. How do Della's and Jim's actions reflect their love for each other?

Answer: Both characters sacrifice their most prized possessions to buy a gift for the other, demonstrating their deep love and selflessness.

5. What might be a modern equivalent of the sacrifices made by Della and Jim in today's context? Answer: A modern equivalent might be someone giving up a valuable item or personal luxury to purchase a meaningful gift for a loved one.

6. Evaluate the effectiveness of the story's ending in conveying its message.

Answer: The ending is highly effective as it encapsulates the story's theme of selfless love.

7. Develop a modern adaptation of "The Gift of the Magi" in a different setting (e.g., digital age). What elements would you include?

Answer: In a digital age adaptation, Della and Jim could sacrifice high-value items like smartphones or subscriptions for each other, with the story focusing on the irony of digital gifts and the impact of modern consumerism on relationships.

8. What gift does Jim buy for Della?

Answer: Jim buys a set of combs for Della's hair.

9. What item does Della sell to afford Jim's gift?

Answer: Della sells her long hair.

5 MARKS

1. Describe the main plot of "The Gift of the Magi."

2. Examine the symbolism of the watch chain and the hair combs in "The Gift of the Magi." How do these symbols enhance the story's exploration of love and sacrifice?

3. Discuss the role of poverty in "The Gift of the Magi."

4. Evaluate the effectiveness of O. Henry's narrative style in conveying the themes of the story.

5. Apply the concept of sacrifice depicted in "The Gift of the Magi" to a contemporary scenario. How can the theme of selflessness be observed in today's world?

8 MARKS

1. Analyze the symbolism of the gifts exchanged between Jim and Della. How do these symbols contribute to the story's theme of selfless love?

2. Design a modern adaptation of "The Gift of the Magi" for a different cultural or social context. How would the changes you make affect the story’s themes and message?

3. Discuss how the story's setting influences the characters' actions and decisions. In what ways does the setting enhance the reader's understanding of the central themes?

4. Compare and contrast the characters of Jim and Della in terms of their motivations and actions. How do these elements contribute to the story's emotional impact?

5. Explain the significance of the title "The Gift of the Magi." How does it reflect the central theme of the story?

Unit V

Fiction

UNIT V FICTION

CONTENT OF UNIT- V

Tony Morrison	**:**	***Beloved***
Ernest Hemingway	**:**	***The Old Man and the Sea***
Navarre Scott Momaday	**:**	***House Made of Dawn***

UNIT OBJECTIVES

- To acquaint you with the author's life.
- To acquaint you with literary contributions made by Ernest Hemingway.
- To familiarise the learner with the novel from examination point of view.

SECTION 5.1: *BELOVED* - TONY MORRISON

5.1.1 Introduction to Toni Morrison

Toni Morrison is one of the leading 20th Century African American Woman novelists, who have endeavored to articulate problems of prejudice and discrimination through her fictional world. Being African American woman, Morrison boldly presents African American feminist consciousness through her literary endeavor where she strongly expresses her philosophy as a feminist. She is awakened and conscious about women's life and problems and believes that human consciousness is the peer experience. Consequently, her novels manifest and highlight Black women who are doubly differentiated in the form of male standard and poverty as well as Euro-American women's standard. In her work, Morrison has

explored the experience and roles of black women in a racist and male dominated society. The unique cultural inheritance of African Americans is the centre of her complex and multi-layered narratives.

Morrison has written the novels namely, *The Bluest Eye*(1970), *Sula*(1974), *Song of Solomon*(1977), *Tar Baby*(1981), *Beloved*(1987), *Jazz*(1992), *Paradise*(1997), *Love*(2003), *A Mercy*(2008)and *Home*(2012). Subsequently, she has produced Children's literature (with Slade Morrison).works namely *The Big Box* (1999) and *The Book of Mean People* (2002). Her short fiction is Recitatif (1983).She has written plays also namely, Dreaming Emmett (performed 1986), Desdemona (first performed 15 May 2011 in Vienna) and libretti, Margaret Garner (first performed May 2005). Her nonfiction are: The Black Book (1974), Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination(1992) etc.

5.1.2. About the Novel:

Beloved is a novel by Toni Morrison, published in 1987 and winner of the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for fiction. The work examines the destructive legacy of slavery as it chronicles the life of a black woman named Sethe, from her pre-Civil War days as a slave in Kentucky to her time in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1873. Although Sethe lives there as a free woman, she is held prisoner by memories of the trauma of her life as a slave.

5.1.3 Summary

The novel is based on the true story of a black slave woman, Margaret Garner, who in 1856 escaped from a Kentucky plantation with her husband, Robert, and their children. They sought refuge in Ohio, but their owner and law officers soon caught up with the family. Before their recapture, Margaret killed her young daughter to prevent her return to slavery. In the novel, Sethe is also a passionately devoted mother, who flees with her children from an abusive owner known as "schoolteacher." They are caught, and, in an act of supreme love and sacrifice, she too tries to kill her children to keep them from slavery. Only her two-year-old daughter dies, and the schoolteacher, believing that Sethe is crazy, decides not to

take her back. Sethe later has *Beloved* inscribed on her daughter's tombstone. Although she had intended for it to read "Dearly Beloved," she did not have the energy to "pay" for two words (each word cost her 10 minutes of sex with the engraver).

These events are revealed in flashbacks, as the novel opens in 1873, with Sethe and her teenage daughter, Denver, living in Ohio, where their house at 124 Bluestone Road is haunted by the angry ghost of the child Sethe killed. The hauntings are alleviated by the arrival of Paul D; a man so ravaged by his slave past that he keeps his feelings in the "tobacco bin" of his heart. He worked on the same plantation as Sethe, and the two begin a relationship. A brief period of relative calm ends with the appearance of a young woman who says that her name is Beloved. She knows things that suggest she is the reincarnation of Sethe's lost daughter. Sethe is obsessed with assuaging her guilt and tries to placate the increasingly demanding and manipulative Beloved. At one point, Beloved seduces Paul D. After learning that Sethe killed her daughter, he leaves.

The situation at 124 Bluestone worsens, as Sethe loses her job and becomes completely fixated on Beloved, who is soon revealed to be pregnant. While the lonely and largely housebound Denver initially befriends Beloved, she begins to grow concerned. She finally dares to venture outside in order to ask the community for help, and she is given food and a job. As the local women attempt to stage an exorcism, Denver's employer arrives to take her to work, and Sethe mistakes him for "schoolteacher" and tries to attack him with an ice pick. The other women restrain her, and during the commotion Beloved disappears. Paul D later returns to the grieving Sethe, promising to care for her, and Denver continues to thrive in the outside world.

5.1.4 Themes

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work. Beloved explores the physical, emotional and spiritual devastation wrought by slavery, a devastation that continues to haunt those characters who are

former slaves even in freedom. The most dangerous of slavery's effects is its negative impact on the former slaves' senses of self and the novel contains multiple examples of self-alienation. Paul D, for instance is so alienated from himself that at one point he cannot tell whether the screaming he hears is his own or someone else's. Slaves were told they were subhuman and were traded as commodities whose worth could be expressed in dollars. Consequently, Paul D is very insecure about whether or not he could possibly be a real "man," and he frequently wonders about his value as a person. Sethe, also, was treated as a subhuman. She once walked in on schoolteacher giving his pupils a lesson on her "animal characteristics." She too, seems to be alienated from her and filled with self-loathing. Thus, she sees the best part of herself as her children. Yet her children also have volatile, unstable identities. Denver conflates her identity with Beloved's, and Beloved feels

Herself actually beginning to physically disintegrate. Slavery has also limited Baby Suggs's self-conception by shattering her family and denying her the opportunity to be a true wife, sister, daughter, or loving mother. As a result of their inability to believe in their own existences, both Baby Suggs and Paul D become depressed and tired. Baby Suggs's fatigue is spiritual, while Paul D's is emotional. While a slave, Paul D developed self-defeating coping strategies to protect him from the emotional pain he was forced to endure. Any feelings he had were locked away in the rusted "tobacco tin" of his heart, and he concluded that one should love nothing too intensely. Other slaves—Jackson Till, Aunt Phyllis, and Halle—went insane and thus suffered a complete loss of self. Sethe fears that she, too, will end her days in madness. Indeed, she does prove to be mad when she kills her own daughter.

Yet Sethe's act of infanticide illuminates the perverse forces of the institution of slavery: under slavery, a mother best expresses her love for her children by murdering them and thus protecting them from the more gradual destruction Wrought by slavery. Stamp Paid muses that slavery's negative consequences are not limited to the slaves: he notes that slavery causes whites

to become "changed and altered . . . made . . . bloody, silly, worse than they ever wanted to be." The insidious effects of the institution affect not only the identities of its black victims but those of the whites who perpetrate it and the collective identity of Americans. Where slavery exists, everyone suffers a loss of humanity and compassion. For this reason, Morrison suggests that our nation's identity, like the novel's characters, must be healed. America's future depends on its understanding of the past: just as Sethe must come to terms with her past before she can secure a future with Denver and Paul D, before we can address slavery's legacy in the contemporary problems of racial discrimination and discord, we must confront the dark and hidden corners of our history. Crucially, in Beloved, we learn about the history and legacy of slavery not from schoolteacher's or even from the Bodwins' point of view but rather from Sethe's, Paul D's, Stamp Paid's, and Baby Suggs's. Morrison writes history with the voices of a people historically denied the power of language, and Beloved recuperates a history that had been lost—either due to willed forgetfulness (as in Sethe's repression of her memories) or to forced silence. "I was talking about time. It's so hard for me to believe in it. Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place—the picture of it—stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don't think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened." (3.88)

Narrative Style

The structure of the work is compounded with an ever-switching point of view. Every character, even the dead ones and half-alive ones, tell parts of the tale. At one point, Paul D and Sethe exchange flashbacks that finally meld into one whole (chapter 2). At another, the point of view switches off between four white people, who unreservedly show the biased point of view of some men who view

slaves as tamed animals. The diversity of the point of view creates a tapestry of people who interact individuals joined by past or present into a community. Very few readers will miss the experimental structure of Beloved. It is not a linear tale, told from beginning to end. It is a story encompassing levels of past, from the slave ship to Sweet home, as well as the present. Sometimes the past is told in flashbacks, sometimes in stories, and sometimes it is plainly told, as if it were happening in the present (with highly unusual use of the present tense).

