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Shaan Studio Magam Cell; 9906778677

UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR



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UNIT I: ONE ACT PLAY

The New Hangman: Laurence Housman

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



LAURENCE HOUSMAN (1867-1936), an English writer and artist, was born on 18th June, 1867. Having studied at South Kensington, he first made reputation as a book illustrator. Some of his best pictorial work may be seen in the editions of Meredith's *Jump to Glory* (1892), *The Weird Tales of Jonas Lie* (1892), *Jane Barlow's Land of Elfintoun* (1894), Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* (1893), *Werewolf* (1896), by his sister, Miss Clemence Housman, *Shelley's Sensitive Plant* (1898), and his own *Farm in Fairyland* (1894). His designs were engraved on wood by Miss Housman. His volumes of verse include *Green Arras* (1896), *Rue* (1899), *Spikenard* (1898) and *Mendicant Rhymes* (1906); and the mysticism which characterizes the devotional poems in *Spikenard* recurs in his half-allegorical tales, *All Fellows* (1896), *The Blue Moon* (1904) and *The Cloak of Friendship* (1906). His nativity play, *Bethlehem*, was

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presented in the Great Hall of London University at South Kensington for a week in December 1902. In 1900 he published anonymously *An Englishwoman's Love Letters*, which created a temporary sensation; and he followed this essay in popular fiction by the novels *A Modern Antaeus* (1901) and *Sabrina Warham* (1904). On the 23rd of December 1904 his fantastic play *Prunella*, written in collaboration with Mr Granville Barker, was produced at the Court Theatre. His brother, Alfred Edward Housman (b. 1859), an accomplished scholar, professor of Latin at University College, London, is known as a poet by his striking lyrical series, *A Shropshire Lad* (1896).

He worked as a book illustrator and his best-known works includes *Goblin Market* (1893), *The Sensitive Plant* (1898) and *The Blue Moon* (1904). After his eyesight began to fail, he turned to writing books and plays, including *Angels and Ministers* (1921), *Little Plays of St. Francis* (1922) and *Victoria Regina* (1937). A committed socialist and pacifist, in 1907, he joined with Henry Nevinson and Henry Brailsford to form the Men's League for Women's Suffrage. His autobiography, *The Unexpected Years*, appeared in 1937.

Housman was a strong supporter of the Peace Pledge Union. In 1945, the organization opened Housmans Bookshop in Shaftesbury Avenue, London, and it became a major source of literature on pacifism. Laurence Housman, who lived with his sister in Street, Somerset, died on 20th February 1959.

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Laurence Housman has been called "so brilliantly versatile that there is hardly a field of letters which he has left untried and unadorned." Versatile he most certainly was, and distinguished not only as a writer, but as an artist and social reformer also. His literary output was immense, and his place in English literature would probably have been more significant had he permitted himself time to polish one work before launching into the next. Housman was conscious of this when, in a scene imagining his own death-bed, he causes himself to say: "My brother used to say that I wrote faster than he could read. He wrote two books - of poems - better than all mine put together." Nonetheless, though Laurence was inclined to regard himself merely as "the brother of the 'Shropshire Lad'", he was very much more than that.

Q: -Write a summary of the Play "The New Hangman: Laurence Housman". OR Discuss why hangman accepted the job of hanging a person in the play, if he was not supposed to perform it? Or Why does the new hangman refuse to carry out his duty of hanging a prisoner?

Ans: - This play is a criticism of death penalty. It begins in the office of a jail. There are the second warder and the third warder (the officials who control the prisoners in a jail). The second warder is talking to someone on the telephone. On finishing the talk, he puts down the receiver. Then the third warder asks him whether the new hangman has joined. The second warder tells him that the new hangman has come, but looks very queer. At this the third warder

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says that perhaps the hangman is nervous. Perhaps it is his first chance of being the hangman.

Just then the jail's governor enters the room. Both the warders salute him. The second warder tells him that the hangman has come but the Sheriff (a police officer) has not yet come. He also tells that some time before, there was a telephone call from the Sheriff. He ordered that they (warder and other officials) should start doing their work (the hanging of the criminal) even without him. Then the second warder looks towards the corridor. He says that the new hangman is coming. The new hangman enters the office. The governor asks him whether everything is ready.

The hangman replies that everything is ready. The governor asks him where his assistant is. The hangman replies that he has not brought his assistant. He says that on that day, he will not need any assistant. In an aside, the second warder tells the third that the new hangman appears very queer. The head warder tells him that he is very nervous. The governor asks the head warder how is the man who is to be hanged. The head warder tells him that he is very upset and has been weeping for the whole night. The governor asks the head warder to give two large measure of wine to the prisoner to keep his spirits up. Then the head warder leaves the office.

Just then the Chaplain enters the office. He is intoxicated and does not want to share the work of execution. He appears very nervous. The governor rebukes him that he has no sense of decency.

The Chaplain replies that a man cannot have decency if one is going

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to hang a man. He says that he had known all this would happen to him in the jail, he would not have become a Chaplain. He says that he cannot face an execution. At this the new hangman tells him that he will not have to face execution 'today'. He also says that if no other person is ready to do the hanging, there would be no hanging that day.

