

BEGE-108
Reading the Novel
Assignment 2016 - 2017
(Based on Blocks 1-6)

Max. Marks: 100

Answer all questions.

1. Write short notes on any **two**: 2 × 10 = 20
 - (i) Symbolism in *The Awakening*
 - (ii) The Post Independence Indian English Novel
 - (iii) Writing Diaspora as a marker of cultural identity
 - (iv) Difference between an idea and a theme

2. How is Mme. Defarge represented in *A Tale of Two Cities*? Does Dickens give her actions a sympathetic colouring? 20

3. Comment on the use of folk material in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja*. 20

4. Attempt a reading of *Sunlight on A Broken Column* as a partition novel. 20

5. Write an essay on the Indian Diasporic Novel in Canada. 20

ASSIGNMENT SOLUTIONS GUIDE (2016-2017)

B.E.G.E-108

Reading the Novel

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Answer all questions.

Q. 1. Write short notes on any two:

(i) Symbolism in *The Awakening*

Ans. SYMBOLISM IN THE AWAKENING: Art becomes a symbol of both freedom and failure. It is through the process of trying to become an artist that Edna reaches the highest point of her awakening. Edna sees art as a way of self-expression and of self-assertion. Birds are major symbolic images in the narrative. They symbolize the ability to communicate (the mockingbird and parrot) and entrapment of women (the two birds in cages; the desire for flight; the pigeon house). Flight is another symbol associated with birds, and acts as a stand in for awakening. The ability to spread your wings and fly is a symbolic theme that occurs often in the novel. Edna escapes her home, her husband, her life, by leaving for the pigeon house.

Edna is fully dressed when first introduced; slowly over the course of the novel she removes her clothes. This symbolizes the shedding of the societal rules in her life and her growing awakening and stresses her physical and external self. As she disrobes, the reader is presented with an internal voyeuristic view. When she commits suicide she is finally naked, she has shed everything she has in her quest for selfhood. But it is not only Edna who is symbolized in clothes, Adele is more “careful” of her face in the seventh chapter and wears a veil. Both she and Madame Leburn constantly make clothes to cover the body, and the woman in black and Mlle. Reisz never change their clothes, symbolizing their distance from any physical attachment.

There are several symbolic meals in the text and each stress mythic aspects in the text. The meal on Cheniere Caminada occurs after she awakens from a fairy tale sleep; the dinner party in chapter thirty is viewed by some as a re-creation of the Last Supper.

There are many houses in the novel: the one on Grand Isle, the one in New Orleans, the pigeon house, the house in which Edna falls asleep on Cheniere Caminada. The first two of these houses serve as cages for Edna. She is expected to be a “mother-woman” on Grand Isle and to be the perfect social hostess in New Orleans. The other two are places of supposed freedom. On the island she can sleep and dream, and in the pigeon house she can create a world of her own. In the same way, places have a similar significance.

Edna has struggled all summer to learn to swim. She has been coached by the men, women, and children on Grand Isle. In chapter ten, Chopin uses the concept of learning to swim as a symbol of empowerment. It provides Edna with strength and joy. Also attached to the concept of swimming are the ideas of staying afloat and getting in over one’s head. Edna manages to do both.

The moon has many symbolic meanings in *The Awakening*. It is used as a symbol of mythic power and connects Edna with the goddess Selene and the associated implications. She is strong and commanding, the goddess of the hunt. She is sexually aware of Robert for the first time, the fertility aspect of Artemis. Moonlight also symbolizes the struggle Edna has with the concepts of sexual love and romantic love. At the end of chapter ten, delicate images

of “strips of moonlight,” are interposed with strong sexual feelings, “the first-felt throbbings of desire.” Joyce Dyer suggests that this juxtaposition “symbolically anticipates the problems Edna will have determining the relationship between sex and romance”. Go back and reread chapter 10.

Music is an important symbol in text, both Adele and Mlle. Reisz play the piano. Each woman functions to underscore a different aspect of the narrative. Adele is considered a musician by Leonce, but she does not play for art, instead she does so to keep her husband and children cheerful and to set time for parties. Mlle. Reisz, on the other hand, is disliked by all, but is granted status as a musician by only Robert and Edna. The issue of the piano playing echoes the issue of placement in society. If you follow the rules and norms whatever you accomplish is considered great, if you defy those rules you are shunned and dispaired. Thus, the piano playing becomes a symbol of societal rules and regulations.

