

Survey of South Asian Literature

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| Course Code | : <i>ENG 0232- 2111</i> |
| Course Title | : <i>Survey of South Asian Literature</i> |
| Course Type | : Core Course |
| Course Teacher | : Shaon Gharami |
| Credit Value | : 03 |
| Total Marks | : 150 |
| Contact Hours | : 42 |

Course Objectives

By the End of this Course, Students will be Able to:

- **Identify Key Themes and Movements:** Recognize and analyze major literary themes, historical contexts, and socio-political movements that shape South Asian literature, including issues of colonialism, postcolonial identity, migration, gender, and caste.
- **Explore Diverse Literary Forms:** Examine a variety of literary forms such as novels, short stories, poetry, drama, and oral traditions from different regions of South Asia.
- **Analyze Authorial Perspectives:** Evaluate the works of influential South Asian authors, both classical and contemporary, to understand their contributions to global literature and their reflections on social, political, and cultural realities.
- **Foster Cross-Cultural Understanding:** Build an appreciation for the cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity within South Asia and its diaspora, fostering a global perspective on literature and human experience.

Course Learning Outcomes: For a course on the *Survey of South Asian Literature*, learning outcomes should reflect different levels of cognitive skills as per Bloom’s Taxonomy. At the end of this course, students will be able to –

| | | |
|-------|---|------------|
| CLO 1 | Identify key authors, texts, and historical periods of South Asian literature. | Remember |
| CLO 2 | Explain the central themes, motifs, and narrative techniques in selected works of South Asian literature. | Understand |
| CLO 3 | Apply literary theories and critical frameworks to the analysis of South Asian texts. | Apply |
| CLO 4 | Examine the relationships between form, content, and meaning in South Asian literary texts. | Analyze |
| CLO 5 | Critique the representation of race, gender, class, and postcolonial identity in South Asian literature. | Evaluate |
| CLO 6 | Create comparative analyses that explore intersections between South Asian and other world literatures. | Create |

Sharon Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV.

Specific Contents, Teaching-Learning Activities, and Assessment Strategy Mapping with Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs):

| Week | Topic | Teaching-Learning Strategy | Assessment Strategy | Corresponding CLOs |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| 1 Shaouf Gharami, Lecturer, English Department, UGV. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Overall discussion on The South Asian Literature ✓ Introduction to Poetry & Kaiser Haq ✓ “Ode on the Lungi” ✓ “The Graffiti Artist” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLO 1 CLO 2 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ “The Logopathic Reviewer's Song” ✓ “Darkness” ✓ “The Firefly” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test | CLO2 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ”Strange Pleasures” ✓ “Dear Reviewer” ✓ “As Usual” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test ✓ (Written Test) | CLO 2 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introduction Nissim Ezekiel ✓ “History” ✓ “Advice,” “Nothingness,” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test | CLO 2 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ “ The Child,” “Confession,” “Wisdom” ✓ Introduction to Salman Rushdie ✓ About the Names in <i>Haroun and the Sea of Stories</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral test ✓ (Assignment) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLO 2 CLO 3 |

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| 6 | <i>Haroun and the Sea of Stories:</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class performance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test | CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 3 | | | |
| | <i>Haroun and the Sea of Stories:</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture using digital equipment & illustration on board ✓ Interactive discussion ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class performance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test | CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5 |
| 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Chapter 9, Chapter 10, Chapter 11, Chapter 12 | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introduction to AMITAV GHOSH ✓ <i>The Shadow Lines</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture using digital equipment & illustration on board ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided | Feedback and Oral Test | CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5 |
| 10 | <i>The Shadow Lines</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class performance | CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introduction to R. K. Narayan ✓ An Overview of <i>The Man-Eater of Malgudi</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test | CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5 |

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| 11 | <i>The Man-Eater of Malgudi</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test | CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5 |
| 12 | <i>The Man-Eater of Malgudi</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided ✓ Discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test ✓ Quiz 3 (Presentation) | CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5 |
| 13 | <i>The Man-Eater of Malgudi</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class Performance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test | CLO 5 |
| 14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introduction to Arundhati Roy ✓ Introduction to <i>The God of Small Things</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class performance | CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5 |

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|----|----------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------|
| 15 | ✓ <i>The God of Small Things</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test | CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5 |
| 16 | ✓ <i>The God of Small Things</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided ✓ Discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test | CLO 3 CLO 4 CLO 5 |
| 17 | ✓ <i>The God of Small Things</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class lecture with Digital Equipment ✓ Lecture Sheet will be provided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Class Attendance ✓ Class Performance ✓ Feedback and Oral Test | CLO 5 |

ASSESSMENT PATTERN

Assignment & Presentation:

Students will be assigned topics or case studies to work on at home and submit by the specified due date, with no late submissions accepted. Alternatively, students may be required to deliver a PowerPoint presentation in class. Presentations should be clear, well-organized, visually engaging, and effectively communicate research findings. Students should be prepared to answer questions and engage in discussions, enhancing their understanding of the material and developing public speaking skills.

Quizzes:

Three Quiz Tests will be taken during the semester. No makeup quiz test will be taken. Students are strongly recommended not to miss that test.

Viva-Voce:

At the end of the semester, the students must appear before a board of faculty from their course, who will assess them on topics they have covered. The department may invite external faculty to evaluate the students.

ASSESSMENT PATTERN

| Total Marks Per Credit 50 Marks | |
|--|-----------|
| 3 Credits Course | 150 Marks |
| 2 Credits Course | 100 Marks |
| CIE | 60% |
| SEE | 40% |

CIE- Continuous Internal Evaluation (90 Marks-60%)

| Bloom's Category Marks (out of 45) | Tests (45) | Assignments (15) | Quizzes (15) | External Participation in Curricular/Co-Curricular Activities (30) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Remember | 10 | | 05 | Attendance: 15 Viva-Voce: 15 |
| Understand | 10 | 05 | | |
| Apply | 05 | 10 | | |
| Analyze | 10 | | | |
| Evaluate | 05 | | | |
| Create | 05 | | 10 | |

**SEE- Semester End
Examination (60 Marks-40%)**

| Bloom's Category | | Tests |
|-------------------------|--|--------------|
| Remember | | 15 |
| Understand | | 15 |
| Apply | | 10 |
| Analyze | | 10 |
| Evaluate | | 5 |
| Create | | 5 |

Recommended Books

- Roy, Aurndhathi. *The god of small things*. Mehta Publishing House, 2001.
- Narayan, Rasipuram Krishnaswami. "The man-eater of Malgudi." *Writers in East-West Encounter: New Cultural Bearings*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1962. 95-99.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. Penguin, 2014.
- Ghosh, Amitav. *The shadow lines*. Penguin Books India, 2010.
- Ezekiel, Nissim. *Collected Poems 2nd Edition*. Oxford University Press, January 6, 2006.
- Haq, Kaiser. *Published in the Streets of Dhaka: Collected Poems, 1966-2006*. University Press Ltd., 2007.

Week 1 (P. 13-32)



Kaiser Haq



Ode on the Lungi

Ode On The Lungi Kaiser Haq

Grandpa Walt, allow me to share my thoughts
with you, if only because every time
I read “Passage to India” and come across
the phrase “passage to more than India”
I fancy, anachronistically, that you wanted
to overshoot the target
by a shadow line
and land in Bangladesh

Lately, I’ve been thinking a lot
about sartorial equality
How far we are from
this democratic ideal!

And how hypocritical!

“All clothes have equal rights” –

this nobody will deny

and yet, some obviously

are more equal than others

No, I’m not complaining about

the jacket and tie

required in certain places –

that, like fancy dress parties,

is in the spirit of a game

I'm talking of something more fundamental
Hundreds of millions
from East Africa to Indonesia
wear the lungi, also known variously
as the sarong, munda, htamain, saaram,
ma'awaiis, kitenge. kanga. kaiki
They wear it day in day out,
indoors and out
Just think –
at any one moment
there are more people in lungis
than the population of the USA
Now try wearing one
to a White House appointment –
not even you. Grandpa Walt,
laureate of democracy,
will make it in
You would if you
affected a kilt –
but a lungi? No way.
But why? – this is the question
I ask all to ponder

Is it a clash of civilisations?
The sheer illogicality of it –
the kilt is with “us”
but the lungi is with “them!”

Think too of neo-imperialism
and sartorial hegemony,
how brown and yellow sahibs
in natty suits crinkle their noses
at compatriots (even relations)
in modest lungis,
exceptions only proving the rule:
Sri Lanka, where designer lungis
are party wear, or Myanmar
where political honchos
queue up in lungis
to receive visiting dignitaries
But then, Myanmar dozes
behind a cane curtain,
a half pariah among nations
Wait till it's globalised:
Savile Row will acquire
a fresh crop of patrons

Hegemony invades private space
as well: my cousin in America
would get home from work
and lounge in a lungi –
till his son grew ashamed
of dad and started hiding
the “ridiculous ethnic attire”

It's all too depressing
But I won't leave it at that
The situation is desperate
Something needs to be done
I've decided not to
take it lying down
The next time someone insinuates
that I live in an Ivory Tower
I'll proudly proclaim
I AM A LUNGI ACTIVIST!
Friends and fellow lungi lovers,
let us organise lungi parties and lungi parades,
let us lobby Hallmark and Archies
to introduce an international Lungi Day
when the UN Chief will wear a lungi
and address the world

Grandpa Walt, I celebrate my lungi
and sing my lungi
and what I wear
you shall wear
It's time you finally made your passage
to more than India – to Bangladesh –
and lounging in a lungi
in a cottage on Cox's Bazar beach
(the longest in the world, we proudly claim)
watched 28 young men in lungis bathing in the sea

But what is this thing
(my learned friends,
I'm alluding to Beau Brummell)
I repeat, what is this thing
I'm going on about?
A rectangular cloth,
White, coloured, check or plaid,
roughly 45X80 inches,
halved lengthwise
and stitched
to make a tube
you can get into
and fasten in a slipknot
around the waist –
One size fits all
and should you pick up dirt
say on your seat
you can simply turn it inside out

When you are out of it
the lungi can be folded up
like a scarf

Worn out it has its uses –
as dish rag or floor wipe
or material for a kantha quilt

Or you can let your imagination
play with the textile tube
to illustrate the superstrings
of the “Theory of Everything”
(vide, the book of this title
by the venerable Stephen Hawking)

Coming back to basics,
the lungi is an elaborate fig-leaf,
the foundation of propriety
in ordinary mortals
Most of the year, when barebodied
is cool, you can lead a decent life
with only a couple of lungis,
dipping in pond or river
or swimming in a lungi
abbreviated into a G-string,
then changing into the other one
Under the hot sun
a lungi can become
Arab-style headgear
or Sikh-style turban
Come chilly weather
the spare lungi can be
an improvised poncho
The lungi as G-string
can be worn to wrestle
or play kabaddi
but on football or cricket field
or wading through the monsoon
it's folded vertically
and kilted at the knee

In short
the lungi is a complete wardrobe
for anyone interested:
an emblem of egalitarianism,
symbol of global left-outs
Raised and flapped amidst laughter
It's the subaltern speaking

And more:
when romance strikes, the lungi
is a sleeping bag for two:
a book of poems, a bottle of hooch
and your beloved inside your lungi –
there's paradise for you

If your luck runs out
and the monsoon turns into
a biblical deluge
just get in the water and hand-pump
air to balloon up your lungi –
now your humble ark

When you find shelter
on a treetop
take it off',
rinse it,
hold it aloft –
flag of your indisposition –
and wave it at the useless stars



The Graffiti Artist

The Graffiti Artist Kaiser Haq

Some years ago two new student hostels were built overlooking the busy New Elephant Road. As soon as the whitewash on the outer wall had dried graffiti artists belonging to rival political organisations set to work. First they just laid claim to wall space, by scrawling arrows and party initials. The work of painting giant slogans with a bold brush at those precarious heights was for later (the hostels are five storeys tall and the best place for graffiti is the space just beneath the roof). But for the time being, one of the graffiti artists (I forget from which party) left a personal message: YOU RICH, I AM POOR - WHY ?