The novel is, in essence, written in fragments, pieces shattered and left for the reader to place together. The juxtaposition of past with present serves to reinforce the idea that the past is alive in the present, and by giving us fragments to work with Morrison melds the entire story into one inseparable piece to be gazed at. In forcing the reader to put back the pieces, Morrison forces him also to think about them and consider the worth of each. From a stylistic perspective, Morrison's artistry in this regard is nothing short of breath taking. Morrison's use of both verse and stream of consciousness writing where necessary is unsurpassed and not often matched in literature. Strict narrative, she realizes, is not enough to capture the feelings of a people, and she manages to capture them in some of the most well-known passages of modern literature. Finally, her use of objective correlativism should be noted. The use of Biblical allusions and much ambiguous symbolism creates an atmosphere riddled with force and drama. Beloved is meant to be more than a story-it is a history, and it is a life.

5.1.5 Character Analysis

Sethe

Sethe is the protagonist of the novel. Her traumatic past comes back to haunt her at house 124. She grows up as a slave, separated from a mother who killed all her children but Sethe. Her mother gives Sethe her birth father's male name, but this story is relayed to her by another enslaved woman, as her mother is killed before she has the chance to explain. Years later, Sethe repeats her mother's tragic actions

against her own children. After running away from Sweet Home where she was enslaved, Sethe lives in hiding at her mother-in-law Grandma Baby Suggs' house with her four children. When her former master finds her, she tries to kill her children and herself, succeeding in killing only her oldest daughter. While the horror of her actions prevents her from being brought back into slavery, it also result in her ostracization from the rest of the black community, the eventual death of Grandma Baby Suggs, the departure of her two sons, and the haunting of 124 by her dead daughter's spirit.

Throughout the hardships of Sethe's life, she exhibits resilience and immense strength. After surviving her rape at the hands of the nephew of her former slave master, the schoolteacher, she runs away while pregnant with her youngest daughter, Denver, and without her husband, Halle. Despite being close to death, she survives with the help of a kind white woman, Amy, who helps her give birth. After Amy's assistance, Sethe completes her journey on her own, arriving safely at Grandma Baby Suggs' door with her newborn infant. The townspeople interpret Sethe's resilience and strength as pride, leading them to betray and shun her. When Sethe is arrested after attempting to kill all her children and herself, the townspeople judge her not for the horrific circumstances of her actions, but rather for her "outrageous claims, her self-sufficiency" (202). Hurt from the townspeople's betrayal, Sethe never seeks anybody's help after the incident in the shed. As a result, she becomes more independent and isolated.

Since Sethe has overcome so many difficult life circumstances, she does not flinch when it comes to potentially fearful or violent events. When the haint of 124 throttles the family dog, Here Boy, so severely that several of his joints and limbs are out of place, Sethe swiftly sets his bones. To Denver, Sethe is the "one who never look[s] away" (14) from any horrific circumstance but rather look[s] directly at it without fear. Since Sethe is hardened from her experiences, this attitude carries through until the novel's end when she impulsively attacks Mr. Bowdin, believing him to be the schoolteacher. Refusing to be taken back to captivity, she responds instantly despite her error in recognition.

Beloved

After Paul D chases away the spirit of Sethe's dead daughter from 124, the spirit takes the corporeal form of Beloved, a beautiful and mysterious "sleepy beauty" (63) dressed in fine clothes who appears at the house one day. Beloved's appearance incites varied reactions from those around her—Paul D's curiosity, Sethe's instinctual warmth, and Denver's nervousness. She gradually becomes a part of the household, accepted openly by Sethe and Denver but arousing suspicion in Paul D. Over time, she demonstrates increasingly alarming behavior that betrays her identity as Sethe's dead daughter and her capacity to do harm to those around her. She seduces Paul D in an attempt to drive him away from Sethe, cruelly reminding him of his sexually repressed past and unstable present. Additionally, she taunts and dismisses Denver, repeatedly reminding her doting sister that she did not enter into the world of the living for her. She makes it clear that she is only interested in possessing Sethe, proclaiming, "'She is the one. She is the one I need. You can go but she is the one I have to have'" (89).

Beloved unsettles those around her with visions of a past she could not possibly know about. The level of intimacy in her revelations grows increasingly sentimental until she finally hums a song that Sethe would sing to her dead daughter. By informing Sethe of her identity in such a way, Beloved emotionally manipulates her mother's sense of latent guilt. Beloved's possession of Sethe is so strong that she can coax her mother into abandoning all her responsibilities to tend to her every need. She delights in Sethe's dependency on her approval, escalating her demands at every turn. When the townspeople gather to exorcize her from 124, Beloved appears to them as a "pregnant woman, naked and smiling" (308). She has taken on the form of someone disarming, despite possessing supernatural abilities to manipulate the actions of people around her.

Beloved acquires her name from the lone word printed on her pink tombstone. Since Sethe could not afford a more elaborate engraving, she offered the engraver "the one word that mattered" (5) from the phrase "dearly beloved," part of the

preacher's sermon during her daughter's funeral. When Beloved introduces herself, Sethe is "deeply touched by her sweet name" (63) and feels immediate affection toward her. Unlike Denver, whose name has a more original and specific origin, Beloved's name is as ephemeral as her haunted presence. Her name gestures to her temporal existence between life and death.

Denver

As Sethe's youngest and only surviving daughter, Denver has spent much of her life burdened by the knowledge of her mother's violence. As the only one of Sethe's living children to reside at 124, Denver grows up sullen, petulant, and isolated. Given Sethe's ostracization from the rest of the black community, Denver does not have the opportunity to socialize beyond her immediate household. After her brothers' departure from the house and the passing of Grandma Baby Suggs, Denver knows only the company of her mother and her dead sister's spirit. As a result, she is resistant to strangers such as Paul D, who she initially views as a threat to her place in the house. When Paul D visits, she is overwhelmed by his presence and protests, "'I can't live here. I don't know where to go or what to do, but I can't live here'" (17). As her mother is so preoccupied with her repressed grief, Denver realizes that the addition of Paul D in their lives will mean that she will become less of a priority in the house. She will cease to matter.

While her isolated upbringing has hampered her emotional maturity, she experiences an immense growth over the course of the novel. By devoting so much of her time to protecting Beloved's identity, Denver learns to care for someone other than herself. She also demonstrates tactfulness and intelligence in the way she guards Beloved from Paul D's suspicion. When Paul D attempts to enlist Denver's help in corroborating a detail about Beloved's curious behavior, Denver's eyes become "deceptive, even when she [holds] a steady gaze" (67). She lies to prevent Paul D from exposing Beloved's true form and to keep her mother from enacting the same violence she did years ago when she murdered her sister. In each of her actions, Denver is motivated by love, loyalty, and a deep desire to be needed.

By the end of the novel, Denver achieves a more empathetic perspective of her mother's traumatic past. She realizes that Beloved is not a benign spirit but a dangerous supernatural creature who is killing Sethe slowly. When Sethe is fired from her job after being fully possessed by Beloved, Denver leaves the house by herself for the first time to seek employment to care for her mother. Without any skills or prior training, she manages to gradually endear herself to the townspeople, eventually acquiring a job as the Bowdins' nighttime caretaker. She even alerts the townspeople to her mother's struggle, which leads them to intervene and help get rid of Sethe's possession. Her growth is so notable by the novel's end that Stamp Paid remarks with admiration, "'I'm proud of her. She turning out fine'" (313).

Paul D

Paul D began his enslavement alongside four other men and Sethe at Sweet Home under the ownership of the Garners. When Mr. Garner passes away, leaving the schoolteacher in charge, Paul D is sold to another slaveowner named Brandywine. When Paul D attacks Brandywine, he is sent to a prison farm in Alfred, Georgia, where the white guards sexually and physically abuse him. He is fortunately able to escape with the other inmates during a flood. In the years following, he serves as a soldier on both the Union and Confederate sides of the Civil War, as he does not have many other employment options available to him as a former slave. After the war ends, he wanders on his own and takes employment wherever it is available.

After slavery is abolished, he encounters Sethe again in Ohio. He is reminded that during his time at Sweet Home, he and the other men coveted Sethe as a potential mate when she first arrived. Like the other Sweet Home men, his masculine desires were repressed under his enslavement, so he mitigated his feelings by "fucking cows, dreaming of rape, thrashing on pallets" (13). Despite this frustration, the Sweet Home men let Sethe choose her mate from among them. Although Sethe chose to be with Halle at the time, Paul D and Sethe begin a relationship when they reunite years later. However, the trauma of Paul D's enslavement still haunts him. As

his trauma is largely associated with his emasculation as a black man, he struggles to express his desires in truly vulnerable ways, leading to his inability to form long-lasting, committed relationships with others. After consummating his relationship with Sethe, Paul D remains “guarded and stirred up” by Sethe’s eyes, suddenly disturbed by the scars on her back. Although he seeks her permission to stay at the house and tries to create a family with her, his fear of his past, which manifests in his relationship with Sethe, intervenes. He leaves her after learning that she had killed her own daughter. By the end of the novel, he faces his past and returns to Sethe with a newfound sense of tenderness and vulnerability, reminding her, “‘You your best thing, Sethe’

5.1.6 Themes

The Trauma and Memory of Slavery

Following the abolishment of slavery, the trauma of enslavement still follows Sethe and Paul D as their relationship forces them both to remember the horrors of their pasts. This trauma persists in various hauntings—from the haint possessing house 124 to the sudden appearance of Beloved. Each haunting reminds the formerly enslaved characters of the residual trauma they grapple with even long after slavery’s abolishment. Both Sethe and Paul D struggle with their coping mechanisms at the start of the novel, moving between repression and silence.