Sleep is an important symbolic motif running through the novel. Edna’s moments of awakening are often preceded by sleep and she does a great deal of it. Robert Levine calls it the “sleepiest novel in the American literary canon” and sees Edna’s sleep patterns as a rebellion against natural rhythms. Sleep is also a means of escape and of repairing her tattered emotions. In fairy tales, sleep is a key ingredient.

(ii) The Part Independence Indian English Novel.

Ans. Post-independence novelists: Bhabhani Bhattacharya was one of the first novelists of the post-independent India. His first novel *So Many Hungers* (1947) was followed by *Music For Mohini* (1952), *He Who Rides A Tiger* (1952), *A Goddess Named Gold* (1960), *Shadow From Ladakh* (1966) and *A Dream In Hawai* (1978).

Another novelist of repute belonging to this period was Manohar Malgonkar. He authored his first novel *Distant Drum* in 1960 which was followed by novels like *Combat Of Shadows* (1962), *The Princes* (1963) and *A Bend In The Ganges* (1964).

Khushwant Singh born 2 February 1915 in Hadali, Punjab, which now lies in (Pakistan) is a prominent Indian novelist and journalist. Singh’s weekly column, “With Malice towards One and All”, carried by several Indian newspapers, is among the most widely-read columns in the country.

An important Indo-Anglian novelist, Singh is best known for his trenchant secularism, his humour, and an abiding love of poetry. His comparisons of social and behavioural characteristics of Westerners and Indians are laced with acid wit. He served as editor of several well-known literary and news magazines, as well as two major broadsheet newspapers, through the 1970s and 1980s.

In August 1947, days before the partition of India and Pakistan, Singh, then a lawyer practicing in the High Court in Lahore, drove to his family’s summer cottage at Kasauli in the foothills of the Himalayas. Continuing on to Delhi along 200 miles (320 km) of strangely vacant road, he came upon a Jeep full of armed Sikhs who boasted that they had just massacred a village of Muslims. Such experiences were to be powerfully distilled in Singh’s 1956 novel *Train to Pakistan*. (The 2006 edition of *Train to Pakistan*, published by Roli Books in New Delhi, also contains 66 photographs by Margaret Bourke-White that capture the partition’s violent aftermath.)

Govindas Vishnoodas Desani or G. V. Desani, (1909-2000) was a Kenyan-born, British-educated Indian writer and Buddhist philosopher. The son of a merchant, he began his career as a journalist, and achieved fame with the cult novel *All About H. Hatterr* (1948), considered one of the finest examples of literature in English and a novel that compares favourably with Joyce’s *Ulysses*. He was for a time a university professor in America, and spent many years engaged in meditation at various monasteries. A second volume, *Hali and Collected Stories*, was published in 1991.

It was, however, the publication in Britain in 1948 of his experimental novel, *All About H. Hatterr*, that attracted the widest attention on both sides of the Atlantic and in India. T. S. Eliot said of it, “... In all my experience, I have not met with anything quite like it. It is amazing that anyone should be able to sustain a piece of work in this style and tempo at such length.”

Sir Ahmed Salman Rushdie (Born 19 June 1947) is a British Indian novelist and essayist. He first achieved fame with his second novel, *Midnight’s Children* (1981), which won the Booker Prize in 1981. Much of his early fiction is set on the Indian subcontinent. His style is often classified as magical realism mixed with historical fiction, and a dominant theme of his work is the story of the many connections, disruptions and migrations between the Eastern and Western world.

His fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988), was at the center of The Satanic Verses controversy, with protests from Muslims including Yusuf Islam (formerly known as Cat Stevens) in several countries. Some of the protests

were violent, with Rushdie facing death threats and a *fatwâ* (religious edict) issued by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, then Supreme Leader of Iran, in February, 1989. In response to the call for him to be killed, Rushdie spent nearly a decade largely underground, appearing in public only sporadically, but was outspoken on the *fatwâ*'s censoring effect on him as an author and the threat to freedom of expression it embodied.

He was appointed a Knight Bachelor for "services to literature" in June 2007,. He also holds the highest rank — *Commandeur* — in the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France. He began a five-year term as Distinguished Writer in Residence at Emory University in 2007. In May 2008 he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His latest novel is *The Enchantress of Florence*, published in June 2008. In July 2008 *Midnight's Children* won a public vote to be named the Best of the Booker, the best novel to win the Booker Prize in the award's 40-year history.