It's hard to say whether the copula 'are' got in advertently left out after Tou, or 'rich' was deliberately, albeit ungrammatically, used as a substantive, as in the collective noun 'the rich.'

Whatever the case, the tremendous force of the question was undeniable. Why indeed should one human being be rich (or for that matter beautiful, muscular, intelligent, etc.) and another poor (or ugly, scrawny, stupid, etc.).

No matter how you explain things, resorting to genetics, history, sociology, etc., the question remains a stumper: Why? Why did you have to be born into a rich, robust or goodlooking family and not me?

For days the composure-shattering personal graffiti flashed its question at the swarming traffic. Then it was painted over and replaced by the usual stuff, a profound, if naive, metaphysical *cri de Coeur* gave way to political clichés.

Strangely enough, none of my acquaintance remembers having noticed the short-lived message.

Week 2 (P. 33-46)

The Logopathic Reviewer's Song



The Logopathic Reviewer's Song *for Priti & Sudeep*

Late to bed
but early to rise -
so much to do,

so many books,
so many authors
to get through:

so many loafers
on my daily
stretch of road.

A quick breakfast,
quicker shit
and I'm in my seat,

ignition on,
revving up,
then zoom!

And I'm upon a lonely poet
meandering across:
who does he think

he is, does he think

he owns the road?

A blast from the horn

makes him skitter.

I step on it, swing,

catching his leg

with the fender's edge

and watch him hobble —

no sense of rhythm: poetaster!

A sententious bore - progressive,
puritan - waves
from the kerb. I wave

back, gesture to him
to step on to the road
as if offering a lift,

then slam him head on
below the belt
and leave him clutching his groin.

Now for a wholesale massacre
o f the novelistic crew,
men, women, gender-benders,

the whole mob o f word-wasters.
Head on! Swinging right and left!
In reverse! I drive

like a Demolition Derby champ
gone berserk. Docs it feel good!
Yahoo!! Vrrrooom!!!

And though by evening I'm tired
as the sun, I can't wait
for the next day to start.

I'm the greatest, the one
and only logopathic
hit-and-run critic.

Got to admit though
there are bad nights
and worse mornings

when the will flags.

So many computers

puking crap

by the megabyte:

one against infinity,

a hopeless fight

and I just don't know

what to do, just feel sad

as the last dodo.



Darkness



Darkness *for Alamgir*

TV news time

The power snaps

What if there's no news tonight

Only a voice

Saying over

And over:

All is well

Please don't go out of your houses

The Firefly

Kaiser Haq

Everything was then newly created. The firefly was sunk in sorrow because it was tiny and jet black. There was no dearth of colour and the Creator had lavished varied shades on diverse creatures. Why was he so niggardly towards the firefly.?

A butterfly was flying by. Observing the morose firefly it stopped to enquire.

‘Why so sad, my little friend? Can I do anything to help?’

‘No, thanks,’ replied the firefly, and added curdy, ‘It’s my problem. You’d do well to mind your own business.’

A while later a bumblebee that was happily humming along stopped to ask why the firefly looked so sad.

‘Because I’m jet black and not colourful, like the butterfly,’ said the firefly.

‘But I’m jet black too,’ said the bumblebee, ‘and I don’t care.’

‘But you aren’t tiny like me,’ said the firefly.
Along came a bee. ‘Good morning,’ the bee said. ‘Why are you looking so sad?’

‘I’m sad because o f the Creator’s stinginess,’ said the firefly.

‘What do you mean?’ asked the bee.

‘I mean, why has the Creator made m e so small?’

‘So? I am small too, but I don’t care?’

‘But you aren’t jet black like me.’

‘No, but the Creator probably made you black to serve a noble purpose.’



‘Not at all, it’s only out o f stinginess.’

Then one day it was discovered that someone had stolen light from the Lord’s storehouse. Everyone was stunned.

The Lord summoned every living creature. They came and bowed, one by one. All except the firefly.

Everything became clear. The creatures who had come to plead innocence bowed and took their leave.

Since then the firefly hasn’t been seen in the realm of light. Only when the reign of light ends is its light visible. One can see it roaming the dark like one lost, looking for God - in vain.

Week 3 (P. 47-62)



Dear Reviewer Kaiser Haq

Right now I'm free
of the fear that plagues
all poets -
of not being read

for you
are reading these
wobbly lines.




I don't crave awards
or such praise as humdingers
among writers receive
in the grave

but I do long
to be noticed
for (remember Bishop
Berkeley?) not to be
noticed is not to be!

Feel free to damn
with faint praise
or just damn me —
but in print, please!

I will read you in either case,
cut you out, frame
and hang you on my wall
for others to read:



yours is the superior art,
giving book news
fortified with smart views -
you go down like a small sherry.

And just in case you are
in a good enough mood to say
'The value o f this work will surely
keep pace with paper prices,'
why, I'll feel I'm immortal!

Strange Pleasure Kaiser Haq

The last time we had prolonged
political disturbances (which
are regular as cyclones or,
in happier lands, carnivals)
nobody knew anything
beyond their own anger
or despair, shops were half-shuttered, buses ran halfway,
a half-hearted coup aborted,
the sale of tranquilizers
went up, foreign exchange reserves
went down, and nobody bothered
to keep count o f bodies sent to morgues.



Mercifully, phones still worked,
were kept busy with chat.

A friend rang to tell me
how people still tried
to get on with life, indoors
and out: one man wished
to have his ear cleaned, another
who made a living by satisfying
such wishes got down to work.

The client sat on a stool
beside a pavement near a crossroads,
eyes meditatively half-shut;
the other sighted like a marksman
along a thin steel rod –
on his concentration depended
pleasure and hygiene or pain and infection.
Not far away a few random shots were fired:
one entered the sitting man's ear,
came out his other ear, entered
the ear-cleaner's eye, ruining
for good his delicate concentration.



How the phones rang with our laughter:
politics affords strange pleasures.

But I ought to add
my informant was a poet
and poets, as everybody knows,
are not to be entirely trusted.



As Usual Kaiser Haq

As usual

My old friend

The Sage of the Roadside Tea-stall

Casually solves a problem or two

Between sips of semi-viscous tea

For which, as usual, I am paying

Because, as usual, he is out o f pocket.

The talk, as usual, is of money -
Ministers and their multi-millions,
Captains of commerce and their borrowed billions,
Spiralling prices and dwindling incomes.

‘Ban money,’ the Sage counsels.
‘Abolish currency, and peace
Will reign on earth.’
Silence descends upon us
Like feathers from ruffled chickens.

AH eyes are trained on the Sage

Imploring elaboration. 'No money -

No desire for money, no pickpocketing,

No bribes, no violence;

No taka - no trickery,

No pounds sterling - no pound of flesh,

No moolah - no murder,

No greenbacks - no Green Berets.'

The Sage pauses,
Takes a long sip
And a sagacious conceptual leap:
'I am of course using the word money
In a broadly symbolic sense.
By money I mean everything
That arouses cupidity -
Gold, diamonds, cars...
I mean, in fact,
Private property.

‘What about power?’ I ask.

(You see, I’ve read my Michel Foucault.)

‘I was coming to that,’

Says the wily Sage.

‘Abolish power as well.

No more power play

Between politicians and the people,

Between teachers and the taught,

Between friends, lovers, relatives,

Family members, colleagues, fellow citizens,

No more money, and no more power -

Only peace, peace, peace,

Shantih, Shantih, Shantih!’