For Sethe, her isolation from the townspeople has enabled her to avoid confronting the horrors of her past, particularly her violent actions toward her own children. However, the temperamental haint of 124 physically articulates the anger and pain that Sethe has repressed by shaking the house and tossing its furniture. The haint, the spirit of Sethe’s dead daughter, imbues the house with “baby’s venom” (3), and it is also a constant reminder of Sethe’s fear of being enslaved once again.

Paul D has coped with his enslavement and subsequent imprisonment by moving from place to place. House 124 is one of the first places he has settled in a while. His growing intimacy with Sethe, a woman he has desired since they were enslaved together at Sweet Home, compels him to speak about his traumas for the

first time. However, the process of narrating his traumatic experiences is not easy, as he is practiced in keeping his past to himself. He has placed his feelings in a "tobacco tin buried in his chest where a red heart used to be" (86). Like Sethe, he has been desensitized by the rapidity of his traumatic experiences during his enslavement and imprisonment. The only viable way of coping he has had all these years is not to feel. Throughout the novel, Sethe and Paul D heal from their traumatic pasts and reconcile with their painful memories of enslavement.

The Destruction of Black Identity

Long after the abolishment of slavery, white people enact control over black people through the destruction of black identity. The most violent example of this harm is the schoolteacher's methods of controlling and punishing the enslaved black people at Sweet Home. His cruel punishments include burning Sixo alive and whipping Sethe when she informs him that his nephews raped her. He is able to justify his dehumanization of them by assigning white superiority over their black identity. As an educator, he practices eugenics, a science rooted in biological racism, and studies the bodies and practices of his black slaves, establishing ideas about black inferiority. To the schoolteacher, the ownership and control of black slaves is the same as taming animals. When he finds Sethe in the shed with her injured and murdered children, he does not express any emotion over the scene but rather calculates his own loses in labor and property value. He determines that Sethe has "gone wild" as horses do when they reach their threshold for physical punishment.

Slavery's psychic and physical harms also have a detrimental impact upon kinship among the black townspeople in the novel. While Grandma Baby Suggs labors to produce a sense of community and healing for the townspeople, they betray her family by neglecting to inform her of the slave catchers' arrival. While they have all benefitted from Grandma Baby Suggs' words of wisdom over the years, they also grow increasingly jealous of her life when her family slowly rejoins her. Grandma Baby Suggs is so heartbroken by this betrayal from her black community that she becomes sick shortly after and passes away. To her, the betrayal is the fault

of whiteness, leading her to proclaim, "'There is no bad luck in the world but whitefolks'". The persistent influence of whiteness continues to disrupt black kinship, even in a town of black people who have the opportunity to protect one another.

The Intimacy of Mother-Daughter Relationships

While there are different forms of intimate relationships throughout the novel, the most prominent ones are between mothers and daughters. For Sethe, the trauma of motherhood begins with her own mother, who killed every one of her children but Sethe. While Sethe cannot comprehend the meaning behind her mother's actions when she is younger, she will go on to repeat her mother's violent actions against her own children to prevent them from being captured into slavery. In both incidents, the mother permits the survival of one daughter who will live to either break the cycle of intergenerational trauma or sustain the pain for another generation.

For Sethe, this tension is exemplified through her two daughters, Denver and Beloved. Whereas Denver stands for the future of growth and healing from trauma, Beloved represents the inability to let go of the past. Denver grows from protecting Beloved to shielding her mother from her dead sister's possession. Despite being afraid of her mother's capacity for violence, Denver also realizes from witnessing Beloved's possession that "if Sethe [doesn't] wake up one morning and pick up a knife, Beloved might". Denver witnesses her mother's pain over time and understands Beloved's possession for what it is. Meanwhile, Beloved's possession represents an unwillingness to heal. Sethe nurses this possession by providing motherly love in excess, spoiling Beloved and feeding her own guilt over killing her child. Realizing this is not sustainable, Denver seeks outside help, disrupting the abusive pattern of mother and daughter relationships by being open to new forms of kinship that might heal them.

5.1.7 Recall

"Beloved" by Toni Morrison is a haunting exploration of the enduring legacy of slavery in America. Set in the years following the Civil War, the novel tells the story

of Sethe, a former slave who escaped to freedom but continues to be haunted by the trauma of her past. The arrival of a mysterious young woman named Beloved, who may be the reincarnation of Sethe's deceased daughter, forces Sethe to confront her buried memories and the devastating choices she made to protect her children. Through powerful prose and vivid imagery, Morrison delves into themes of identity, memory, trauma, and the ongoing struggle for freedom and self-determination. "Beloved" is a profound meditation on the human capacity for both resilience and suffering, and a testament to the enduring power of love and survival in the face of oppression.

5.1.8. Characters

1. **Sweet Home**: The plantation where Sethe and many of the other characters were once enslaved. It's a significant setting in the novel, representing both the horrors of slavery and the sense of home and community that the characters long for.
2. **124 Bluestone Road**: The address of the house where Sethe and her family live in Cincinnati. The house is haunted by the ghost of Sethe's deceased daughter and serves as a central setting in the novel.
3. **Beloved**: The mysterious young woman who comes to live with Sethe and Denver. Beloved's identity and origin are ambiguous, but she is believed to be the reincarnation of Sethe's deceased daughter.
4. **Denver**: Sethe's daughter, who lives with her in 124 Bluestone Road. Denver is a central character in the novel, and her relationship with Beloved and her journey to independence are key aspects of the story.
5. **Sethe:** The protagonist of the novel, Sethe is a former slave who escaped from Sweet Home. She is haunted by the trauma of her past, particularly by the memory of killing her own daughter to prevent her from being recaptured by slaveowners.

6. **Paul D:** A former slave who also escaped from Sweet Home and later reunites with Sethe in Cincinnati. Paul D becomes romantically involved with Sethe and plays a significant role in her life.
7. **Baby Suggs:** Sethe's mother-in-law and a former slave. Baby Suggs is a spiritual and maternal figure in the community, known for her gatherings in the Clearing where she preaches about freedom and self-love.
8. **The Clearing:** A wooded area outside of Cincinnati where Baby Suggs holds her gatherings. The Clearing is a symbol of freedom and communal healing in the novel.
9. **School Teacher:** The cruel and sadistic owner of Sweet Home who mistreated Sethe and the other slaves. Schoolteacher represents the dehumanizing institution of slavery and the brutality of its perpetrators.
10. **Memory:** A central theme in the novel, memory is depicted as both a source of trauma and a means of confronting and processing the past. The characters in "Beloved" struggle with the memories of slavery and its aftermath, which continue to haunt them in their daily lives.

5.1.9 Check Your Progress

Short Answer

1. Who is the author of "Beloved"?
2. Where is the novel primarily set?
3. What historical event serves as the backdrop for the novel?
4. Who is the protagonist of the novel?
5. What is the significance of the character Beloved?
6. Who is Sethe's former owner and what is his relationship to her?
7. What is the name of Sethe's daughter who dies?
8. What is the significance of the character Paul D?
9. What literary device does Morrison frequently use in "Beloved" to depict the

haunting presence of the past?

11. What does the character Baby Suggs preach about in the Clearing, and what is its significance?

Essay Questions:

1. Explore the theme of memory and trauma in "Beloved." How do characters like Sethe and Paul D grapple with their pasts?
2. Analyze the significance of the character Beloved in the novel. What does she represent, and how does her presence affect the other characters, particularly Sethe and Denver?
3. Discuss the motif of motherhood in "Beloved." How do characters like Sethe, Baby Suggs, and Denver navigate the challenges of motherhood in the context of slavery and its aftermath?
4. Explore Morrison's use of magical realism in *Beloved*.
5. Examine the significance of community and communal healing in *Beloved*.
6. Discuss Morrison's portrayal of race and identity in *Beloved*.
7. Explore the symbolism of names and naming in *Beloved*.
8. Analyze the role of violence in "Beloved." How does Morrison depict the physical and psychological violence of slavery, and what effect does it have on the characters' lives and relationships?
9. Discuss the theme of freedom in "Beloved." How do characters like Sethe and Paul D define and pursue freedom in the wake of slavery?
10. Explore the narrative structure and storytelling techniques used in *Beloved*. How does Morrison employ nonlinear storytelling and multiple perspectives to convey the complexity of her characters' experiences?

SECTION 5.2: THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA- ERNEST HEMINGWAY

5.2.1 Introduction to Ernest Hemingway

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961). A writer famous for his terse, direct style, Ernest Hemingway was also known for the way in which his own life mirrored the activities and interests of his characters. Many of his works show man pitted against nature, as in his favourite sports-hunting, fishing, and bullfighting. In others he tells of the experiences of wartime-man against man. The immediate appeal of his best writing probably stems from the fact that he wrote of things he knew intimately and that were important to him.

Ernest Hemingway was born on July 21, 1899, in Oak Park, Ill., a Chicago suburb. His father was a doctor. After high school Hemingway got a job as a reporter on the Kansas City Star. During World War I he tried to enlist in the armed forces but was rejected because of an old eye injury. He volunteered as an ambulance driver on the Italian front, and in 1918 he was badly wounded.

After the war he settled in Paris, France, where he began to write fiction. He submitted his work for criticism to the poet Ezra Pound and to Gertrude Stein, a writer who served as friend and adviser to many writers of the time. The first of many collections of stories, 'In Our Time', published in 1925, did not sell well. His novel 'The Sun Also Rises', which came out a year later, made his name known. It tells of young people in post war Paris and their search for values in a world that in many ways has lost its meaning.