Midnight's Children is a loose allegory for events in India both before and, primarily, after the independence and partition of India, which took place at midnight on 15 August 1947. The protagonist and narrator of the story is Saleem Sinai, a telepath with an extraordinary nose. The novel is divided into three books.

Midnight's Children tells the story of the Sinai family and the earlier events leading up to India's Independence and Partition, connecting the two lines both literally and allegorically. The central protagonist, Saleem Sinai, is born at the exact moment that India becomes independent. He later discovers that all children born in India between 12 AM and 1 AM on August 15, 1947, are imbued with special telepathic powers. Saleem thus attempts to use these powers to convene the eponymous children. The convention, or *Midnight Children's Conference*, is in many ways reflective of the issues India faced in its early statehood concerning the cultural, linguistic, religious, and political differences faced by such a vastly diverse nation. Saleem acts as a telepathic conduit, bringing hundreds of geographically disparate children into contact while also attempting to discover the meaning of their shared gifts. In particular, those children born closest to the stroke of midnight wield more powerful gifts than the others. Shiva and Parvati-the-witch are two of these children with notable gifts and roles in Saleem's story.

Meanwhile, Saleem must also contend with his personal trajectory. His biological family is active in this, as they begin a number of migrations and endure the numerous wars which plague the subcontinent. During this period he also suffers amnesia until he enters a quasi-mythological exile in the jungle of Sundarban, where he is re-endowed with his memory. In doing so, he reconnects with his childhood friends. Saleem later becomes involved with the Indira Gandhi-proclaimed Emergency and her son Sanjay's "cleansing" of the Jama Masjid slum. For a time Saleem is held as a political prisoner; these passages contain scathing criticisms of Indira Gandhi's overreach during the Emergency as well as what Rushdie seems to see as a personal lust for power bordering on godhood. The Emergency signals the end of the potency of the Midnight Children, and there is little left for Saleem to do but pick up the few pieces of his life he may still find and write the chronicle that encompasses both his personal history and that of his still-young nation; a chronicle written for his son, who, like his father, is both chained and supernaturally endowed by history.

Boman Desai, who grew up in Bombay and was educated in the United States, began writing in 1976. It follows that his debut novel, *The Memory of Elephants*, would shuttle back and forth between Anglo and Indian worlds, neither critical nor laudatory, but clearly giving credence to the efficacy of both. Grounded in history, both panoramic and intimate, *The Memory of Elephants* is a visually evocative story chiefly concerned with memory—collective, personal, and perceived.

The novel's protagonist, Homi Seervai, is a brilliant Parsi from Bombay attending school in the United States. Homi has been conducting experiments on himself with a memory machine—a memoscan—that allows him to rewind to any memory he wishes to retrieve. He becomes so enamored of one particular memory that he overplays it, threatening to sever his synapses forever. As a result, he is now in a semiconscious state, without a short-term memory, and totally at the whim of an unrelenting past. Slipping in and out of time and space, Homi's memory takes him as far back as the 7th century, when the Parsis were driven from what is now Iran by the conquering Arabs. But most of his memories concern the last three generations, transporting readers into 19th-century India, England, even Scotland, and into the lives of his family's matriarchs.

Irwin Allan Sealy is a writer born in 1951 in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India. His novel *The Everest Hotel: A Calendar* was shortlisted for the 1998 Booker Prize. Biography.

Allan was born in Allahabad and he went to La Martiniere School in Lucknow and then on to St. Stephen's College, Delhi University. He has worked in Canada, the USA, New Zealand and Australia.

His first novel *The Trotter Nama* was published in 1988 and tells the story of seven generations of an Anglo-Indian family. It includes references to his former school which is thinly disguised.

He now spends his time in Dehra Dun.

Upamanyu Chatterjee (born 1959), is an Indian author and administrator, notable for his work set in the milieu of the Indian Administrative Service, especially his novel *English August*.

His second novel, *The Last Burden*, appeared in 1993. This novel recreates life in an Indian family at the end of the twentieth century. *The Mammaries of the Welfare State* was published at the end of 2000 as a sequel to *English, August*. His latest novel, *Weight Loss*, a dark comedy, was published in 2006.