As dinner invitations pour

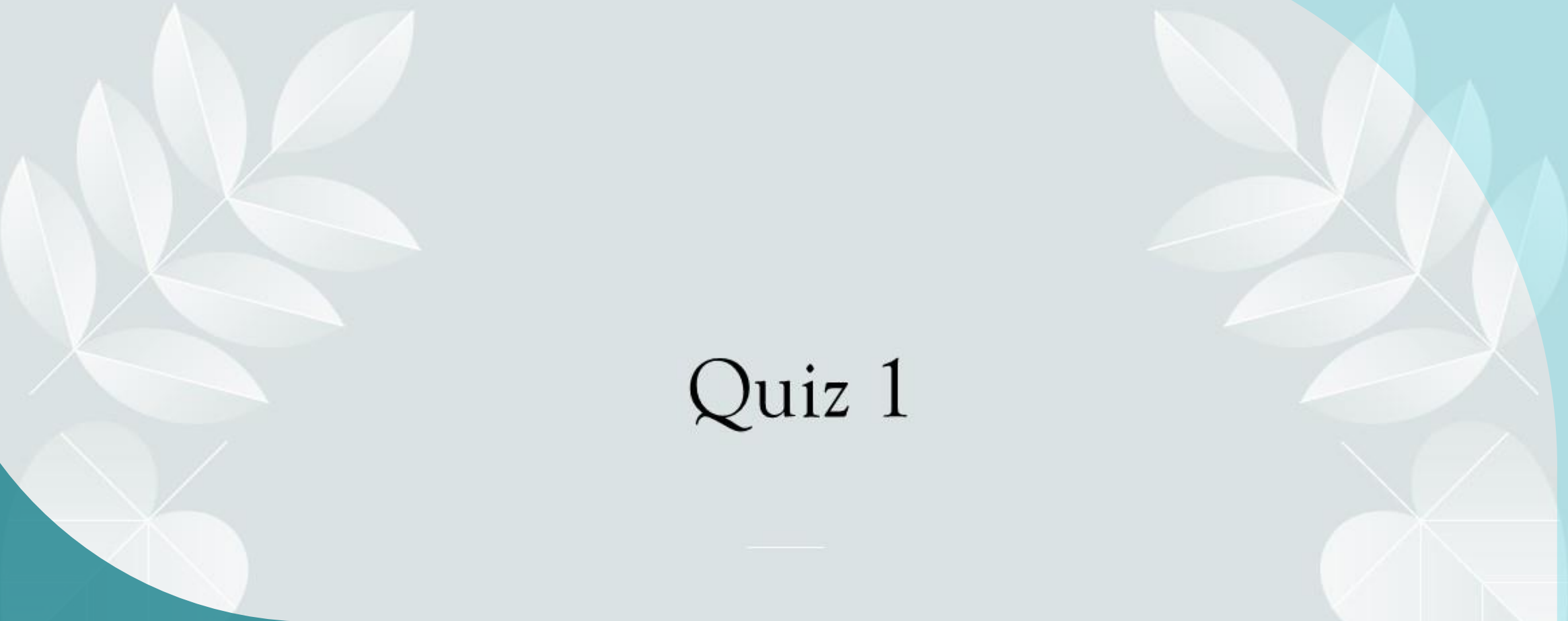
On the Sage

Like confetti

A brainwave hits me:

What about sex?' I mutter in his ear.

'Don't add unnecessary complications,'
he mutters back.

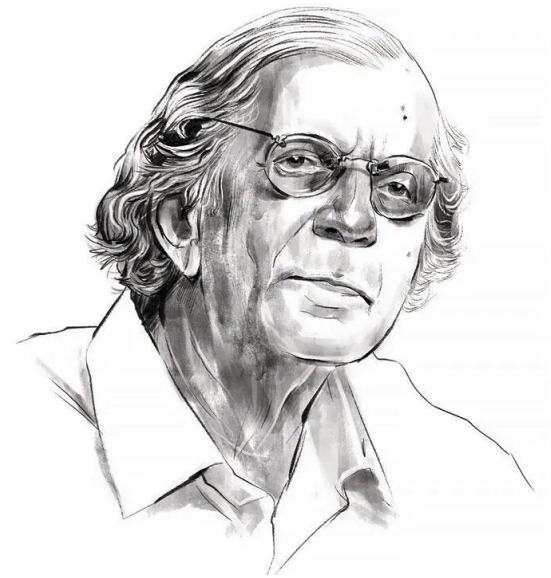


Quiz 1

Quiz 1 (Written Test)

Week 4 (P. 63-72)

Nissim Ezekiel



Nissim Ezekiel

- Nissim Ezekiel (1924–2004) was one of the most significant figures in modern Indian English poetry.
- Often regarded as the “father of modern Indian English poetry.”
- Ezekiel’s work is known for its irony, wit, and deep exploration of the human condition.
- His poetry blends personal experience, philosophical reflection, and social critique, capturing the essence of urban middle-class India.





History Nissim Ezekiel

A blind man standing with his crutches, old,
Retired, does not know the time of day,
And cannot hold his rags against the cold,
Returns no greeting, turns and walks away

Is what the earth was born for. The image
With its freight of dreams is always near,
Whispers to the air a formless language:
Will Bethlehem or Moscow end my fear?

It all comes back to individual man
And what he chooses; always, somehow,
A failure, and knowing all he can,
Accepts the mob or worships snake and cow.

Consorting gunmen hold the final fuse,
But by the hard unwelcome stone a dream
Of angels sings the abstract right to choose
And starts from rocks an unexpected stream.

Advice Nissim Ezekiel

“Be tolerant,” I said, “of all but bores,
Hostile only to indifference.
Creative and a hero if you can
Or know the odds and choose a useful job.
Be rooted in the liberties of mind,
Swear on fire, water, earth and wind,
Fear the chase of cash that comes by chance,
And knowledge if it does not move the heart



Taste the wide variety of things,
Uncertainties, incompatibilities,
And listen to no argument that fails
To push you out to sea or back to port.
Do not try to live unchangeably,
The Saragosa Sea is quiet
But they call it dead, in the desert
There is only sand and a sordid thirst.”

And then I watched him die and turned away,
Could not save him, merely had my say.

Nothingness

Nissim Ezekiel

At last I have been reconciled
To simple nothingness, and catch
Myself, hour after hour,
Free from any need to live at all—
The impulse and the fear of love,
Small ambition sick at the roots,
Shabby cures for dissolution,
Twenty thousand abysses
Encountered on an aimless day,
Humiliated by the truth
Of nothingness, mortality.



Have I been over-faithful to
The dream of living like a dream
In which the myth is plenitude?
And am I right in turning to
The logic of absurdity,
Nothingness, mortality,
Returning home to roost at last?
After all, it does not matter.
Who, beside the final void,
Would analyse his errors?
Time, the great consumer, cancels all.

Weeks 5, 6, & 7 (P. 73-111)



The Child Nissim Ezekiel

Once I was a child

And in the mornings woke to wind and sun,

With upturned face receiving kisses from

The constant newness of the world.



Once I was a child
And knew the certain joy of mud and toys,
The destiny of fairy princes, magic birds
And happy giants in the golden books
Whose colours sang the wonders I was born into.

Once I was a child,
Remember how I listened to the words around me.
Fresh as rain, with sudden thunder
Fearful in the adult anger,
And the marvel of the whispered kindness
Soaking to the root where all was rest.



And now again the simple thrust
Of all that lives is love within me, reaching
Down for water
Up for sunlight
Sprouting greenly in the fragrant air.



Confession Nissim Ezekiel

'When I pretend to be happy
I let the intellect
Boisterously propel me on,
Play with women Chinese chequers,
Trade on the names of prophets,
Listen to the wireless
Consume my dreams, and turn away
Unsatisfied, to be alone.



And what is in this loneliness?
Perfection. A fantasy
Of lucid being, relation
To a rational crowd, traffic
Of the heart on images,
Miracles of Jove that run to rule,
And at the end, desolation,
Which any fool could have foretold.

Wisdom Nissim Ezekiel

To take the burden and exert oneself
As though it were not there,
Neither more nor less than one can bear,
To do this would be wise—
But the old are weak and on the shelf
And the young have shining eyes.

To keep our bonds in tension, plumb the night,
Renounce the soothing lie,
From all the routines and the customs fly,
To do this would be wise—
But the old are stale in the morning light
And the young have shining eyes.

To shape one's inner image silently
Though human and infirm,
Preserving love against the secret worm,
To do this would be wise—
But the old are still as a fallen tree
And the young have shining eyes.




ASSIGNMENT

Quiz 2 (Assignment)

Salman Rushdie

Salman Rushdie is an Indian-British novelist and essayist, widely regarded as one of the most important and influential contemporary writers.



His work blends magical realism with historical fiction, often exploring themes of identity, migration, religion, and the intersections between East and West.

Themes in Rushdie's Writing

- ✓ **Magical Realism:** Often blends the supernatural with the real world, influenced by Latin American authors like Gabriel García Márquez.
- ✓ **Postcolonial Identity:** Rushdie's works engage with questions of cultural identity, hybridity, and displacement, often reflecting the migrant experience.
- ✓ **Political Satire:** His works are known for their sharp political criticism, especially concerning religious extremism, colonialism, and authoritarianism.

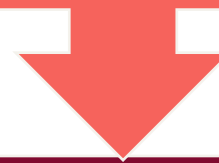


Awards & Recognition of Rushdie

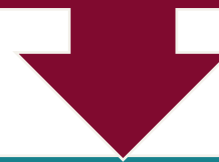
- **Booker Prize** (1981 for *Midnight's Children*)
- **“Booker of Bookers”** (1993 and 2008 for *Midnight's Children*)
- **Knighthood** (2007) for his services to literature, granting him the title Sir Salman Rushdie.
- Multiple honorary degrees and international accolades for his contributions to global literature.

Salman Rushdie in a Nutshell

Rushdie's work challenges readers to confront complex issues like religion, freedom, and cultural identity.



His magical realist approach has inspired writers worldwide, especially within the postcolonial and global South literary traditions.



His influence is often seen in Indian and South Asian literature, as well as in broader discussions about freedom of expression in literature.

Haroun and the Sea of Stories

Salman Rushdie



- *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990) by Salman Rushdie is a whimsical, allegorical novel that blends fantasy, adventure, and satire.
- Unlike Rushdie's more complex works, this book is often seen as a children's tale but carries profound philosophical and political themes.
- Rushdie wrote *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* while he was in hiding due to the fatwa issued after *The Satanic Verses*. The novel reflects his personal struggle with censorship, silence, and the power of storytelling.
- The story was written for his son, Zafar, and the father-son relationship is mirrored in the narrative.
- Genre: Fantasy, Allegory, Adventure, Political Satire



Character Analysis of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* From Page (75-94)

Haroun



- Haroun is the main character and the story's central awareness. A youthful, curious, brave, and vocal child.
- Throughout the novel, he suffers from a type of attention-deficit disorder induced by his mother fleeing with Mr. Sengupta at exactly eleven o'clock, and as a result, he is unable to concentrate for an extended period. But, at the end, he overcomes his illness and never suffers from it again.
- He and his father are named after the “legendary Caliph of Baghdad, Haroun al-Rashid,” who appears in many Arabian Nights stories. Their surname, Khalifa, means Caliph.

Rashid Khalifa

- **Rashid:** Haroun's father, nicknamed as the Shah of Blah and the Ocean of Notions for his ability to create stories on the spot, is a professional storyteller who is occasionally recruited by corrupt politicians to convince supporters in their favor.
- His devotion to his wife and his storytelling habit are perhaps his greatest psychological flaws; when one is gone, he becomes despondent and tends to lose the other.
- In the novel, to recover the latter, he journeys to Kahani via "Rapture," which allows him to travel within his dreams and wake up in the world created by his dreams.

Soraya Khalifa



Soraya, Haroun's mother and Rashid's wife, is tired of his fantasy and abandons him for the boring and gloomy Mr. Sengupta.



In the end, she returns to Rashid and rekindles her feelings for her husband and kid. Upon her return, Rashid's despair and Haroun's syndrome do not resurface.