In 'A Farewell to Arms' (1929), about war on the Italian front, Hemingway tells a love story that is interspersed with scenes of magnificent battle reporting. 'To Have and Have Not' (1937) shows Hemingway's interest in social problems, an interest more fully realized in 'For Whom the Bell Tolls' (1940), set in the Spanish Civil War. In 'Across the River and into the Trees' (1950) an army officer dies while on leave. This novel is generally considered inferior to 'The Old Man and the Sea' (1952), which won a Pulitzer prize in 1953. Hemingway received the Nobel prize for literature in 1954.

Hemingway was a war correspondent in Spain, China, and Europe during World War II. He was married four times and had three sons. Toward the end of his life he suffered from anxiety and depression. He died on July 2, 1961, in his home in Ketchum, Idaho, of a self-inflicted shotgun wound.

5.2.2.1 Summary Part 1 - Preparations

For 84 days, the old fisherman Santiago has caught nothing, returning empty-handed in his skiff to the small Cuban fishing village where he lives. After 40 days without a catch, Manolin's father has insisted that Manolin, the young man Santiago taught to fish from the age of five, fish in another boat. This evening, as every evening, Manolin meets the old man to help carry the coiled line, gaff, harpoon, and sail back to his shack. Along the way, Manolin tries to cheer Santiago by reminding him of the time, when they were fishing together, that the old man went 87 days without a fish and then they caught big fish for three weeks.

On their way home, Manolin buys Santiago a beer at the Terrace. Some of the other fishermen make fun of Santiago; others look at him and are sad, speaking politely about the current and the depths at which they had fished and what they had seen at sea. The fishermen who were successful this day have taken their marlin to the fish house or their sharks to the shark factory. Manolin asks if he can get sardines for Santiago tomorrow. Santiago at first tells him to go play baseball but eventually relents. They reminisce a while, talk of Santiago's plans for going out the next day, and then go to Santiago's shack. Because Santiago has nothing to eat, Manolin fetches Santiago the dinner that the Terrace owner, Martin, sends for free, as he has many times before. As Santiago eats, he and the boy talk of baseball, the great Joe DiMaggio, and other topics of mutual interest.

The next morning, Santiago picks up the boy at his house. They have coffee (which is all that Santiago will have all day) at an early morning spot that serves fishermen. The boy fetches sardines and fresh bait and helps the old man ease his skiff into the water. They wish each other good luck, and the old man rows away.

5.2.2.2 Summary Part 2 - The Journey Out

Alone in his boat, in the dark of early morning, Santiago rows out to sea. He hears the other fishermen leaving in their boats but cannot see them in the dark. He passes the phosphorescence of some Gulf weed and one of the deep wells where

many fish and other sea creatures congregate. He has fished such deep wells without success on previous days of this long stretch without a catch. So this day, he plans to row far out to sea, in search of a really big fish.

As he rows, Santiago hears the flying fish he regards as friends and feels sympathy for the delicate sea birds that must fish to survive and must cope with an ocean that can be beautiful yet cruel. He also thinks about the differences between himself and the younger fishermen who float their lines on buoys and use motorboats bought with money they earned selling shark livers. Whereas Santiago affectionately refers to the sea as la mar (using the Spanish feminine), they say el mar (using the Spanish masculine).

Santiago rows effortlessly, not disturbing the ocean's surface but working with the current, letting it do a third of the work. He sets his baits at precise depths and ties and sews them so that all the hook is concealed and sweet smelling and good tasting to a fish. He uses the albacores Manolin bought for him and a big blue runner and a yellow jack he had from before, using the sardines to give them scent and attractiveness. He loops each line onto a green-sapped stick, so that even a touch on the bait will make the stick dip, and connects the coils of line so that a fish can run out more than 300 fathoms if necessary.

As he fishes, Santiago takes pride in keeping his lines straighter than anyone, even though he knows that other fishermen sometimes let their lines drift with the current. For a moment, he reluctantly admits that, despite his precision, he has no luck anymore. But he quickly reminds himself that each day is a new day and that, while it is better to be lucky, he prefers to be exact so that he will be ready when the luck finally comes. Santiago briefly reflects that all his life the early morning sun has hurt his eyes, yet again catches himself, keeping in mind that his eyes are still good and in the evening he can look into the sun without getting the blackness.

Santiago sees a man-of-war bird circling in the sky ahead of him. Through his experience and his fisherman's skill, he recognizes that the bird is following a school of flying fish, themselves pursued by a school of big dolphin. Santiago works with nature, fishing where the bird leads, but neither he nor the bird have any luck. As the flying fish (which have little chance against the dolphin) move too fast for the bird, the school of dolphin move too fast and too far for Santiago. Santiago clings to the hope that perhaps he will catch a stray, but the dolphin get away.

Santiago studies a Portuguese man-of-war (agua mala he calls it in Spanish) floating in the water. He notices the tiny fish swimming in its filaments and notes that while these fish are immune to its poisons, men are not. While working on a fish, he has many times suffered welts and sores from the poisons. He considers the man-of-war's iridescent beauty the falsest thing in the sea, and he thinks how much he loves to watch sea turtles eat them or to step on them himself on the beach after a storm.

Santiago recalls his days turtling and thinks that "people are heartless about turtles because a turtle's heart will beat for hours after he has been cut up and butchered." He muses that his heart is like the turtle's, as are his hands and feet, and that he eats turtle eggs to be strong in the fall when the big fish come, the same reason he drinks the shark liver oil available in the shack where the fishermen store their equipment. Although the oil is there for anyone who wants it, most of the fishermen don't like it. But Santiago considers it no worse than the early hours fishermen keep, and he drinks it because it gives him strength, is good for the eyes, and protects against colds and grippes.

The second time Santiago sees the bird circling above him, he sees tuna jumping into the air. Santiago successfully catches a ten-pound albacore and hauls it into the boat, where it flops around until he kills it out of kindness. Santiago says aloud that the fish will make a good bait, which prompts him to begin thinking about his habit of talking aloud to himself at sea, a habit that he began after Manolin stopped fishing with him. He remembers that he and Manolin talked only when necessary or at night when bad weather had them storm-bound. Most fishermen consider talking only when necessary at sea a virtue, and Santiago has always respected that belief. Now, however, he grants himself this minor indiscretion because it bothers no one. He knows that if the others hear him, they will consider him crazy, but he decides that if he is crazy, this habit doesn't matter and that the rich take along their radios to listen to baseball games.

Santiago upbraids himself for thinking of baseball when he should be focusing his attention on what he describes as "[t]hat which I was born for." He shifts his thoughts to something he has observed this day — all the fish he has seen are moving fast, travelling to the northeast. Although he is not sure whether that is a sign of bad weather or something else, he has noticed. He also notices that he is now so far out into the ocean that he can barely see the tops of the tallest hills, which look

white in the distance. With the sun hot on his back, Santiago briefly is tempted to nap, with a line around his toe to wake him if a fish bites. But he remembers that he has been trying to catch a fish for 85 days now and so "must fish the day well." At that moment, one of the green sticks takes a sharp dip.

5.2.2.3 Summary Part 3 - Battles at Sea: The Marlin and the Sharks

Death and Mourning

A sudden dip in one of the green sticks heralds the start of the novella's central battle. Holding the line gently between thumb and forefinger, Santiago somehow knows that a hundred fathoms down a great marlin is eating the sardines covering the hook that projects from the head of the small tuna. Santiago unleashes the line from the stick and lets the line run through his fingers, careful not to put any tension on it.

Santiago thinks about how big this fish must be, this far out and in this month, and desperately tries to coax or will the fish to eat the bait. He also asks God to help the fish to take the bait, and when the nibbling stops a couple of times, he desperately searches his experience for explanations that indicate the fish is still working on the bait. Then Santiago feels something hard and heavy and allows the line to play out, going deeper and deeper. He assumes the fish will turn and swallow the bait but is afraid to say so, out of a belief that "if you said a good thing it might not happen."

When he feels the fish eat the bait, he prepares the reserve coils of line, allows the fish to eat a bit more, and then sets the hook. He takes the weight of the taut line against his back, bracing himself against the boat and leaning back against the fish's pull on the line. For the first of many times during his great struggle, Santiago says fervently, "I wish I had the boy."

As the fish tows the boat, Santiago wonders what he'll do if the fish suddenly dives down deep and then dies. But he immediately assures himself that there are plenty of things he can do. He thinks about how he hooked the fish at noon and has been holding onto the line for four hours but hasn't yet had a first glimpse of the fish. Santiago drinks a bit of water from a bottle he has tucked away in the bow and tries not to think, but simply endure. When he realizes he can no longer see anything of

the land, he reminds himself that he can always sail back by following the glow coming from Havana at night. Then he ponders various times when the fish might come up so he can see it.

When two porpoises come playing around the boat, Santiago speaks of them as "our brothers like the flying fish." Then he begins to pity the marlin, which is stronger and stranger than any fish he has ever hooked. Santiago considers whether the marlin has been hooked before, how the marlin cannot know that its adversary is only one old man, what price it may bring in the market, how it pulls like a male and without panic, and whether it has plans or is simply as desperate as he is.

Santiago remembers the time he hooked the female of a pair of marlins and the male stayed nearby until after Santiago had her in the boat. As Santiago was preparing the harpoon, the male jumped to see where the female was and then dove deep and was gone. Santiago still recalls the male marlin's beauty and how the whole incident was the saddest thing he ever saw. Both he and the boy felt sad afterwards, so they begged the female marlin's pardon and quickly butchered her.

In the night, Santiago catches another fish on one of his other lines but cuts it loose before he even knows what it is. He also cuts away the other leader line that is still in the water, so he can use all the reserve coils of line to bring in the marlin that he is joined in battle with. He abandons the other catch, the hooks, the lines, and the leaders to land this one fish. Santiago yearns for the boy but then yanks himself back to what he must do at the moment. When the marlin surges forward, the line cuts Santiago's face. He thinks that the fish's back cannot feel as bad as his does but that he has made all possible preparations and that the fish cannot pull the skiff forever. Santiago vows to stay with the fish until he's dead and then recognizes that the fish will do the same with him.