Amitav Ghosh (Born 1956), is an Indian-Bengali author known for his work in the English language. Ghosh's latest work of fiction is *Sea of Poppies* (2008) an epic saga, set just before the Opium Wars which encapsulates the colonial history of the East. His other novels are *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1990), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *The Glass Palace* (2000) and *The Hungry Tide* (2004). *The Shadow Lines* won the Sahitya Akademi Award, India's most prestigious literary award. *The Calcutta Chromosome* won the Arthur C. Clarke Award for 1997. *Sea of Poppies* was shortlisted for the 2008 Booker Prize. Ghosh's fiction is characterised by strong themes that may be somewhat identified with postcolonialism but could be labelled as historical novels. His topics are unique and personal; some of his appeal lies in his ability to weave "Indo-nostalgic" elements into more serious themes.

Ghosh has also written *In an Antique Land* (1992), *Dancing in Cambodia*, *At Large in Burma* (1998), *Countdown* (1999), and *The Imam and the Indian* (2002, a large collection of essays on different themes such as fundamentalism, history of the novel, Egyptian culture, and literature). In 2007, he was awarded the Padma Shri by the Indian government.

Vikram Seth, (Born June 20, 1952) is an Indian poet, novelist, travel writer, librettist, children's writer, biographer and memoirist.

Seth was born to Leila and Prem Seth in Calcutta (now Kolkata). His family lived in many cities including the Bata Shoe Company town of Batanagar (near Kolkata), Patna, near Danapur and London.

The first of his novels, *The Golden Gate* (1986), is indeed a novel in verse about the lives of a number of young professionals in San Francisco.

A Suitable Boy

After the success of *The Golden Gate*, Seth took up residence in his parents' house back in Delhi to work on his second novel, *A Suitable Boy* (1993). Though initially conceived as a short piece detailing the domestic drama of an Indian mother's search for an appropriate husband for her marriageable Indian daughter against the background of the formative years of India after Independence, the novel grew and Seth was to labour over it for almost a decade. The 1474-page novel is a four-family saga set in post Independence, post-Partition India, and alternatively satirically and earnestly examines issues of national politics in the period leading up to the first post-Independence national election of 1952, inter-sectarian animosity, the status of lower caste peoples such as the jatav, land reform and the eclipse of the feudal princes and landlords, academic affairs, inter- and intra-family relations and a range of further issues of importance to the characters. The Indian journalist and novelist Khushwant Singh has said of the novel that, "I lived through that period and I couldn't find a flaw. It really is an authentic picture of Nehru's India." The novel was, despite its formidable length, a bestseller, and propelled Seth into the public spotlight and assured his reputation. English critics greeted *A Suitable Boy* with almost universal enthusiasm (notwithstanding its somewhat controversial passing-over for the Booker Prize shortlist), though it received mixed reviews from some American critics.

(iii) Writing Diaspora as a marker of cultural Identity.

Ans. Writing diaspora as a marker

OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

Diaspora Literature involves an idea of a homeland, a place from where the displacement occurs and narratives of harsh journeys undertaken on account of economic compulsions. Basically Diaspora is a minority community

living in exile. The Oxford English Dictionary commences with the Judic History, mentioning only two types of dispersal: The “Jews living dispersed among the gentiles after the captivity” and The Jewish Christians residing outside the Palestine. The dispersal (initially) signifies the location of a fluid human autonomous space involving a complex set of negotiation and exchange between the nostalgia and desire for the Homeland and the making of a new home, adapting to the power, relationships between the minority and majority, being spokes persons for minority rights and their people back home and significantly transacting the Contact Zone - a space changed with the possibility of multiple challenges.

Under Colonialism, ‘Diaspora’ is a multifarious movement which involves-

- The temporary or permanent movement of Europeans all over the world, leading to Colonial settlement. Consequently, consequently the ensuing economic exploitation of the settled areas necessitated large amount of labor that could not be fulfilled by local populace. This leads to:

- The Diaspora resulting from the enslavement of Africans and their relocation to places like the British colonies. After slavery was outlawed the continued demand for workers created indentured labor. This produces:

- Large bodies of the people from poor areas of India, China and other to the West Indies, Malaya Fiji. Eastern and Southern Africa, etc.

The author finds a common element in all forms of Diaspora; these are people who live outside their ‘natal (or imagined natal) territories’ (ix) and recognize that their traditional homelands are reflected deeply in the languages they speak, religion they adopt, and cultures they produce. Each of the categories of Diasporas underline a particular cause of migration usually associated with particular groups of people. So for example, the Africans through their experience of slavery have been noted to be victims of extremely aggressive transmigrational policies.