Mr. Sengupta

Mr. Sengupta is Haroun's neighbor who elopes with Soraya. Mr. Sengupta generally dislikes imagination and stories, which sets the tone for his subsequent appearance on Kahani as adversary Khattam-Shud. His surname Khattam-Shud is an authentic Bengali one.

Miss Oneeta

- The talkative, emotional, and self-important wife of Mr. Sengupta.
- She is described as obese, generous, and deeply disappointed after her husband elopes with Soraya.
- In her dismay, she disowns both her husband and her married name. Miss Oneeta is the one who informs Haroun of his mother's departure, revealing that Soraya's desertion is the cause of Haroun's sudden affliction.
- Later, she announces her decision to return.

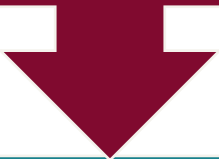


Mr. Butt

A reckless yet determined mail courier who serves as a driver for Haroun and Rashid.



When requested to transport them to a political rally where Rashid is to give a speech, Mr. Butt disregards all other demands, focusing solely on getting them to their destination before dusk.



His daring driving style adds to the adventure.



Snooty Buttoo

- ✓ A pompous, arrogant, and class-conscious politician who hires Rashid to sway voters in his favor during an election.
- ✓ He is self-assured and relies on his previous re-election as proof of his influence.
- ✓ To win Rashid's favor, he offers him and Haroun a stay on the lavish houseboat, "The Arabian Nights Plus One."
- ✓ However, his manipulative tactics backfire, and he is eventually driven out of the district by the local populace.

Butt the Hoopoe

- A mechanical hoopoe bird who serves as Haroun's guide and steed in the magical world of Kahani.
- With the ability to fly at incredible speeds between Earth and Kahani, Butt the Hoopoe also possesses telepathic abilities, allowing him to communicate without moving his beak — a fact often played for humor in the story.
- His mental prowess and unwavering support make him a vital companion for Haroun.

Iff

A “water genie” from the magical world of Kahani. Tasked with controlling Rashid’s imagination, Iff manages the flow of “story water” to Rashid through an invisible faucet. He is a kind-hearted yet cantankerous character with a distinctive blue mustache and beard. Known for his effusive nature, Iff often speaks in lists of synonyms.

Prince Bolo

A parody of the classic “heroic prince” archetype. Reckless, melodramatic, and a bit dim-witted, Bolo is the nominal leader of the mission to rescue Princess Batcheat from Chup. However, his authority is questionable, as he is prone to overreaction and impulsiveness. His obsession with rescuing Batcheat causes him to disregard other important matters.

Princess Batcheat

The daughter of King Chattergy and the fiancée of Prince Bolo. Portrayed as a classic “damsel in distress,” she is sentimental, reckless, and often seen as foolish. Despite her plain appearance, Bolo insists she is beautiful. Her name, “Batcheat,” is a play on the Hindi/Urdu word for “conversation.” She is captured by the Chupwalas during a visit to the border between Gup and Chup. Her captors plan to sew her mouth shut and rename her “Khamosh” (meaning “silent”), but this plan is never carried out.

General Kitab

The commander of the Guppee Army, aptly called the “Library.”

His name means “book” in Hindi/Urdu. The Library Army consists of numerous “Pages,” each representing a soldier.

General Kitab promotes open debate, ensuring that every “Page” can voice their opinions. This system of free speech contrasts with the strict silence of Chup.

Haroun notes that, in the real world, this level of debate would be seen as insubordination.

King Chattergy

- The father of Princess Batcheat and father-in-law to Prince Bolo.
- He serves as the symbolic head of Gup's government but wields little actual power, playing a minimal role in the story's events.

Blabbermouth

- A fiery, outspoken Page of the Guppee Library Army.
- Disguised as a boy to join the army (since girls lack equal rights), she is clever, quarrelsome, and highly skilled at juggling.
- She openly dislikes Princess Batcheat and joins the army to participate in the mission to Chup.
- Blabbermouth proves her courage by thwarting a bomb attack planned by Khattam-Shud's ambassador. Her true identity as a girl is exposed afterward, leading to her expulsion from the army by Bolo.
- She later becomes an aide to Mudra, with whom she is implied to have romantic feelings.

Mudra

The former second-in-command to Khattam-Shud, Mudra becomes disillusioned with his master's oppressive rule and defects to join the Guppees. His most notable trait is his ability to “speak” through Abhinaya, a form of sign language used in Indian classical dance, as he is nearly mute. His shadow, like all Chupwalas' shadows, can move and act independently. Mudra is an expert in hand-to-hand combat and later becomes the President of Chup after Khattam-Shud's defeat.

Khattam-Shud

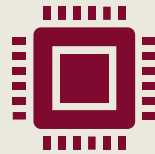
The main antagonist of the story, his name means “completely finished” in Hindi/Urdu. Known as the “Prince of Silence and the Foe of Speech,” he is the sinister ruler of Chup and a counterpart to Mr. Sengupta from the real world. He leads a religion dedicated to silence, resulting in the closure of schools, courts, and theaters in Chup City. His ultimate goal is to poison the Ocean of Stories, ensuring that all stories end in despair and silence.



The Eggheads



Technicians from Kahani who wear white coats and are completely bald, symbolizing their name.



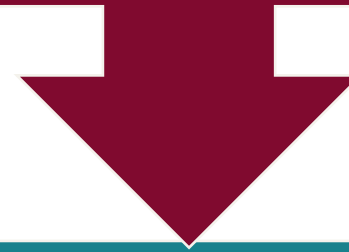
They are skilled inventors responsible for the “Processes Too Complicated To Explain,” such as Kahani’s orbit, the creation of artificial happy endings, and the transmission of story water to Earthly storytellers.



The Eggheads are devoted followers of their leader, the Walrus, and admire his distinguishing mustache.

Walrus

The superintendent of the Eggheads, easily recognizable by his small mustache, which is his namesake.



He holds authority over the Eggheads and oversees their technical operations, including the mysterious and complex systems used to control Kahani and the story waters.

Plentimaw Fish



Gigantic angelfish, as large as sharks, known for their “plentiful mouths”—a reference to the numerous mouths through which they ingest the stories flowing in the Sea of Stories.



These stories mix and transform inside them, creating entirely new tales.



The Plentimaw Fish symbolize the constant evolution of storytelling.

Mali



- A “Floating Gardener” made of interwoven flowering vines and water plants, all of which function together as a single organism.
- As a member of the First Class of Floating Gardeners (the highest rank), Mali's job is to prune and maintain the Ocean of Stories, preventing its narratives from becoming tangled or overgrown.
- Mali is almost invulnerable, easily withstanding attacks from the Chupwalas.
- His resilience, resourcefulness, and calm demeanor make him an essential ally to Haroun.

Haroun and the Sea of Stories

At the start of the story, **Haroun Khalifa** lives with his father, **Rashid**, a renowned storyteller, and his mother, **Soraya**, until she is lured away by their neighbor, **Mr. Sengupta**. Following this, Rashid, who is hired to speak on behalf of local politicians, fails his first assignment. To fulfill another task, Rashid and Haroun travel to the **Valley of K** with the help of a courier named **Mr. Butt**, where they are to assist **Snooty Buttoo**, a self-important politician. While aboard Buttoo's luxurious houseboat, Haroun encounters **Iff the Water Genie**, who has been sent to disconnect Rashid's access to his imagination. Refusing to accept this, Haroun demands to speak with Iff's supervisor, **the Walrus**, to challenge the decision. They are then transported to the legendary **Sea of Stories** aboard a mechanical bird called **Butt the Hoopoe**, named after the courier. There, Haroun discovers that the Sea is being polluted by the villain **Khattam-Shud**, a figure representing the end of stories.



Haroun and the Sea of Stories

In the **Kingdom of Gup**, the rulers — **King Chattergy**, **Prince Bolo**, **General Kitab**, and **the Walrus** — announce a plan to wage war against the neighboring **Kingdom of Chup**. Their goals are to rescue **Princess Batcheat**, Bolo's fiancée, and to stop the pollution of the Sea of Stories. Rashid, having witnessed Batcheat's abduction, joins their cause. Haroun and his companions — Iff, Butt the Hoopoe, and the army of Gup's **Pages** — march toward Chup, where they befriend **Mudra**, a former second-in-command to Khattam-Shud who has defected from the Chupwalas.



Haroun and the Sea of Stories

Meanwhile, Haroun, Iff, **Mali** (a "floating gardener" of the Sea), and Butt the Hoopoe journey to the Sea's **Old Zone**, where they are captured by **Khattam-Shud's animated shadow**. The shadow reveals his plan to seal off the Story Source at the bottom of the Sea. However, **Mali** manages to destroy the machines used to poison the Sea, while Haroun restores the Sea's natural alternation between night and day. This action destroys the shadow and his helpers, as well as diverts the massive **Plug** that was intended to block the Story Source.



Haroun and the Sea of Stories



Meanwhile, in Chup, the Guppee army defeats the **Chupwala** forces and rescues **Princess Batcheat**. **Khattam-Shud** himself is crushed beneath a statue he had commissioned in his own honor. After the victory, **the Walrus** promises Haroun a happy ending for his own story. Upon their return to the real world, Rashid shares his tale of adventure with the local citizens, inspiring them to rise up against **Snooty Buttoo**, who is subsequently driven out.

When Rashid and Haroun return home, the people of their city, once burdened by misery, regain their hope and remember the name of their city, **Kahani** (meaning “story”). In a final, joyful twist, **Soraya** returns to be reunited with her husband and son.

Weeks 8 & 9 (P. 112-139)



AMITAV GHOSH (July 11, 1956...)



AMITAV GHOSH (July 11, 1956...)

- Amitav Ghosh is an Indian writer known for his rich, imaginative storytelling that blends historical fiction, postcolonial themes, and global issues like migration, climate change, and the impact of colonialism.
- His works often weave together multiple time periods, cultures, and geographies, creating complex, interlinked narratives.
- He is a master storyteller whose work bridges history, literature, and environmental activism.
- His ability to make global history personal, while also addressing urgent contemporary issues like climate change, has cemented his place as one of the most significant authors of the 21st century.

Main Themes in Ghosh's Work

Colonialism and Imperialism: Ghosh explores how colonial forces have shaped human history, especially in Asia, Africa, and the Indian Ocean region.

Migration and Displacement: His characters often confront displacement due to war, economic pressures, and environmental crises.

Climate Change and Environmental Concerns: In later works, especially *The Great Derangement* (2016), Ghosh tackles climate change as a narrative crisis.

Hybrid Identities and Cultural Exchange: His works emphasize cross-cultural encounters, particularly focusing on the Indian Ocean trade routes.