In the light of the second morning, the marlin and the current are still pulling the skiff to the north-northeast, but Santiago sees the fish is swimming at a shallower depth. He prays that God will let the fish jump, to fill the air sacs on its back so it cannot go deep and die, where he would lose it. Santiago keeps pulling the line taut, to the verge of breaking, each time worrying that the fish might throw the hook. He takes consolation that he feels better with the morning sun and that for once he doesn't have to look straight into it. Santiago tells the fish, "I love you and respect

you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends." Then he thinks to himself, "Let us hope so."

A small, tired warbler flying south comes and sits on the line to rest. Santiago tells the bird the line is steady and then asks the bird what birds are coming to that it is so tired after a windless night. Then he thinks about the hawks the bird will have to face as it heads toward land and says, "Take a good rest, small bird. Then go in and take your chance like any man or bird or fish." He tells the bird that it can stay at his house, if it likes, and that he would take it in the boat if he weren't with "a friend," meaning the marlin. Then the marlin suddenly lurches, pulling Santiago into the bow. The bird flies up and is gone, and Santiago doesn't even see it go.

Santiago notices his bleeding right hand and speculates that something hurt the marlin at that moment and that the marlin is feeling the strain of all this now as he certainly is. He misses the bird's company and thinks that it is tougher where the bird is going, until it makes the shore. He thinks that he must have let his hand get cut by the line when the fish jumped because he's getting stupid or was distracted by the bird. So he vows to keep his mind on the task at hand, reminds himself to eat the tuna so his strength doesn't fail, and wishes for the boy again and for some salt. Santiago washes his hand in the salt water and with great care manages to position himself so he can eat the tuna. Santiago's left hand begins to cramp, and he disgustedly tells the hand to go ahead and turn into a claw, though it will do no good. As he eats the tuna, he hopes it will help his hand not to cramp.

Santiago wishes for some lime and salt for the fish but thinks that the taste is not bad anyway and preferable to dolphin. He also thinks he must be practical and try to eat all the fish now, before it rots in the sun. He wishes he could also feed the marlin, because it is his brother, but he realizes he must keep strong to kill the fish. After he finishes the tuna, Santiago takes the line in his right hand and calls upon God to help the cramp go away. He considers that if the cramp doesn't go away he may have to open the left hand forcibly if he needs it, which he is willing to do. For now, he decides to hope it will open on its own, since he knows he abused the hand in the night.

Santiago sees clouds building up and a flight of wild ducks and thinks that at sea no man is every truly alone. He knows that some fear being out of sight of land and are right to feel that way in months of sudden bad weather. Although this month

is one of the hurricane months, he knows the weather is best at this time of year when there is no hurricane, and he sees no signs of one. He thinks about how a hurricane can be seen coming for days at sea, whereas ashore people do not see it coming because they don't know what to look for or perhaps the land makes a difference in the shape of the clouds. He considers the light breeze better for him than for the fish.

Santiago regards the cramp in his hand as a betrayal of his own body and a humiliation, and he wishes the boy were there to rub it for him. Suddenly, the fish makes its first jump, coming completely out of the water. The fish is beautiful and huge, two feet longer than the skiff. Its sword seems to Santiago like a baseball bat and tapered like a rapier; its tail seems like a scythe-blade. Santiago knows that he must keep pressure on the line so the fish doesn't run it out and that he must never let the fish learn its own strength. Santiago thinks that if he were the fish, he would pour everything into a run until something broke; but he thanks God that fish aren't as intelligent as those who kill them, though the fish are "more noble and more able."

Although in his lifetime, Santiago twice caught fish weighing a thousand pounds, he never did so alone and out of sight of land. He realizes he is now "fast to the biggest fish that he had ever seen and bigger than he had ever heard of" and that his hand surely will uncramp because his two hands and the fish and are brothers. Santiago wonders if the fish jumped to show itself to him. He wishes he could show himself to the fish but then decides that if the fish thinks Santiago is more man than he is, he will be so. Santiago momentarily wishes he were the fish, which has so much going for it against his intelligence and will. Although he is not religious, Santiago promises to say ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys and to make a pilgrimage to the Virgin of Cobre if he catches the marlin. He begins saying his prayers quickly and automatically. Afterwards, he feels better but is suffering just as much.

Santiago decides to rebait the other line in case he needs something more to eat. He's also running out of water. He doesn't think he'll be able to catch anything but a dolphin, though he wishes for a flying fish, which is excellent raw. Santiago thinks that he will kill this great fish, even though doing so is unjust, and show it "what a man can do and what a man endures." He also reminds himself that he told

Manolin he was a strange old man and so now must prove it, though he has proven it a thousand times before.

Santiago decides to rest. He wishes that he could sleep and dream about the lions and then wonders why the lions are the main thing that is left to him. The marlin begins to swim at a higher level and turns a bit to the east, which Santiago previously thought of as signs that the fish is tiring and the current is pushing it more eastward. Santiago can picture the fish swimming below the water and wonders what it can see at that depth. And he remembers that he, like a cat, once saw well in the dark, though not absolute dark.

Santiago's hand finally uncramps, he shifts the line on his back, and thinks that he is tired and that if the fish is not tired, it is a very strange fish. He tries to think of baseball, of the New York Yankees and the Detroit Tigers and how this is the second day that he hasn't known what's happening. He tells himself he must have confidence and be worthy of the great DiMaggio, "who does all things perfectly even with the pain of the bone spur in his heel." He wonders momentarily what a bone spur really is.

As the sun sets, Santiago deliberately tries to give himself confidence by remembering in great detail the time in Casablanca when he arm wrestled for an entire day with "the great Negro from Cienfuegos who was the strongest man on the docks." Back then, Santiago was called El Campeón (the champion). By Monday, many bettors wanted the match called a draw, so they could go to work loading sacks of sugar or mining at the Havana Coal Company. But Santiago finished off his opponent before anyone had to go to work. For a long time afterward, everyone called him The Champion. The next year, few bets were placed on the return match, and Santiago easily beat the man, having already broken his spirit. Santiago won a few more matches, felt he could beat anyone, and then decided to give up arm wrestling because it might harm his right hand for fishing. He had tried his left, but "his left hand had always been a traitor and would not do what he called on it to do and he did not trust it."

Santiago sees a plane to Miami pass overhead and wonders what it would be like to fly low over the sea. He recalls the days when he used to watch the fish below from his seat in the mast-head of the turtle boats. As the sun goes down, he passes an island of Sargasso weed that heaves and sways as if the ocean were making love

under a yellow blanket. Then Santiago catches a dolphin. Careful not to lose his hold on the line with the marlin, he brings in the dolphin, clubs it, and then rebaits the line and tosses it overboard. Santiago notices that the marlin has slowed its pull on the line. He considers lashing the oars together across the stern to increase the boat's drag. He leans forward, pressing against the wood of the skiff so that it takes much of the strain of the line from his back. He feels good that he is learning the best way to handle the line and that he has eaten once and will again soon, while the great marlin has eaten nothing.

As the stars come out, Santiago thinks of them as his distant friends. He considers the marlin his friend, too, and marvels that he has never seen or heard of such a fish as this one, yet he must kill it. He considers that humans are lucky that they don't have to try to kill the stars, the sun, or the moon; it is bad enough they have to kill their brother creatures. Even as he remains determined to kill the marlin, Santiago feels sorry that it has had nothing to eat. He feels that the people it will feed are not worthy of this great fish.

Santiago decides to be cautious and not use the oars for drag, relying instead on the fish's hunger and its inability to understand what it is up against. He chooses instead to rest for a while, as much as he can, until his next duty. He determines to sleep to keep himself clearheaded, just as the stars, the moon, the sun, and even the ocean sleep. But he decides first to eat the dolphin.

When he guts the dolphin, he discovers two fresh flying fish inside. He positions himself in the boat, and when he washes the dolphin remains from his hands, he leaves a phosphorescent trail in the ocean. He also notices that the marlin's speed has slowed a bit. He eats half of one of the two dolphin fillets and one of the flying fish, thinking how miserable raw dolphin tastes. He wishes he had brought along salt and limes or had the foresight to splash water on the boat's bow, to evaporate and leave sea salt. He notices the clouds and says that there will be bad weather, but not for three or four days.

Santiago positions himself to sleep, pressing his body against his hand and rigging the line so that he cannot lose it in his sleep. He dreams at first of a school of porpoises during their mating time, jumping and diving back into the same hole. Then he dreams that he is asleep in his bed, cold from a north wind, and that his

hand is asleep from his lying on it. Finally, he dreams of watching the lions from where the ship is anchored, and he is happy.

Santiago is jerked suddenly awake by the line racing out, and then the fish jumps several times. His hand and back are cut and burned, but he works very hard to make the marlin pay for every inch it drags out. Santiago wishes the boy were there to wet the lines and to be with him. Santiago wonders whether hunger or fear made the fish jump, though the fish seemed fearless, and then reminds himself that he must be fearless.

As the sun rises on his third day at sea, Santiago drags his cut right hand in the salt water to clean the cuts, and then he switches the line to his right and does the same for his left hand. He begins to think that the weakness in his left hand is because he didn't train it properly and that if it cramps again, the line can cut it off. But then he decides that thinking such a thing is evidence that he's beginning not to think clearly, so he eats the second flying fish. He thinks that he has done everything he can and that he's ready for the marlin to circle and the fight to come. Soon, he feels the marlin begin to turn.

Santiago continues to battle the marlin, pulling in line to shorten the fish's circles. Wet with sweat and aching, he sees black spots before his eyes but attributes them to the tension he is putting on the line. Twice, he has felt weak and dizzy. He does not want to fail himself and die on a fish this great. So he asks God to help him endure and promises to say a hundred Our Fathers and a hundred Hail Marys. Because he cannot say the prayers now, he asks God to consider them said, promising to say them later. He feels the fish bang the leader with its sword. When Santiago feels the trade wind pick up, he begins to think hopefully that he'll need the wind to take the fish in. He thinks that he simply must steer south and west to head back, that a man never really gets lost at sea, and that Cuba is a long island.