Though in the age of technological advancement which has made the traveling easier and the distance shorter so the term Diaspora has lost its original connotation, yet simultaneously it has also emerged in another form healthier than the former. At first, it is concerned with human beings attached to the homelands. Their sense of yearning for the homeland, a curious attachment to its traditions, religions and languages give birth to diasporic literature which is primarily concerned with the individual’s or community’s attachment to the homeland. The migrant arrives ‘unstuck from more than land’ (Rushdie). He runs from pillar to post crossing the boundaries of time, memory and History carrying ‘bundles and boxes’ always with them with the vision and dreams of returning homeland as and when likes and finds fit to return. Although, it is an axiomatic truth that his dreams are futile and it wouldn’t be possible to return to the homeland is ‘metaphorical’ (Hall). the longing for the homeland is countered by the desire to belong to the new home, so the migrant remains a creature of the edge, ‘the peripheral man’ (Rushdie). According to Naipaul the Indians are well aware that their journey to Trinidad ‘had been final’ (Andse Dentseh,) but these tensions and throes remain a recurring theme in the Diasporic Literature.

(iv) Difference between an idea and a theme.

Ans. An idea is not necessarily the theme of the novel and a novel may have diverse ideas. However, when the idea is repeated consistently in the novel and it recurs through the novel showing the emphasis of the novelist it becomes a theme.

A novelist may reveal his theme or a set of themes in a variety of ways. It may be direct or indirect revelation. Some of them are as follows:

Novelist may choose to reveal her/his theme through the choice of the title of her/his work.

Directly through the comments in the novel while describing a character or a situation.

Through allusions that are used throughout the novel.

Indirectly through the characters’ ideas and views.

Indirectly through the symbols and imageries of the novel.

The novelist sometimes tries to reveal the theme indirectly through a conscious use of key words and phrases that find a repeated occurrence in the novel.

THEMES

Of the various elements of fiction, theme is probably the most difficult to discuss. This is why there is a great difference between reading a story that explores the theme of the difficulty of love and reading the message “Love is difficult.” in a fortune cookie. The difference is that the mere message does not allow us to experience its truth – we either accept it or we don’t.

A theme is the understanding that the author seeks to communicate through the work. It gives the work its purpose and has a great deal to do with the way the whole is constructed. By theme here we mean not “message” but the general subject. Theme is at once the beginning and end of our search. The search itself is what gives value to our engagement with literature.

Q. 2. How is Mme. Defarge represented in *A Tale of Two Cities*? Does Dickens give her actions a sympathetic colouring?

Ans. The stereotype of the submissive woman is completely turned down in the character represented by Mme Defarge. The reader is appalled to see a woman being the leader of the mob and giving orders by going out of her supposed circle. Theresa is so different from the other women characters in the novel, ranking in the fronts of the Revolution, devoting herself to the social acts not her family, working with men in the same conditions, defying the oppressive old regime, determining to reach her aims are merits for women in the twentieth century, not in the eighteenth century, but her going to the extremes, animal-like attitude shadows her. Her husband “stands before her with his head a little bent, and his hands clasped at his back” (216) Their marriage is not one of equal sayings of the couple. Dickens makes a woman the leader of the revolutionaries to stress the revolution and the country have gone to the worst excesses. He sees women as possessing compassion and humanity. But this is such a revolution that overturns natural human decency and goodness, that a woman can go through the worst of excesses of the transformation of people into wild animals, and that France turns into a place not recognisable as she was before.

Possessing a remorseless bloodlust, Madame Defarge embodies the chaos of the French Revolution. The initial chapters of the novel find her sitting quietly and knitting in the wine-shop. However, her apparent passivity belies her relentless thirst for vengeance. With her stitches, she secretly knits a register of the names of the revolution’s intended victims. As the revolution breaks into full force, Madame Defarge reveals her true viciousness. She turns on Lucie in particular, and, as violence sweeps Paris, she invades Lucie’s physical and psychological space. She effects this invasion first by committing the faces of Lucie and her family to memory, in order to add them to her mental “register” of those slated to die in the revolution. Later, she bursts into the young woman’s apartment in an attempt to catch Lucie mourning Darnay’s imminent execution.