The Shadow Lines in Brief

- *The Shadow Lines* (1988) by Amitav Ghosh is a landmark novel that explores themes of memory, nationalism, partition, and the fluidity of borders.
- It is one of Ghosh's most critically acclaimed works, blending personal history with political commentary.
- The novel won the Sahitya Akademi Award and is regarded as a classic in postcolonial literature.



The Shadow Lines in Brief

- The story is narrated by an unnamed protagonist from Calcutta. It revolves around his recollections of his family, friends, and his relationship with his cousin Ila and a family friend, Tridib. The narrative shifts between Calcutta, Dhaka, and London, blurring the distinctions between past and present, personal and political, as well as “home” and “foreign.”
- The title, *The Shadow Lines*, refers to the invisible, arbitrary boundaries between nations, identities, and memories. The novel underscores how these “lines” are constructs that often result in violence and division, as seen in the communal riots that punctuate the story.

The Shadow Lines: Going Away

In 1939, thirteen years before the narrator was born, Mayadebi, the Shaheb, and eight-year-old Tridib moved to England. The narrator, who is now eight years old, tries to anticipate Tridib as an eight-year-old but finds it difficult because Tridib is now 29 years old and appears ancient to the narrator. The narrator concludes that Tridib clearly resembled him, despite the fact that his grandmother, Tha'mma, says otherwise. Tha'mma dislikes Tridib; she believes that people should utilize their time wisely, and Tridib does not do so. This is, of course, why the narrator enjoys listening to Tridib: he doesn't seem to do much, but he also does not appear to squander time.



The Shadow Lines: Going Away

Tridib sometimes unexpectedly visits the narrator's family. Despite Tha'mma's hate for him, she enjoys when he visits because his family is wealthy. Tha'mma is aware that Tridib visits primarily to "nurse his stomach." He arrives when he finds himself in dire need of a toilet, a condition known to the family as "Tridib's Gastric." Tha'mma usually has him go through the formalities before letting him go to the bathroom. The narrator recalls growing up believing that Tridib had a special organ called a Gastric, but he was too shy to inquire about it.



The Shadow Lines: Going Away

Tha'mma never let Tridib remain for long because she believes he can have a detrimental impact on the narrator and his father. When the narrator was younger, he frequently ran into Tridib on the street. Tridib is the only member of his family who has spent the most of his life in Calcutta; the rest of his family is wealthy and frequently travels. Tha'mma is outraged by this because she perceives Tridib's lack of marriage and employment as proof of his frivolity. Instead, he stays with his grandmother in Calcutta's ancient family home.



The Shadow Lines: Going Away

Though Tha'mma frequently tells the narrator that she pities Tridib, the narrator realizes that she is afraid of him because she believes he spends all of his time chatting on street corners. However, Tridib is pursuing a PhD in archaeology.



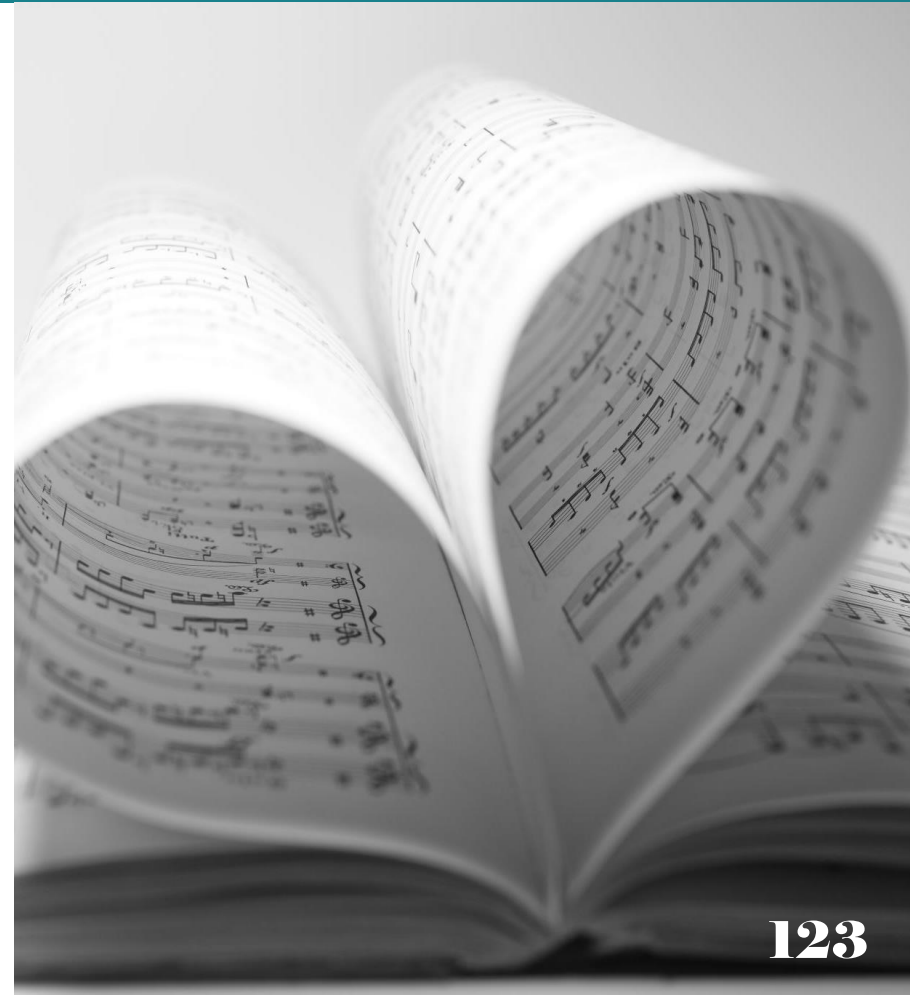


The Shadow Lines: Coming Home

Tha'mma retires in 1962, when the narrator is ten. Having taught at a girls' school since 1936, she had served as headmistress for the past six years. On her final day, the school holds a farewell ceremony, attended by the narrator and his parents. As a parting gift, the students present Tha'mma with a lamp shaped like the Taj Mahal. Moved by the gesture, both she and the students are brought to tears. The narrator is taken aback and filled with jealousy upon realizing that the girls also share a deep affection for his grandmother.

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The Shadow Lines: Coming Home

Following the ceremony, the school prepares a special dinner for them, which ties in with Tha'mma's goal to educate the girls on how to cook food from around the country. Tha'mma compliments on each of the females and their meals when they bring it in. However, Tha'mma refers to the overweight girl who prepared Punjabi food as "plump and juicy," and the unfortunate girl flees the room in tears.

The Shadow Lines: Coming Home

In the beginning, Tha'mma enjoys her retirement. However, within a few days, the narrator overhears his mother grumbling that Tha'mma has started criticizing her housekeeping—something she had never done before. One afternoon, as the narrator and Montu return from school, they notice an unfamiliar man in a turban inside Tha'mma's room, an unusual sight. Curious, the narrator rushes home and barges into the room, only to find Tha'mma sitting with her head wrapped in a wet sari. Stunned, he retreats in silence. His mother then explains that Tha'mma has started a treatment because she fears she's going bald, bursting into laughter as she reveals the reason.

The Shadow Lines: Coming Home

Tha'mma's interest in such activities quickly fades, and she starts visiting her old school. However, the new headmistress eventually calls the narrator's father, requesting that Tha'mma stop coming to the school. Left without this routine, Tha'mma begins spending more time alone, and for the first time in her life, the narrator realizes, she has idle hours to fill. After a few weeks, she starts engaging with the family again, but the narrator notices a shift—she seems detached, showing little interest in their lives. To draw her attention, he frequently asks for help with his homework and deliberately makes silly mistakes or acts out to keep her engaged.

The Narrator

- The narrator was born in Calcutta, India in 1953, where he lives with his parents and his grandmother, Tha'mma.
- He spends his entire childhood in Calcutta and spends a lot of it with his favorite uncle, Tridib.





Tridib

- The narrator's intellectual uncle who introduces him to the power of imagination and storytelling.
- He serves as a philosophical guide throughout the story.

Ila

- The narrator's glamorous, independent cousin who grows up in London.
- She symbolizes cosmopolitan modernity, but she is also disconnected from her roots.



Tha'mma (the Grandmother)

- The narrator's grandmother, a fierce nationalist, whose beliefs about nationhood and partition are challenged as the story unfolds.



May Price

- A British woman who forms a connection with Tridib and becomes a symbolic figure for cross-cultural relationships.

Mayadebi

Mayadebi is Tha'mma's younger sister.

The narrator describes the two women as being like reflections in a looking glass. Mayadebi is lucky enough to marry the Shaheb, a wealthy diplomat.

As such, she travels often throughout her life, including to London in 1939 with the nine-year-old Tridib, her middle son.

She has an older son, Jatin, and a much younger son, Robi, who is only a few years older than the narrator.

Nick Price



As children, Ila introduces the narrator to Nick Price through stories she tells about playing with him in London when her family lives with his.



He is several years older, blonde, and has long hair.



The narrator recognizes that Nick is his opponent for Ila's affection and therefore feels as though he grows up in Nick's ever more mature shadow, even though he doesn't meet Nick until they're all adults.

Jethamoshai

- Jethamoshai is the uncle of Mayadebi and Tha'mma.
- When the girls were little, he was an eccentric man and was difficult to take seriously—though he was sometimes frightening because of his skeletally thin frame and piercing eyes.
- Years before the start of the novel, Jethamoshai and the girls' father began feuding, and as lawyers, eventually came to an agreement to build a wall through their shared house.

Robi

Robi is the narrator's uncle, though he's only a few years older than the narrator. When his parents, Mayadebi and the Shaheb, moved to Dhaka in 1963, Robi went with them. He therefore got to accompany his mother, aunt, Tridib, and May to fetch Jethamoshai from his mother's childhood home when he was thirteen. He witnessed the riot that killed Tridib, which left him with PTSD and a recurring nightmare that haunts him into adulthood. As a student and an adult, Robi is very particular about behaving properly: the narrator suggests that Robi has an absurdly strong moral compass, which makes him willing to follow even the most ridiculous of rules. He's also a celebrated ringleader at Indian colleges, though he doesn't participate in any of the student protests due to his respect for rules. Ila finds his uptight nature tiring and offensive, particularly when he attempts to put her in her place as an Indian woman.