On the fish's third circle, Santiago sees the fish pass under the boat. He can't believe the fish is so big. Eventually he sees the huge scythe blade of the fish's tail. Santiago prepared his harpoon long before, so now he reminds himself to be calm and strong and bring the fish in close. Many times, Santiago hauls the fish closer but the fish manages to right itself and swim away. Santiago thinks that the fish is killing him but that it has a right to, for he has never seen anything greater, more beautiful, calmer, or more noble than this fish he calls brother. He thinks, "Come on and kill

me. I do not care who kills who." But he immediately tells himself to be clear headed and not think such things and to suffer like a man — or a fish. Against the fish's agony, Santiago pits all his pain, his remaining strength, and his long gone pride. Eventually he brings the fish close enough and, with all his strength, drives the harpoon in.

After killing the marlin that he calls brother, Santiago tells himself he must now do the slave work of lashing the fish to the boat and bringing it in. Santiago thinks of the fish as his fortune, although that is not why he wishes to touch the fish. He thinks about how he felt the marlin's heart when he drove in the harpoon. He also thinks about how he and the boy will splice the fishing lines that he now uses to fasten the marlin to the skiff. Although he thinks of the money the fish will bring, Santiago thinks even more of the fact that the great DiMaggio would be proud of him this day.

Santiago needs nourishment and moisture for the strength to bring the fish in, so he shakes some small shrimp out of a bed of seaweed, eats them, and drinks half of one of the two remaining drinks he has left in the water bottle. As he steers toward home, his head becomes a bit unclear, and he begins to wonder whether he is bringing the fish in or the fish is bringing him in. He thinks that he should let the fish bring him in, if doing so pleases the fish, for he has only bested the fish through trickery and the fish meant him no harm. As they speed together toward home, the old man keeps looking at the fish, to remind himself what he truly has done.

Within an hour, the first shark attacks. The attack is no accident. Following the scent of blood, the mako charges out of the depths, homing in. The mako is fast and fearless, wellarmed, built to feed on all the fish in the sea, and beautiful except for its jaws. Most of all, it is no scavenger. Its teeth are long, like an old man's fingers, but crisped like claws. Santiago prepares the harpoon, though the rope is short because of what he cut away to lash the marlin to the skiff. His head is clear now and he realizes how little he can do to prevent the shark from hitting the marlin. Still, he hopes to get the shark, and he wishes bad luck to its mother.

Santiago knows more sharks will come. At first, he can think of nothing he can do against them. Then suddenly he realizes that he can lash his knife to one of the oars. That way, though he is an old man, he won't be unarmed. He considers it silly, even a sin not to have hope. For a moment, he claims not to want to think about sin because he doesn't understand it and doesn't believe in it. Yet he wonders if it was a

sin to kill the fish, even though he did so to keep himself alive and to feed many people. He also recognizes that he killed the fish out of pride and because he was born to be a fisherman — like San Pedro (St. Peter) and the great DiMaggio's father — just as the fish was born to be a fish. He wonders whether killing the marlin was not a sin because he loved it — or whether that made killing it even more of a sin. He admits that he enjoyed killing the mako shark, which lives on live fish as he does and is not a scavenger, but beautiful, noble, and fearless. Eventually, Santiago decides that he killed the shark in self-defense and killed it well, that all animals kill one another, and that fishing kills him even as it keeps him alive. Then he reminds himself that the boy keeps him alive and that he mustn't deceive himself too much.

Santiago pulls off a piece of the marlin's meat, where the shark cut it. He tastes it, noticing the quality and noting that it would bring the highest price in the market. Yet he cannot keep the scent out of the water, so he knows more sharks will come. For two hours he sails, occasionally resting and chewing a bit more of the marlin to be strong. When he sees the first of the two shovel-nosed sharks, he says, "Ay," an involuntary noise that a man might make "feeling the nail go through his hands and into the wood."

The two shovel-nosed sharks — Santiago calls them galanos — are stupid from hunger but closing in on the marlin. These sharks are different from the mako. They are bad smelling and scavengers as well as killers. They are the kind that cut off a sleeping turtle's legs and flippers or hit a man in the water, if they're hungry, even though the man has no blood or fish scent on him. They even hit the marlin differently, shaking the skiff as they jerk and pull at the meat. With his injured hands, Santiago raises the oar with the knife lashed to it and drives it into the brain of one of the sharks and into its eye, killing it. Santiago swings the boat to reveal the second shark and stabs it, barely piercing its hide but hurting his own hands and shoulder. Then he repeatedly stabs it in the head, the eye, and the brain until it is dead.

After he cleans the blade and gets back on course, Santiago thinks that the two shovel-nosed sharks must have taken a quarter of the marlin, and he apologizes to the great fish. He tells it, "I shouldn't have gone out so far, fish." Then he adds, "Neither for you or for me." He checks the lashing on the knife and wishes he had a stone to sharpen it. He admonishes himself not to wish for what he didn't bring with him but to focus on what he can still do to defend the marlin. He says aloud that he

gives himself much good advice but that he is tired of it. He tries to remember that the skiff is much lighter now and not think of the marlin's mutilation. He thinks that the great fish would have kept a man all winter but then tries not to think of that either. He wishes catching the marlin had been a dream but then thinks that it might have turned out well.

When the next shovel-nosed shark comes like a pig to a trough, Santiago stabs it and kills it, but the knife blade snaps. He doesn't even watch the dead shark falling away into the deep water, growing smaller and smaller, although that always fascinates him. Instead, he feels beaten. He feels too old to club sharks yet decides he will try with the oars, the club, and any other items left in the boat. He admits that he is more than tired now; he is tired inside.

At sunset, the sharks hit again. Santiago knows he must let the sharks get a good hold on the marlin and then club them. He does so with the first shark, hitting it on the head and then the nose, until it slides away from the marlin. The second shark has been feeding on the marlin and already has pieces of meat in its jaws. When Santiago clubs it, it only looks at him and wrenches away more meat. When the shark comes again, Santiago hits it repeatedly until it slides away. For a while he doesn't see them, but then he sees one swimming in circles. He knows he couldn't expect to kill them, though he could have in his time, but he has hurt them both badly and would have killed the first one if he had used a bat.

He tries not to think about the marlin, which is half ruined now. As night falls, he knows he will soon see the glow of Havana or one of the new beaches, and he hopes no one has been worried. He thinks at first that there is only Manolin to worry, though he knows the young man would have confidence in him. But then he realizes that some of the older fishermen will worry and some others, too; and he thinks, "I live in a good town."

Santiago apologizes again to the marlin for going so far out. He tells the fish that together he and it have ruined many sharks and wonders how many sharks the marlin killed in its lifetime with its spear. He believes that if he'd had a hatchet he could have lashed the marlin's bill to an oar and fought with that, which would have made a formidable weapon. He wonders what he will do now when the sharks come in the night but remains determined to fight them, even until he is dead.

Around 10 o'clock, he does see the glow. He is stiff and sore and hopes not to fight again. But around midnight, the sharks come in a pack. He can barely see them, although he feels them shaking the skiff as they tear at the marlin. He clubs desperately at what he can only feel in the dark, until something seizes the club. He continues to beat at them with the tiller, until the tiller smashes. Then he lunges at a shark with the splintered butt, driving in the sharp end until the shark rolls away. After that, no more sharks come, for there is nothing left of the marlin to eat.

Injured, Santiago can hardly breathe and has a coppery sweet taste in his mouth. Defiantly, he spits into the ocean, telling the sharks to eat his spit and dream they've killed a man. He knows he's utterly beaten. He fits the damaged tiller into the rudder and continues toward home, trying not to think or feel and ignoring the sharks that occasionally come to pick at the remaining bits of marlin. He notices only how light and fast the skiff is and that the boat is not really harmed except for the tiller, which can be repaired. Following the lights in toward shore, he thinks that the wind can sometimes be a friend, that the sea contains both friends and enemies, that his own bed can be a friend, and that to be beaten is very easy. When he asks himself what really beat him, he answers honestly that nothing beat him; he just went out too far. Long after midnight, when everyone else is asleep, he finally comes ashore.

5.2.3 Critical Analysis

A commonplace among literary authorities is that a work of truly great literature invites reading on multiple levels or re-reading at various stages in the reader's life. At each of these readings, the enduring work presumably yields extended interpretations and expanded meanings. Certainly, The Old Man and the Sea fits that description. The novella invites, even demands, reading on multiple levels.

For example, readers can receive the novella as an engaging and realistic story of Santiago, the old man; Manolin, the young man who loves him; and Santiago's last and greatest battle with a giant marlin. Indeed, Hemingway himself insisted that the story was about a real man and a real fish. Critics have pointed to Hemingway's earlier essay — which mentions a presumably real fisherman who travels far out to sea in a small boat, catches a great fish, and then loses it to sharks — as the seed from which the novella springs.

However, the novella also clearly fits into the category of allegory — a story with a surface meaning and one or more under-the-surface meanings; a narrative form so ancient and natural to the human mind as to be universal; a form found in pagan mythology, in both Testaments of the Bible, and in Classical to Post-Modern literature. Likewise, the characters become much more than themselves or even types — they become archetypes (universal representations inherited from the collective consciousness of our ancestors and the fundamental facts of human existence).

From this perspective, Santiago is mentor, spiritual father, old man, or old age; and Manolin is pupil, son, boy, or youth. Santiago is the great fisherman and Manolin his apprentice — both dedicated to fishing as a way of life that they were born to and a calling that is spiritually enriching and part of the organic whole of the natural world. Santiago, as the greatest of such fishermen and the embodiment of their philosophy, becomes a solitary human representative to the natural world. He accepts the inevitability of the natural order, in which all creatures are both predator and prey, but recognizes that all creatures also nourish one another. He accepts the natural cycle of human existence as part of that natural order, but finds within himself the imagination and inspiration to endure his greatest struggle and achieve the intangibles that can redeem his individual life so that even when destroyed he can remain undefeated.