Dickens notes that Madame Defarge’s hatefulness does not reflect any inherent flaw, but rather results from the oppression and personal tragedy that she has suffered at the hands of the aristocracy, specifically the Evrémondes, to whom Darnay is related by blood, and Lucie by marriage. However, the author refrains from justifying Madame Defarge’s policy of retributive justice. For just as the aristocracy’s oppression has made an oppressor of Madame Defarge herself, so will her oppression, in turn, make oppressors of her victims. Madame Defarge’s death by a bullet from her own gun—she dies in a scuffle with Miss Pross—symbolizes Dickens’s belief that the sort of vengeful attitude embodied by Madame Defarge ultimately proves a self-damning one.

Mme. Defarge refuses the appeals of a “sister woman” because she thinks that the trouble of one wife and mother, that is, of Lucie is not enough when she considers the trouble and problems faced by women due to the atrocities of the aristocracy, the reason due to which women have turned revolutionaries and seek blood of the perpetrators of the crime. She believes that the section of people who have brought such situation must be answered without any mercy. They must be sent to prison, hanged and killed.

This attitude of Mme. Defarge is in great contrast to Lucie’s views of “wives and mothers” and hence the refusal of the proposal.

Q. 3. Comment on the use of folk material in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Gopinath Mohanty’s *Paraja*.

Ans. Folk Material: Proverbs, Sayings And Metaphors: By using English, Achebe faces a problem. How can he present the African heritage and culture in a language that can never describe it adequately? Indeed, one of the primary tasks of *Things Fall Apart* is to confront this lack of understanding between the Igbo culture and the colonialist culture. In the novel, the Igbo ask how the white man can call Igbo customs bad when he does not even speak the Igbo language. An understanding of Igbo culture can only be possible when the outsider can relate to the Igbo language and terminology.

Achebe solves this problem by incorporating elements of the Igbo language into his novel. By incorporating Igbo words, rhythms, language, and concepts into an English text about his culture, Achebe goes a long way to bridge a cultural divide. He uses Igbo proverbs, sayings and metaphors.

Language And Style

“In order to gain a wider audience—and also to respond directly to those British colonial writers who depicted Africans as ignorant and uncivilized—Achebe chose to write in English rather than his native Ibo,” a decision which earned him much criticism from other African authors. Achebe, in response, pointed out that English was his language as well and that he was free to use it as he pleased, “even as a tool against the same British who brought the language to Africa.”

Achebe succeeds in capturing the patterns of Ibo speech and the spirit of the language in the dialogue of *Things Fall Apart*. The entire text is scattered with Ibo words and phrases, as well as traditional folk tales and proverbs, which bring to life the oral culture of the Ibo people. Proverbs play an irreplaceable role in Ibo culture.

The art of story-telling is a dominant aspect of African culture. It ties together components such as religion, social-class, explanation of the unexplainable, and family structure. Stories that explain the unexplainable are often more whimsical than the stories of social class and war. People bonded over stories. It was something for them to share.

Okonkwo, although he never shared emotions, shared stories with his son Nwoye and the child he looked after, Ikemefuna. He told them stories of the land- “masculine stories of violence and bloodshed.” The stories that were shared with Nwoye by his mother were whimsical stories that explained everyday occurrences such as why mosquitoes attack the ears or stories of the conflict between the Earth and Sky. Although Nwoye enjoyed the stories of his mother more than the violent ones of his father, he didn’t dare admit it as the stories of women were meant for “children and fools.”

These stories, as well as the art of language, are very important in the African culture. Proverbs derived from stories indicate intelligence and knowledge. Through the understanding of the underlying meanings of the stories one can demonstrate knowledge. “Among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten”. Through these proverbs and stories the Ibo have built a foundation for their culture. Things such as the Evil Forest as well as customs such as getting rid of twins or using sticks to demonstrate the bride’s dowry have all stemmed from stories told.

In his novel, *Paraja*, Gopinath Mohanty, has described the condition of a tribal man, Sukru Jani, and his family. The complex network of social and economic circumstances has led to rise and fall in the fortunes of Sukru Jani. Through his portrayal, Mohanty has tried to explore the tribal life, their culture, their socio-economic conditions.

The exploitation of tribals by the money lenders and officers of the law has been depicted in a realistic manner. In such difficult situations, how these tribals are fighting the odds of life in an attempt to live with dignity as free human beings on the land they own forms the major theme of the novel. However, it must be noted that while dealing with many aspects of human relations, Mohanty does not highlight on any single idea as the predominant theme of the novel. In other words, he describes the tribal life in general.