The Shaheb

The Shaheb is Mayadebi's wealthy husband. He's elegant, dignified, and the most important relative in the narrator's family, which earns him the admiration of everyone in the family but Tha'mma. Tha'mma resents him because she believes he's an alcoholic (though it's never made entirely clear if the Shaheb ever actually stinks of alcohol) and weak—she instinctively knows that Mayadebi does most of the heavy lifting. Tha'mma also takes offense to his extensive and varied wardrobe: as a diplomat, the Shaheb needs different styles of dress for different locales. He's a kind man who makes a point to engage women in conversation about things that matter to them, something that endears him especially to the narrator's mother. He moves his family to London in 1939 so that he can have an operation in England. rephrase thye passage

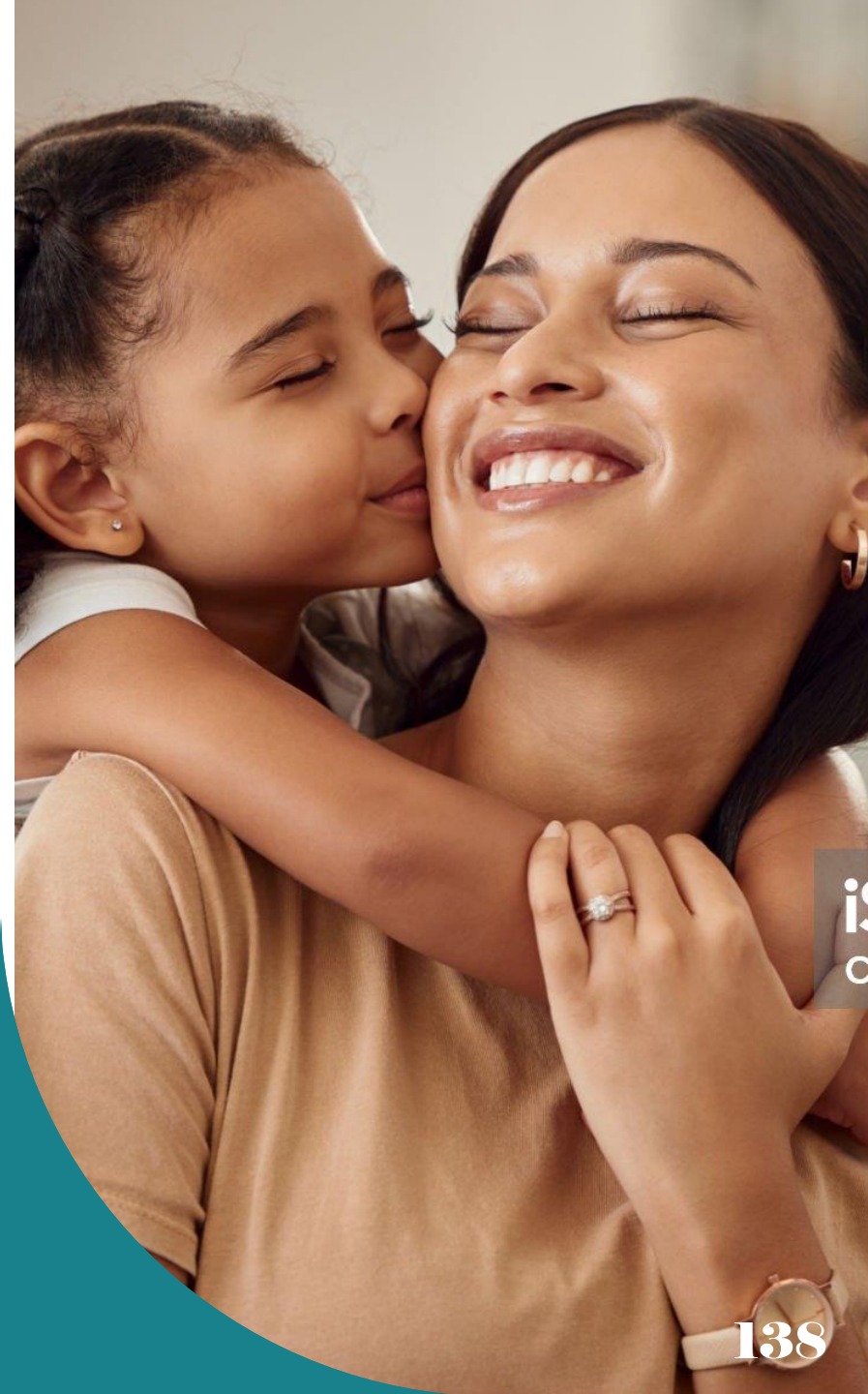


Queen Victoria

Queen Victoria is Ila's mother and the wife of Jatin, an economist. She acquired her nickname because she often sits proudly like Queen Victoria. She keeps several servants and has a habit of creating silly languages to speak to them to make them feel inferior and confused, and the narrator notes that she had a "special affinity" for any being, human or animal, who responded to one of her special languages. This is the reason why she allows a huge monitor lizard to live in her garden: it flicks its tail when she speaks to it, which she interprets as a response to her language.

Mother

The narrator's mother is a skilled and competent housewife who is exceptionally proud of her competence. She's briefly shaken when her mother-in-law, Tha'mma, retires and is in the house full-time, but Mother soon regains her hold over the household. Despite this, she and Tha'mma are often at odds: Tha'mma gave Mother most of her jewelry when her husband died, and it irks Tha'mma to no end that Mother's no-nonsense sensibilities don't leave much room for frivolity like jewelry. She regularly refuses to deal with Tha'mma when Tha'mma is in one of her moods, sending her son instead.



Mrs. Price

Mrs. Price is May and Nick's mother. She and her husband, Snipe, live in West Hampstead, London. She and Snipe take in Tridib and his parents when Tridib is a child, on the eve of World War II. Decades later, when the narrator meets her, Mrs. Price is elderly and tires quickly, but still loves having Indian guests. She and her husband are extremely generous, as over the years they provide lodging for several of the narrator's family members, including Ila's family.

Weeks 10, 11, 12, & 13 (P. 140-163)

R.K. Narayan



R. K. Narayan

- R. K. Narayan (1906–2001) was a renowned Indian novelist and short story writer known for his simple yet profound storytelling.
- He is best known for his works set in the fictional South Indian town of Malgudi, which serves as a microcosm of Indian society.
- His stories are marked by their humor, irony, and keen observation of human nature.

Notable Works of R. K. Narayan

- ***Swami and Friends* (1935)** — His debut novel, which follows the adventures of a young boy named Swami and his friends in Malgudi. It's one of his most beloved works and introduces the iconic setting of Malgudi.
- ***The Bachelor of Arts* (1937)** — A coming-of-age story about a young man navigating love, education, and tradition.
- ***The Dark Room* (1938)** — A tale focusing on gender roles and the plight of a neglected wife.



Notable Works of R. K. Narayan

- *The English Teacher* (1945) — A semi-autobiographical novel that deals with themes of love, grief, and spirituality.
- *The Financial Expert* (1952) — Satirical exploration of wealth, greed, and family ties.
- *The Guide* (1958) — Perhaps his most famous work, this novel tells the story of Raju, a corrupt tourist guide who becomes a spiritual guru. It won the Sahitya Akademi Award and was later adapted into a successful film.

Themes and Style of R. K. Narayan's Writings

- **Human Nature:** Narayan's stories explore the ordinary lives of middle-class Indians, often revealing the ironies of daily life.
- **Humor and Satire:** His works have a light, humorous touch, often exposing social hypocrisies.
- **Malgudi:** The fictional town is a vivid, memorable setting that feels as real as any actual Indian town.
- **Tradition vs. Modernity:** Many of his works grapple with India's transition from colonial rule to independence, highlighting tensions between tradition and change.

The Man-Eater of Malgudi in Brief

- The story follows Nataraj, an Indian printer residing in a large ancestral house in Malgudi, a fictional town in South India.
- Nataraj leads a simple, content life, surrounded by close friends, including a poet, a journalist named Sen, and his assistant, Sastri.
- His peaceful existence is disrupted by the arrival of Vasu, a taxidermist who comes to Malgudi in search of wildlife from the nearby Mempi Hills. Their first encounter occurs at Nataraj's printing press, where Vasu demands 500 visiting cards.
- Although Nataraj is unsure whether Vasu is a friend or a foe, he finds his brash behavior unsettling.

The Man-Eater of Malgudi in Brief

- Vasu, described as a bully and likened to a Rakshasa (demon) by Nataraj and Sastri, persuades Nataraj to let him stay in the attic of the press. Claiming it is only a temporary arrangement; Vasu secretly plans to make the attic his base for taxidermy work.
- Over time, his presence becomes a menace. He drives away Nataraj's friends and customers, kills a pet dog, poaches animals and birds from the neighborhood, and illegally hunts wildlife from the Mempi Hills. His taxidermy activities create an unbearable stench, disturbing the peace of the area.
- When Nataraj confronts him, Vasu files a complaint with the Rent Control authority, declaring himself a tenant. He also begins hosting women in the attic, further straining the neighborhood's tranquility.

The Man-Eater of Malgudi in Brief

- The situation escalates when Nataraj's poet friend plans a grand function to release a book of poetry on Lord Krishna.
- Around this time, Rangi, a local dancer, warns Nataraj that Vasu is plotting to kill Kumar, a temple elephant that Nataraj had helped bring to Malgudi from the Mempi Hills for medical treatment.
- Nataraj is alarmed and seeks help from Muthu, a tea shop owner, who agrees to support him in protecting Kumar. Despite Nataraj's repeated attempts to stop Vasu, he fails to prevent the threat. Determined to confront Vasu, Nataraj visits him but finds him asleep.
- The next morning, however, Vasu is found dead.

The Man-Eater of Malgudi in Brief

- An autopsy reveals that Vasu died from a blow to the head with a blunt object. Rumors circulate that Nataraj may be responsible for his death, tarnishing the reputation of his press and alienating his friends and customers.
- Later, Sastri informs Nataraj — based on information from Rangi — that Vasu was not murdered. Instead, he had attempted to swat a mosquito on his forehead, inadvertently striking himself with such force that he damaged a vital nerve, resulting in his sudden death.

The Moral of the Story

The story concludes with a moral message: demons, devils, and monstrous beings ultimately bring about their own destruction.





Nataraj

- The protagonist and narrator of the story. He runs a small printing press in Malgudi and is a gentle, kind-hearted, and non-confrontational man. Nataraj represents the traditional, peaceful Indian way of life.

Vasu

- The antagonist, a taxidermist who rents a room in Nataraj's press. He is aggressive, self-centered, and destructive, embodying the “man-eater” of the title. Vasu is symbolic of modern, predatory, and materialistic forces that disrupt traditional life.