In living according to his own code of behavior, accepting the natural order and cycle of life, struggling and enduring and redeeming his individual existence through his life's work, and then passing on to the next generation everything he values, Santiago becomes an everyman (an archetypal representation of the human condition). His story becomes everyone's story and, as such, becomes genuinely uplifting. As the tourists who mistake the marlin for a shark still comprehend from its skeleton something of the great fish's grandeur, readers of different ages and levels of understanding can find something inspirational in this story — perhaps even more if they dip into its waters more than once.

5.2.4 Recall

"The Old Man and the Sea" is a novella written by Ernest Hemingway. It tells the story of an aging Cuban fisherman named Santiago who has been experiencing a long run of bad luck. Determined to prove his worth as a fisherman, Santiago sets

out alone in his small skiff into the Gulf Stream to catch a big fish. After a long struggle at sea, Santiago hooks a giant marlin, which he battles with for days. Despite his physical exhaustion and the relentless attacks of sharks, Santiago refuses to give up, determined to bring the marlin back to shore. Eventually, Santiago succeeds in killing the marlin, but the sharks have devoured most of it by the time he returns home. Despite his physical defeat, Santiago's indomitable spirit and resilience in the face of adversity serve as a testament to the human capacity for endurance and dignity.

5.2.5 Glossary :

1. Keel - one of the main longitudinal beams of the hull of a vessel
2. Vessel - a craft designed for water transportation
3. Grim - harshly uninviting or formidable in manner or appearance
4. Trill - sing or play alternating with the half note above or below
5. Bouquet - an arrangement of flowers that is usually given as a present
6. Wreath - a circular band of flowers or other foliage
7. Sway - move back and forth
8. Exult - feel extreme happiness or elation
9. Mournful - filled with or evoking sadness
10. Tread - a step in walking or running

5.2.6 Check Your Progress

Short Answers:

1. Who is Santiago? Describe him.
2. Who is Manolin?
3. Identify Martin.
4. Why is the boy not fishing with the old man anymore? Does he want to?
5. What did the other fishermen think of the old man?
6. Describe Santiago's house.
7. What's the point behind the conversation about yellow rice with fish and

the cast net?

8. Why is there so much talk about baseball, specifically DiMaggio?
9. "There are many good fishermen and some great ones. But there is only you." What does the boy mean?
10. What is Hemingway's point to having the old man say, "I may not be as strong as I think . . . . But I know many tricks and I have resolution"?
11. What did the old man dream about?

Essay Questions:

1. Explain why the old man goes for the fish and stays with it until he brings the carcass to port even though he put himself at great risk to do so.
2. Describe Hemingway's writing style.
3. Compare Santiago to the marlin.
4. Compare and contrast Santiago and DiMaggio.
5. What function does the character of Manolin serve in the novel?
6. List several religious references in the story and explain why Hemingway chose this imagery.
7. Does Santiago undergo any type of change during the story? If so, what? If not, give possible reasons why he does not.
8. Explore the idea of nobility in the story.

SECTION 5.3: HOUSE MADE OF DAWN – NAVARRE SCOTT MOMADAY

5.3.1 Introduction to Navarre Scott Momaday

N. Scott Momaday, full name Navarre Scott Momaday, is a highly regarded Native American author, poet, and painter. Born on February 27, 1934, in Lawton, Oklahoma, Momaday is of Kiowa descent, belonging to the Kiowa and Cherokee tribes through his parents. Momaday's work is deeply influenced by his Native American heritage and his upbringing in the southwestern United States. He is perhaps best known for his debut novel, "House Made of Dawn," which won the

Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1969. This novel is often credited with ushering in a renaissance in Native American literature. It explores themes of identity, cultural conflict, and the impact of modernity on indigenous communities.

In addition to his novels, Momaday is celebrated for his poetry, essays, and memoirs, which often reflect his connection to the land and his cultural heritage. His writing style is lyrical and evocative, drawing on oral traditions and the natural world. Aside from his literary achievements, Momaday is also an accomplished artist. He has produced numerous paintings and drawings, many of which complement his written works by visually depicting themes from Native American culture and the American Southwest. Throughout his career, Momaday has received numerous awards and honors for his contributions to literature and the arts, including the National Medal of Arts in 2007. He continues to be a prominent voice in Native American literature and a respected figure in American letters.

5.3.2 About the Novel

House Made of Dawn is a groundbreaking novel written by N. Scott Momaday, first published in 1968. It is widely regarded as one of the most important works of Native American literature and a key text in the Native American Renaissance of the late 20th century. The novel follows the story of Abel, a young Native American man and member of the Kiowa tribe, who returns to his reservation in New Mexico after serving in World War II. As Abel tries to reintegrate into his community and reconcile his experiences in the war with his traditional way of life, he grapples with feelings of alienation, displacement, and cultural identity.

`"House Made of Dawn" is structured into four parts, each exploring different aspects of Abel's life and experiences. Through vivid and poetic prose, Momaday weaves together themes of tradition versus modernity, the impact of colonization on Native American communities, and the search for belonging and meaning in a changing world.The novel is known for its rich symbolism, evocative imagery, and

lyrical writing style, drawing heavily on Native American oral traditions and storytelling techniques. It explores the complexities of Native American identity and the enduring connection between indigenous peoples and the land.

"House Made of Dawn" received widespread acclaim upon its release and won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1969, making Momaday the first Native American to receive this prestigious award. The novel continues to be studied in literature courses and is considered a classic of American literature, not only for its literary merit but also for its profound exploration of Native American culture and history.

5.3.3 Summary

"House Made of Dawn" by N. Scott Momaday is a novel that follows the journey of Abel, a young Native American man of the Kiowa tribe, as he struggles to find his place in the world after returning from World War II. The story begins with Abel's return to the reservation in New Mexico, where he finds it difficult to reintegrate into his community and reconnect with his cultural identity. He grapples with the trauma of war, feelings of alienation, and the clash between traditional Native American values and the modern world.

As Abel tries to navigate his way through life, he faces various challenges and encounters with people who shape his experiences. He forms relationships with individuals such as Francisco, a fellow Native American who introduces him to the complexities of modern society, and Angela, a woman who becomes a significant figure in his life. Throughout the novel, Abel wrestles with inner conflicts and external pressures, including his struggles with alcoholism, violence, and the legal system. His journey is a poignant exploration of cultural displacement, the impact of colonization, and the search for identity and meaning in a changing world.

"House Made of Dawn" is structured into four parts, each offering glimpses into different moments of Abel's life and experiences. Through vivid descriptions, poetic language, and rich symbolism, Momaday paints a powerful portrait of Native

American life and the enduring connection between indigenous peoples and the land. Ultimately, "House Made of Dawn" is a profound meditation on the complexities of Native American identity, the legacy of historical trauma, and the resilience of the human spirit. It remains a timeless classic of American literature, celebrated for its lyrical prose, thematic depth, and poignant portrayal of the Native American experience.

5.3.4 Themes

House Made of Dawn explores a range of themes that resonate deeply with readers and offer insight into the complexities of the human experience, particularly within the context of Native American culture and history. Some of the key themes include:

Cultural Identity and Displacement: The novel delves into the struggle for cultural identity faced by Native Americans, particularly those who experience displacement and alienation as a result of colonialism and modernization. Abel's journey reflects the tension between his traditional upbringing and the demands of the modern world.

Spirituality and Tradition: Momaday examines the role of spirituality and traditional beliefs within Native American culture. Through rituals, myths, and connections to the natural world, characters in the novel seek meaning and guidance in navigating their lives.

Colonization and Its Legacy: The impact of colonization on Native American communities looms large in the novel, influencing relationships, social dynamics, and individual psyches. Momaday explores the lasting effects of historical trauma, loss of land, and cultural erasure on indigenous peoples.

Nature and the Land: The landscape of the American Southwest serves as a powerful backdrop for the novel, with its rugged beauty and spiritual significance.

Nature is not merely a setting but a character in its own right, embodying themes of resilience, harmony, and connection to the earth.

Alienation and Loneliness: Many characters in the novel grapple with feelings of alienation and loneliness, stemming from experiences of war, displacement, or personal struggles. Momaday sensitively portrays the human longing for connection and belonging, even amidst adversity.

Violence and Healing: The novel confronts themes of violence and its far-reaching consequences, both on individuals and communities. Through Abel's experiences with trauma and conflict, Momaday explores the potential for healing and redemption, as well as the cycle of violence that can perpetuate suffering.

Identity and Self-Discovery: At its core, "House Made of Dawn" is a story of self-discovery and identity formation. Abel's journey to understand himself and his place in the world mirrors broader themes of personal growth, resilience, and the search for meaning. These themes resonate beyond the specific cultural context of the novel, offering universal insights into the human condition and the quest for understanding, connection, and reconciliation.

5.3.5 Character Analysis

Abel:

The protagonist of the novel, Abel is a young Native American man of the Kiowa tribe. He returns from World War II deeply scarred by his experiences and struggles to find his place in both the modern world and his traditional community. Abel embodies themes of cultural dislocation, trauma, and the search for identity. His journey is marked by inner turmoil, as he grapples with feelings of alienation, guilt, and self-destructive behavior. Throughout the novel, Abel seeks redemption and a sense of belonging, ultimately confronting the demons of his past in order to find peace and reconciliation.

Francisco:

Francisco is Abel's friend and mentor, a fellow Native American who introduces him to the complexities of modern society. He serves as a bridge between Abel's traditional upbringing and the outside world, offering guidance and companionship. Francisco is portrayed as worldly and pragmatic, yet he also harbors his own wounds and insecurities. His relationship with Abel is fraught with tension and misunderstanding, reflecting broader themes of cultural conflict and adaptation.