The novelist organizes his events in a manner that they may relate to one another in a logical sequence. The novelist crafts the plot after choosing the elements of the story to be included and the order in which they are to be narrated. S/he links the events of the story to one another to establish the causality convincingly. The novelist always considers this cause and effect relationship between interrelated events to be crucial.

Thus, the novelist structures the narrative by closely linking the character and motivation into the fabric of the novel. She/he considers how the skeletal structure in the form of plot will manage to give vital support to the very fabric of the story that is to be narrated. She/he tries to satisfy the demands of the novel which requires amore careful and nuanced interpretation of motivation, psychology and human behaviour as the reader has to follow why a particular character behaves in a specific manner that ultimately leads to a twist in the sequence of events.

Plots begin when you decide to write a book of a particular kind, and often derive initially from a true-life story, a mental picture, a chance overheard remark, or something of that sort.

With your basic idea in mind, it is then imperative to begin seeing the story in terms of the leading character or characters. Plots develop from characters, not the other way around. Research can often help in the construction of the plot by explaining the actions of the characters, and also by the influence which backgrounds have on the characters themselves.

Once you know who your central character is, and have built that person in your mind so that you know a great deal about him or her, the next step is almost always to give your hero or heroine an aim, a goal in life. Sometimes there may be two conflicting aims.

A formula which can in most cases be used for any novel is to:

Present your central character with obstacles which will prevent him or her from reaching that goal.

The main character's secondary aim, misunderstandings, accidents, illness, death, the goals of subsidiary characters and many other possibilities will form such barriers, and the plot then develops as the obstacle is surmounted or avoided in some way.

However, outside events, and the way the barrier is overcome will lead to another problem, and so on, with what might be called a rolling cause-and-effect development – because this happens, the result is such-and-such, and such-and-such leads to this-and-that.

A story without subplots will seem rather thin. However, it is essential that any subplot should be relevant to the main story and indeed should rise out of it. Again any developments in the subplots are brought about by the characters who surround the hero or heroine.

The more rounded your characters are in your mind, the more likely it is that they will begin to suggest various directions in which the plot might go. It is exciting for the author when the characters come to life in this way, but it is important to keep control so that the story does not veer off in a direction which was not intended.

If the plot gets bogged down, it can often be kick-started if the author bears two phrases in mind:

What if ... ?

And so ...

The former is an invitation to the imagination, and the author should continue asking that question until a satisfactory, credible answer is found. The latter phrase is a reminder that causes have effects, and sometimes several effects.

When working out the plot in full, it should be possible to see a shape to the story, which will be a gentle rise to its climax.?

However, its upward movement will be intensified at intervals when the latest unexpected development or barrier is reached.

Any work of fiction should begin at, or immediately before, a moment of crisis.

Q. 4. Attempt a reading of *Sunlight on A Broken Column* as a partition novel.

Ans. *Sunlight On A Broken Column* is unique and different from other partition novels in the sense that it presents the story of a Muslim household and has been written by a woman from Lucknow. Another novel written in 1948 soon after partition but published in 1957, *The Heart Divided*, is by a Pakistani woman, Mumtaz Shah Nawaz. This novel is also from a woman's point of view and reflects the Muslim identity in the years before the partition. However, the two novels are very different in their treatment of the subject. *The Heart Divided* is set in Lahore and is much more deeply concerned with the theme of freedom movement, with agitations and demonstrations, prisons, etc. than *Sunlight On A Broken Column*. Moreover, it also discusses Hindu-Muslim relationships in more depth. It is not a first person narrative though like Laila the heroine of this novel, Zohra, is a college going girl of sixteen and is intelligent and rebellious.

Mumtaz's *The Heart Divided* deals with political and social history with greater detail than *Sunlight On A Broken Column* and discusses both patriarchal structure and *pardah* with more depth. Again the regional differences in the political atmosphere is quite evident in the two novels.

A Train to Pakistan by Khuswant Singh and *Ice Candy Man* by Bapsi Sidhwa comment upon the role of the authorities and their representatives played in the riots but we do not find any such discussion in *Sunlight On A Broken Column*.

Other novels which differ from *Sunlight On A Broken Column* are those that deal with the freedom struggle of the period without being focused on religion or partition, for instance, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* and Premchand's novel's of 1930s or Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*.

Yet, there are novels which are very much different from *Sunlight On A Broken Column*. They are those which deal with the revolutionary aspect of the freedom struggle and focus on the struggles of the revolutionaries. For example, Sarat Chand's novels like *Patha ke Davedar* and Yashpal's *Jhoota Sach* are such novels.