Sastri



Nataraj's assistant at the printing press. He is deeply superstitious and well-versed in Indian mythology, often drawing parallels between Vasu and demonic figures from ancient tales.

Sen

- A journalist and one of Nataraj's customers. He represents the intellectual, critical perspective on society and modernity.

Rangi

- A temple dancer and one of the few people who maintain a relationship with Vasu. She provides key information about Vasu's activities.



Muthu

- A tea shop owner and animal rights sympathizer who helps Nataraj in his conflict with Vasu.

Themes of *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*

- **Good vs. Evil:** Nataraj represents goodness, simplicity, and harmony with nature, while Vasu embodies evil, destruction, and egoism. Their conflict reflects the eternal battle between good and evil forces in society.
- **Tradition vs. Modernity:** The peaceful, traditional life of Malgudi is disrupted by the arrival of Vasu, who embodies modern materialism, individualism, and the destruction of natural harmony.
- **Mythological Parallels:** The story draws on Indian mythology, with Sastri likening Vasu to demonic figures like asuras (demons) who challenge dharma (cosmic order). This connection reinforces the symbolic significance of Vasu as an “evil force” destined for self-destruction.

Themes of *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*

Violence vs. Non-violence: The story contrasts Vasu's predatory instincts with Nataraj's passive resistance. Nataraj avoids confrontation, embodying the principle of ahimsa (non-violence), a key tenet of Indian philosophy.

Human-Nature Relationship: Vasu's killing of animals for profit highlights the theme of ecological destruction. His threat to Kumar, the temple elephant, symbolizes humanity's disregard for nature's sanctity, while Nataraj's protective attitude underscores reverence for living beings.

Fate and Irony: Vasu's death is an ironic twist of fate. Despite his violent and domineering nature, he dies accidentally, symbolizing the idea that evil eventually brings about its own destruction.

Critical Appreciation of *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*

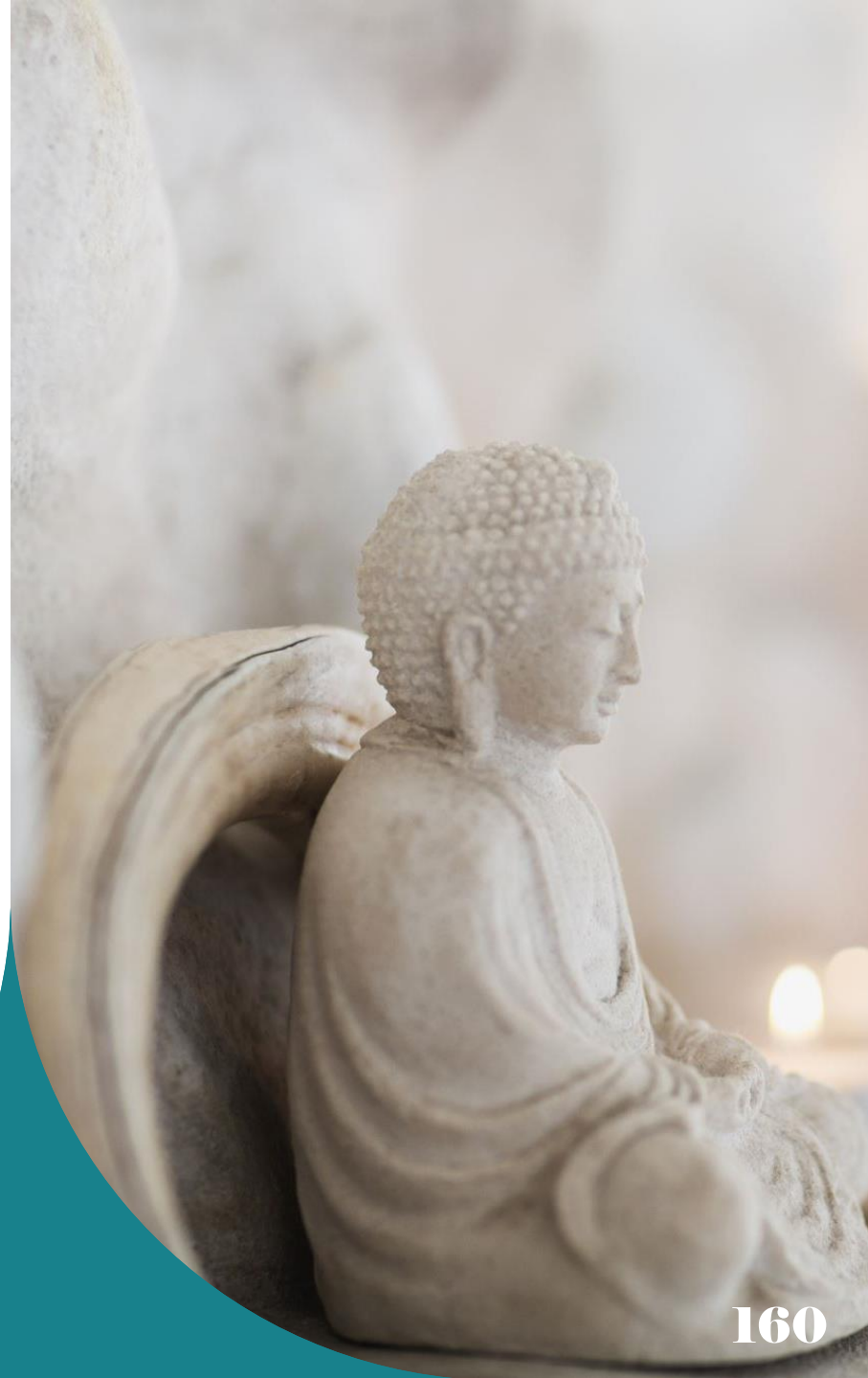
Symbolism and Allegory: R.K. Narayan's story is a rich allegory. Vasu, the "man-eater," symbolizes the modern, predatory mindset that seeks to exploit nature for selfish gain. His eventual self-destruction can be seen as a moral lesson on the consequences of unchecked egoism and materialism.

Narrative Style and Humor of *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*

Narayan employs a simple, conversational narrative style, filled with humor and irony. The character of Nataraj, with his naive optimism and internal moral struggle, draws sympathy from readers. Vasu's grotesque nature, combined with his ridiculous death, adds a layer of dark comedy.

Mythological Undertones in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*

Sastri's frequent references to Hindu mythology enrich the narrative, inviting readers to see Vasu as a Rakshasa (demon) figure who, like the demons of myth, is ultimately undone by his own arrogance. This fusion of mythology with everyday life is a hallmark of Narayan's storytelling.





Philosophical Reflections in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*

The novel reflects larger philosophical questions about human nature, fate, and the balance between good and evil. The self-destruction of Vasu serves as a reminder of karma and cosmic justice.



The Man-Eater of Malgudi is a satirical and philosophical exploration of modernity, power, and the consequences of egoism. Through humor, irony, and mythological resonance, Narayan delivers a profound moral message on the nature of evil and the inevitability of its self-destruction.

PRESENTATION



Quiz 3 (Presentation)

Weeks 14, 15, 16, & 17 (P. 164-188)

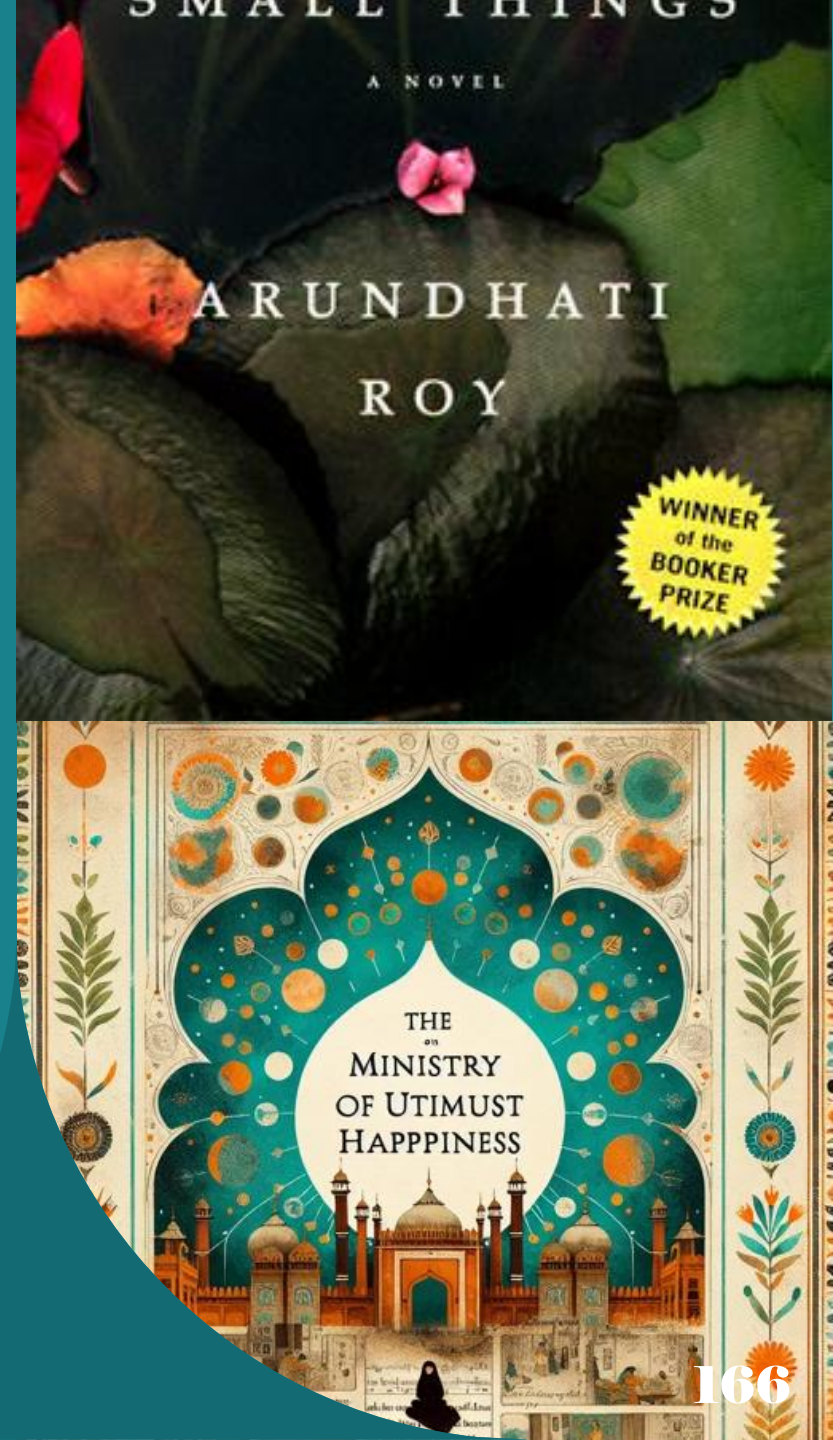


Arundhati Roy

- Arundhati Roy is an Indian author, activist, and essayist best known for her Booker Prize-winning debut novel, *The God of Small Things* (1997).
- Her writing is characterized by lyrical prose, deep emotional insight, and sharp critiques of social and political issues.