Father Olguin:

A Catholic priest who ministers to the Native American community, Father Olguin represents the forces of colonization and religious assimilation. Despite his genuine desire to help his parishioners, Father Olguin struggles to connect with them on a deeper level, grappling with his own sense of inadequacy and cultural disconnect. His interactions with Abel and other characters highlight the clash between indigenous spirituality and Western religious beliefs, as well as the complexities of cross-cultural communication.

Ben Benally:

Ben Benally is a Navajo man who befriends Abel during his time in Los Angeles. Like Abel, Benally is a veteran haunted by the traumas of war, and the two men form a bond based on shared experiences of loss and displacement. Benally's quiet strength and resilience serve as a foil to Abel's inner turmoil, offering a glimpse of hope and solidarity amidst the chaos of urban life.

Angela:

Angela is a woman whom Abel meets in Los Angeles and with whom he forms a romantic relationship. She represents stability and companionship for Abel, providing a sense of grounding amidst his struggles. However, their relationship is also fraught with challenges, reflecting broader themes of intimacy, trust, and the

complexities of human connection. Through these and other characters, Momaday paints a rich and nuanced portrait of Native American life, exploring themes of cultural identity, spirituality, and the enduring resilience of the human spirit. Each character contributes to the novel's exploration of the complexities of the human experience and the search for meaning and belonging in a rapidly changing world.

5.3.6 Recall

"House Made of Dawn" is a novel by N. Scott Momaday, published in 1968. It tells the story of a young Native American man named Abel, who returns to his reservation in New Mexico after serving in World War II. The novel explores Abel's struggles with identity, cultural displacement, and the clash between traditional Native American values and the modern world. As Abel tries to reconnect with his heritage, he grapples with alienation, alcoholism, and the traumatic experiences of war. The narrative delves into themes of belonging, spirituality, and the complex relationship between indigenous people and mainstream American society. "House Made of Dawn" won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1969, making Momaday the first Native American to receive this prestigious award.

5.3.7 Glossary of terms

1. Native American: Indigenous peoples of the Americas, including tribes, nations, and communities with distinct cultures, languages and traditions.

2. Reservation: Land set aside by the United States government for Native American tribes, often with limited sovereignty and resources.

3. Cultural identity: The feeling of belonging to a particular culture or ethnic group, shaped by shared customs, traditions, language, and history.

4. Assimilation: The process by which individuals or groups adopt the customs, language, and culture of a dominant society, often leading to the loss of their own cultural identity.

5. Spirituality: Belief in and connection to the sacred or transcendent aspects of existence, often expressed through rituals, ceremonies, and reverence for nature.

6. Trauma: Psychological distress caused by experiences of violence, abuse, or extreme stress, which can have long-lasting effects on mental health and behavior.

7. Alcoholism: Addiction to and dependence on alcohol, characterized by compulsive drinking despite negative consequences on physical health, relationships, and social functioning.

8. Symbolism: The use of symbols to represent ideas, emotions, or concepts beyond their literal meaning, often employed in literature to convey deeper themes and messages.

9. Renewal: The process of restoration or revival, often associated with rebirth, regeneration, and the beginning of a new cycle.

10. Ancestral heritage: The cultural, familial, and historical legacy passed down through generations, shaping individuals' identities and connections to their roots.

11. Cyclical nature: The idea that events, patterns, or processes repeat in cycles, often reflecting themes of continuity, repetition, and interconnectedness.

12. Violence: Behavior involving physical force intended to harm, damage, or kill, which can manifest in various forms, including interpersonal, systemic, and cultural violence.

13. Interconnectedness: The state of being connected or linked together, often emphasizing the idea of mutual dependence and the interconnectedness of all living beings

5.3.8 Check Your Progress

Short answers

1.Who is the protagonist of "House Made of Dawn"?

2. What is the setting of the novel?

3. Which war did Abel serve in before returning to his reservation?

4. What is the name of the reservation where Abel returns?

5. What is the significance of the title, "House Made of Dawn"?

6. Who is the author of "House Made of Dawn"?

7. Which literary award did "House Made of Dawn" win?

8. What themes are explored in "House Made of Dawn"?

9. Who is the woman Abel falls in love with on the reservation?

10. What is the fate of Abel's friend Ben Benally?

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of cultural identity and displacement in "House Made of Dawn."
2. Analyze the role of spirituality and tradition in the novel. How do traditional Native American beliefs and rituals shape the characters' experiences and worldview?
3. Explore the theme of trauma and its effects on the characters in " House Made of Dawn".
4. Discuss the symbolism of the title, "House Made of Dawn." What does it represent in terms of Abel's journey and the broader themes of the novel?

5. Examine the portrayal of women in "House Made of Dawn." How do characters like Milly and Angela contribute to the development of Abel's character and the overall narrative?
6. How does his time in the war and his return to the reservation shape his understanding of his identity and place in the world?
7. Discuss the motif of violence in "House Made of Dawn".
8. Explore the significance of landscape and place in "House Made of Dawn."

Self Assessment Questions:

TONI MORRISON- BELOVED

2 MARKS

1. Who is Beloved in the novel?

Answer: Beloved is the ghost of Sethe's deceased daughter.

2.What year is Sethe's story predominantly set in?

Answer: The story is predominantly set in 1873.

3. Name the house where Sethe lives.

Answer: 124 Bluestone Road.

4. How does the novel portray the impact of slavery on family relationships?

Answer: The novel shows that slavery disrupts family bonds, causes trauma, and creates a legacy of suffering.

5. Why is the character of Baby Suggs significant in the novel?

Answer: Baby Suggs represents a figure of resistance and spiritual guidance for the community.

6. Evaluate the impact of Sethe’s past actions on her present life.

Answer: Sethe's past actions deeply affect her present, causing ongoing guilt and psychological distress.

5 MARKS

1. Describe the significance of the character Sethe in Beloved. How does her past influence her present actions?

2. Analyze the role of the supernatural in Beloved. How does Morrison use supernatural elements to enhance the novel's exploration of trauma and memory?

3. Identify and discuss the role of the community in the novel. How does the community's response to Sethe's past affect her and her family?

8 MARKS

1. Explain how the character of Beloved functions as a symbol in the novel. What does she represent to Sethe and the other characters?

2. List and discuss the different ways in which the novel explores the theme of motherhood. How do these depictions reflect the historical context of slavery?

3. Evaluate how Morrison's use of stream-of-consciousness narration affects the reader's understanding of the characters' thoughts and feelings. Provide specific examples from the text.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY: THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

2 MARKS

1. What is the name of the protagonist in "The Old Man and the Sea"?

Answer: Santiago.

2. Why does Santiago consider the marlin a worthy opponent?

Answer: Santiago views the marlin as a worthy opponent because of its strength, size, and the challenge it presents to him as a fisherman.

3. Analyze the symbolic meaning of the marlin in the story.

Answer: The marlin symbolizes the ultimate challenge and the ideal of struggle and achievement, representing Santiago's quest for personal redemption and self-worth.

4. Critically assess the significance of Santiago's relationship with the boy, Manolin, in the context of the story.

Answer: Santiago's relationship with Manolin adds depth to his character, showcasing his mentorship and the theme of hope and renewal, as Manolin represents a future generation who values Santiago's wisdom and skills.

5. Integrate Santiago's interactions with the marlin and the sea to form a comprehensive view of his philosophy of life.

Answer: Santiago's interactions with the marlin and the sea reveal his philosophy of life centered on respect for nature, acceptance of struggle, and the pursuit of personal dignity, emphasizing his belief in the nobility of enduring hardships with honor.

5 MARKS

1. Describe the main characteristics of Santiago, the protagonist of "The Old Man and the Sea."

2. Evaluate the effectiveness of Hemingway's writing style in conveying Santiago's internal struggles.

3. Create an argument on how Santiago's ultimate defeat by the sharks can be seen as a victory in terms of personal integrity and self-worth.

4. How does Santiago's struggle with the marlin reflect the themes of perseverance and personal dignity?

8 MARKS

1. Compare and contrast Santiago's relationship with the marlin and the sharks. How do these relationships highlight different aspects of Santiago's character and the novel's themes?

2. Evaluate Santiago's role as a tragic hero. Do you believe his actions and ultimate fate align with the characteristics of a tragic hero according to classical definitions? Justify your response with evidence from the text.

3. Discuss how Santiago's struggle with the marlin can be seen as a metaphor for the human condition. How might this struggle be relevant to contemporary issues or personal experiences?

NAVARRE SCOTT MOMADAY: HOUSE MADE OF DAWN

2 MARKS

1. Who is the protagonist of "House Made of Dawn"?

Answer: Abel.

2. Explain the significance of the title "House Made of Dawn."

Answer: The title reflects the blending of Native American culture with modern influences and the protagonist's journey from darkness to enlightenment.

3. Describe the relationship between Abel and his grandfather.

Answer: Abel's relationship with his grandfather is complex, marked by respect and cultural transmission, but also by tension and a struggle for understanding.

4. How could Abel's experiences be interpreted as a commentary on the broader Native American experience in modern America?

Answer: Abel's experiences symbolize the larger struggles of Native Americans balancing traditional values with the pressures of modernity and assimilation.

5 MARKS

1. Identify the main characters in House Made of Dawn and briefly describe their roles in the novel.

2. Explain the significance of the novel's title, House Made of Dawn, in relation to the themes and narrative.

3. Discuss how Momaday uses symbolism in the novel. Provide examples of symbols and explain their meanings within the context of the story.

4. Analyze the role of time in House Made of Dawn. How does Momaday's portrayal of time affect the novel's exploration of identity and memory?

8 MARKS

1. Examine the psychological trauma experienced by Abel. What role does war play in shaping his identity, and how does it contribute to his sense of disconnection?

2. Analyze the role of nature in House Made of Dawn. How does Momaday use nature to convey Abel's inner struggles?

3. Describe the significance of Abel's return to the reservation. How does his homecoming set the tone for the novel?