Other Partition Novels

The Indian English novels written on the theme of the partition of the Indian subcontinent that took place in 1947, throw light on the causes and effects of the fateful decision of the partition that rendered millions to migrate and an equal number to face horrid atrocities, arsoning, abductions, rapes and unforeseen violence. A good number of novels, right from Ramanand Sagar's *Aur Insaan Mar Gaya* (1948) in Urdu to Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) to Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* (1975) to Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers* (1999) and Manju Kapur's *Home* (2006) form the theme of partition.

A Train To Pakistan like many other novels deal with personal relationships. Like Khuswant Singh in *A Train To Pakistan*, Bapsi Sidhwa in *Ice-Candy Man* and others also comment on the role of the authorities and their representatives played in inflaming the riots. Rahi Masoom Raza's *Adha Gaon* is a powerful story about a divided village.

The Novel as History: Until recently, most historical novels set in India were written from the perspective of the British, who began trading there in the early 17th century and during the 18th and 19th centuries gradually added more and more of the country to the British empire. Violent rebellions failed to end British rule. In 1947, the peaceful protest movement led by Mohandas Gandhi finally won independence. Today, with many talented Indian novelists attracting readers around the world, more novels portray the Indian perspective on colonial rule.

It is observed that the novel is an outstanding presentation of the crisis of partition. It is unique among Indian English novels on partition as it is not only the first woman writer's response but also the first Muslim writer's response towards the holocaust. Being much closer to another bildungsroman — *Ice - Candy - Man* by Bapsi Sidwa, a Pakistani writer, Attia's novel offers the Muslim point of view of the Partition, whereas the former is an account of an outsider's view—Parsi perception of the tragedy. The novel captures the poignant political event very artistically with elegant style.

Q. 5. Write an essay on the Indian Diasporic Novel in Canada.

Ans. The focus of Vassanji's work is the situation of South Asians in East Africa. As a secondary theme, members of this community (like himself) later undergo a second migration to Europe, Canada, or the United States. Vassanji examines how the lives of his characters are affected by these migrations: "[the Indian diaspora] is very important...once I went to the US, suddenly the Indian connection became very important: the sense of origins, trying to understand the roots of India that we had inside us" (Kanaganayakam, p. 21) Vassanji looks at the relations between the Indian community, the native Africans and the colonial administration. Though few of his characters ever return to India, the country's presence looms throughout his work; his 2007 novel *The Assassins Song*, however, is set almost entirely in India, where it was received as an Indian novel.

Vassanji is concerned with the effects of history and the interaction between personal and public histories. The colonial history of Kenya and Tanzania serves as the backdrop for his work, but it is the personal histories of the main characters that drive the narrative. Vassanji's presentation of the past is never cut-and-dried. He avoids the impression of, a simple, linear, historical truth emerging. In much of his work the mysteries of the past remain unresolved. (Kanaganayakam p. 22) He consistently refuses to be pigeonholed by nationality or faith, attempts to do which he finds offensive and malicious.

When Mistry's second novel, *Such a Long Journey*, was published in 1991, it won the Governor General's Award, the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book, and the W.H. Smith/Books in Canada First Novel Award. It was shortlisted for the prestigious Booker Prize and for the Trillium Award. It has been translated into German, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Japanese, and has been made into the 1998 film *Such a Long Journey*.

His third novel, *A Fine Balance* (1995), won the second annual Giller Prize in 1995, and in 1996, the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for Fiction. It was selected for Oprah's Book Club in November 2001 and sold hundreds of thousands of additional copies throughout North America as a result.

In 2002, Mistry cancelled his United States book tour for his novel *Family Matters* (2002) because he and his wife were targeted by security agents at every airport he visited, apparently because Mistry appeared to be Muslim. Mistry reported that on his first flight of the tour, "we were greeted by a ticket agent who cheerfully told us we had been selected randomly for a special security check. Then it began to happen at every single stop, at every single airport. The random process took on a 100 percent certitude." His publisher issued a statement that said, "As a person of color [Mistry] was stopped repeatedly and rudely at each airport along the way—to the point where the humiliation ... had become unbearable."

His books, thus far, portray diverse facets of Indian socioeconomic life; as well as Parsi Zoroastrian life, customs, and religion. Many of his writings are markedly "Indo-nostalgic"