Famous Works of Arundhati Roy

- *The God of Small Things* (1997) – A semi-autobiographical novel set in Kerala, India. It tells the story of fraternal twins, Estha and Rahel, whose lives are changed by forbidden love and societal taboos. This work brought her international acclaim and won the Booker Prize.
- *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) – A sprawling, multi-perspective narrative that addresses themes like gender identity, caste, love, and political resistance in contemporary India.





Themes and Style of Arundhati Roy's Writings

- **Social Critique:** Her works address issues like caste discrimination, gender oppression, and the impact of colonialism and globalization on Indian society.
- **Political Activism:** Roy is a vocal critic of nationalism, militarism, and human rights abuses, particularly in Kashmir and India's treatment of its marginalized communities.
- **Lyrical Prose:** Her writing is often described as poetic, with vivid sensory descriptions and an emphasis on memory, time, and loss.

Characters in *The God of Small Things*

- **Rahel** – One of the two twins at the heart of the story. She is reflective, sensitive, and more introspective than her brother.
- **Estha (Esthappen Yako)** – Rahel's twin brother, marked by trauma and silence after a disturbing childhood experience. His mental state deteriorates over time.
- **Ammu** – The twins' mother, a fiercely independent but oppressed woman. She defies social norms by engaging in a forbidden love affair with Velutha, a Dalit (untouchable).
- **Velutha** – A low-caste Dalit man and a skilled carpenter. His relationship with Ammu defies social norms, leading to tragic consequences.

Characters in *The God of Small Things*

- **Baby Kochamma (Navomi Ipe)** – The twins' grandaunt, a deeply conservative and bitter woman who reinforces caste, class, and gender oppression.
- **Chacko** – Ammu's brother, an Oxford-educated man who romanticizes his past and maintains a sense of entitlement.
- **Sophie Mol** – Chacko's daughter from his marriage to Margaret, an Englishwoman. Sophie Mol's arrival to Ayemenem sparks the events leading to the tragedy.
- **Mammachi (Shoshamma Ipe)** – The twins' grandmother, who is both a victim and enforcer of patriarchy. She tolerates her son Chacko's behavior while suppressing Ammu's independence.

Characters in *The God of Small Things*

Pappachi (Benaan John Ipe) – The patriarch of the family, a cruel and abusive man whose influence lingers long after his death.

Comrade Pillai – A local Marxist politician who manipulates events for his own gain, representing the hypocrisy of revolutionary politics.



The God of Small Things

- The story unfolds in Ayemenem, Kerala, with a non-linear narrative that shifts between 1969 and 1993. The plot follows Rahel and Estha, fraternal twins, who reunite in 1993 after years of separation. Their mother, Ammu Ipe, had earlier married Baba to escape the control of her oppressive father.
- However, after suffering abuse in her marriage, she returns to Ayemenem with her children. The family home is shared with Chacko, Ammu's brother, who has returned from England following his divorce, and Baby Kochamma, Pappachi's unmarried sister, who remains embittered by the pain of unrequited love.
- Baby Kochamma's manipulative nature becomes a key driver of the family's misfortune.



BRIEF

The God of Small Things in Brief

- When Chacko's ex-wife, Margaret, loses her second husband in a car accident, he invites her and their daughter, Sophie Mol, to spend Christmas in Ayemenem.
- On their way to the airport to receive them, the family encounters a crowd of Communist protesters. The mob surrounds their car, and Baby Kochamma is publicly humiliated. Rahel thinks she spots Velutha, a Dalit (Untouchable) who works as a carpenter at the family's pickle factory, among the protesters.
- Later, at a theater, Estha is sexually molested by a vendor known as the "Orangedrink Lemondrink Man," an event that leaves a lasting psychological scar.



BRIEF

The God of Small Things in Brief

- Rahel's belief that she saw Velutha among the Communist protesters fuels Baby Kochamma's animosity toward him, as she links him to her public humiliation.
- Meanwhile, Estha and Rahel develop a strong bond with Velutha, who is depicted as kind and caring despite his marginalized social status.
- Ammu also becomes drawn to him, and the two begin a forbidden love affair that defies caste boundaries.

The God of Small Things

- When Velutha's father discovers the affair, he reports it to the family. In response, Ammu is confined to her room, and Velutha is expelled from the family's property. Consumed by rage, Ammu blames her children for her suffering, prompting Estha and Rahel to run away from home with their cousin Sophie Mol.
- The children's escape takes a tragic turn when their boat capsizes, and Sophie Mol drowns. Upon discovering Sophie's body laid out on the sofa, Margaret and Chacko are devastated.



The God of Small Things

- Seizing the opportunity to exact revenge on Velutha, Baby Kochamma falsely accuses him of kidnapping the children and being responsible for Sophie Mol's death. This leads to a violent police raid, during which Velutha is savagely beaten in front of Estha and Rahel.
- Despite knowing that Velutha is innocent, the police chief, wary of potential backlash from Communist sympathizers, urges Baby Kochamma to drop her false allegations.
- To protect herself, Baby Kochamma coerces the traumatized twins into falsely testifying that Velutha had kidnapped them. Velutha succumbs to his injuries and dies in custody.



The God of Small Things

- Though Ammu tries to reveal the truth, Baby Kochamma convinces Chacko that Ammu and her children are responsible for Sophie's death.
- Chacko expels Ammu from the family home, forcing her to live in poverty. Separated from Estha, Ammu dies alone in a seedy motel at the age of 31.



The God of Small Things

- Years later, Rahel moves to America, where she lives a turbulent life, eventually returning to Ayemenem. She finds Estha living in silence, his spirit broken by the trauma of their past.
- The twins' shared grief draws them together in an emotionally fraught moment of intimacy. Despite their physical reunion, the weight of their past remains unbearable.
- The novel closes with a poignant reflection on the love story between Ammu and Velutha, symbolizing the fragile beauty of “small things” crushed by the weight of “big things” like caste, class, and social convention.



Themes used in *The God of Small Things*

Caste and Class Oppression:

- The love between Ammu and Velutha transgresses caste boundaries, leading to catastrophic consequences. The caste system's dehumanization is vividly depicted, especially in Velutha's brutal death.
- The novel critiques India's systemic oppression, where untouchables like Velutha are condemned for their very existence.

Themes used in *The God of Small Things*

Forbidden Love

- ✓ Love is portrayed as a transgressive force. The forbidden love between Ammu and Velutha and the inappropriate intimacy between Rahel and Estha reflect how love can defy social norms but is also punished for doing so.

Childhood and Trauma

- ✓ Childhood innocence is overshadowed by trauma, seen in the tragic experiences of Rahel and Estha. Their exposure to death, sexual abuse, and violence scars them for life.
- ✓ The psychological impact of these experiences is seen in Estha's silence as an adult and Rahel's emotional detachment.

Themes used in *The God of Small Things*

Gender Inequality and Patriarchy:

- ✓ Women in the novel, especially Ammu, are subjected to societal control. Unlike Chacko, who enjoys sexual freedom, Ammu is condemned for her love affair.
- ✓ Mammachi's tolerance for Chacko's behavior while punishing Ammu reveals the patriarchal double standard.

Memory and Time:

- ✓ The non-linear structure reflects how memories haunt the present. The narrative loops back and forth, demonstrating how past trauma defines the present.
- ✓ The use of childlike language to depict past events contrasts with the grim reality of adulthood, blurring the boundaries between past and present.

Themes used in *The God of Small Things*



Politics and Hypocrisy



The Marxist politician Comrade Pillai is an embodiment of hypocrisy. Though he speaks of class equality, he upholds the caste system and betrays Velutha.



The novel critiques how political ideologies can be co-opted for personal gain.

Critical Appreciation

The *God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy is a landmark novel that explores complex social, political, and personal issues in post-colonial India.

Literary Style and Language:

- ✓ **Narrative Style:** The novel employs a non-linear, fragmented narrative, moving between past and present. This technique mirrors the characters' fractured psyches and the inescapability of memory.
- ✓ **Child's Perspective:** Rahel and Estha's perspective as children highlights the innocence with which they view their violent, oppressive world. Their childish misinterpretations create a sense of foreboding.
- ✓ **Language:** Arundhati Roy's prose is lyrical, poetic, and evocative. She plays with syntax, capitalization, and repetition to reflect a childlike perspective. Phrases like "The Loss of Sophie Mol" are repeated to emphasize the event's gravity.



Symbolism

- ✓ **The River:** The river represents both life and death. It serves as a site of Sophie Mol's death and becomes a metaphor for the uncontrollable flow of events.
- ✓ **Pappachi's Moth:** The moth symbolizes Pappachi's unacknowledged anger and violence. It haunts Ammu and Rahel, embodying generational trauma.
- ✓ **Small Things vs. Big Things:** "Small things" refer to love, personal experiences, and fleeting moments of happiness. "Big things" are the social, political, and cultural forces that shape lives. Velutha and Ammu's love is a "small thing" crushed by "big things" like caste, class, and family honor.

Feminist Critique

- The novel critiques how women are denied agency in a patriarchal society. Ammu's love is deemed immoral, while Chacko's casual affairs are normalized.
- Female characters like Mammachi and Baby Kochamma are complicit in patriarchal oppression, revealing how even women can reinforce the system.



Social Critique

The caste system is laid bare, especially through Velutha's status as an "untouchable." The system's brutality is exposed in Velutha's unjust punishment.

The novel critiques how "Big Things" like caste, class, and patriarchy wield control over "Small Things" like love and personal freedom.

Emotional Impact

The novel evokes deep empathy for its marginalized characters, especially Velutha, Ammu, and the twins. Their suffering serves as a critique of India's deeply entrenched social hierarchies.





The God of Small Things

The God of Small Things is a powerful critique of caste, patriarchy, and political hypocrisy. It highlights the delicate balance between the "small things" that define human relationships and the "big things" that shape society.

Arundhati Roy's masterful use of language, structure, and symbolism cements the novel's status as a modern classic.

Its non-linear narrative and exploration of childhood, trauma, and forbidden love make it a profoundly moving and unforgettable story.

Thank You

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