The governor asks the hangman what he means. The hangman replies that he will not hang anyone. The governor asks him angrily why he took the job of a hangman when he was not willing to hang a man. At this the hangman replies that he took up the job to see whether anyone would do the hanging if he refuses to do so. The governor asks him why he applied for the post of a hangman when he did not want to hang a person. At this the hangman replies that he did so in order to save someone's life. He wants to shame a few other persons also from taking part in the job of hanging. The governor asks him why he is putting all of them in an awkward position. Now the hangman tells him that he is bent on putting another man (the prisoner) even in a more awkward position. The governor tells him that he is not doing it, the law is compelling him to do it. The hangman says that laws are made by those human beings who want others to do those things which they themselves do not want to do. The governor says that he can be dismissed from services for this. The hangman says that some social institutions will give him a lot of money for giving up the job of a hangman at the call of his conscience. He tells the governor that the last man whom he

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hanged was innocent. If the judges were to see how innocent people were hanged according to their verdict, they would also dislike giving death penalty.

The governor is in a peculiar position. He asks the warders whether they would like to do the hanging. Both the warders refuse to do so. The hangman asks the governor why he himself or the Chaplain do not do it. The bell is ringing. The governor orders to stop the bell. He talks to the commissioner on the telephone and tells him that the hangman has refused to do the hanging and no other person is ready to do it. The governor is worried about the reaction of the people because this news will be published in the newspapers. The commissioner says that he will contact the home ministry. He asks the governor to wait till then.

The new hangman bids good bye to the governor and goes out. The Chaplain tells the governor that he is shocked at the hangman's conduct. The head warder enters the office. The governor asks him to tell the prisoner that there is hope for him. They hear a noise from outside. The second warder tells the governor that the hangman is giving a speech before a big crowd. He has become popular among people. The governor is worried what the home office will say about this.

Q: -Write a theme of the play "The New Hangman: Laurence Housman"

Ans: - This play conveys an important message. The main theme of the play is the evil of death sentence. It tells us that it is immoral to

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hang a person. In this play a hanging is to take place. The date and time of the hanging has been fixed. But at the fixed time, the hangman refuses to do the hanging. The governor asks a number of other persons to act as a hangman. But nobody agrees to hang the prisoner. The warders, the head warden and the Chaplain, all refuse to do the hanging.

(The hangman feels that hanging ^{any} a man is a murder in cold blood. But this murder has got the sanction of the law. The society also does not approve of the death sentence. It hates the hangman. He says that everybody hates him. He has to live under a false name. No decent person likes to have contact with him. No decent girl wishes to marry a hangman.

The hangman in the play criticises the practice of hanging an accused. He says that sometimes an innocent person is hanged. He believes that the truth shows clearer on the platform than in the court. He says that if the judge and juries were present at the time of hanging, they would be compelled to change their views about death sentence. Thus, the play conveys the theme that death sentence is evil and should be abolished.

Q: -Write a Character-Sketch of The Chaplain? Or Chaplain is a coward person. Do you agree?

Ans: - The Chaplain is the most important character in the play. He appears to be a weak and timid man. His duty is to be present at the time of a hanging. He has to pray for the soul of the person who is being hanged. But the Chaplain gets confused when he is called

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upon to help in the hanging of a person. He finds it difficult to face the horrible scene of hanging. So, when he reports for duty, he is drunk. He does so to fortify his heart.

The Chaplain is a simple man. He is a God-fearing man. He comes drunk. But he prays to God to forgive him for his drinking. He says that he has been compelled to drink. He tries to drown his conscience in wine. He tells the governor that he cannot face the hanging. He says that he would not have become a Chaplain if he had known that he would have to assist a hangman in hanging. The Chaplain replies that a man cannot have decency if one is going to hang a man. He says that he cannot face an execution. At this the new hangman tells him that he will not have to face execution 'today'. He also says that if no other person is ready to do the hanging, there would be no hanging that day.

Like the hangman, the Chaplain is also against the practice of hanging. He feels that it is immoral to hang a man. But he has not the courage to say these things. Outwardly, he tells the hangman that he should do his job. But inwardly, he is happy that the hanging has been postponed.

Q: -Write a Character-Sketch of The Hangman?

Ans: - The hangman is the central character in the play. The play is named after him. When he appears in the play, he appears somewhat strange. (He is a young man with a thin face. He is a bit nervous. He is not new to his job as previously he was an assistant to a hangman for five years.

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The hangman has clear and firm views on death sentence. He has seen innocent people being hanged. He feels that sometimes truth shows clearer at the gallows than in the court. He thinks that it is immoral to hang a person. Even though he takes up the job of a hangman, he considers that hanging is killing a person in cold blood. But hanging has got legal sanctions. He gives a number of reasons for not hanging the prisoner. First, he thinks that hanging a person is inhuman. It is a murder in cold blood. A hangman murders his fellow human beings for money. It is unjust and terrible.

Secondly, sometimes the condemned prisoners are innocent. He thinks that the truth often appears clearer at the gallows than in the witness box. If judges were present at the time of hanging, they would change many of their verdicts.

Thirdly, the hangman thinks that it is unjust to give a man the duty of hanging others. People expect a hangman to do the execution. But no other man is prepared to do this job. For all these reasons, the hangman refuses to hang the prisoner. He expresses the general feeling that death penalty is out of date in a civilized society.

The hangman is a bold man. It is his duty to hang the accused. But he boldly refuses to hang the prisoner. He knows that he will be dismissed from his job. But he does not care. He knows that nobody likes to do this evil job. He tells the governor that everything is ready. Now only a lever has to be pressed. Even a child can do it. The governor becomes very angry with hangman. Even then the

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hangman is firm in his decision. Everybody in the play hates the job of hanging a man. But only the hangman has the courage to speak against it.

His boldness makes him famous. Outside the prison, a crowd of people gather and cheer him. Thus, the hangman is an interesting character.

Q: -Explain the Reason for the refusal By The Hangman?

Ans: -The play 'The New Hangman' is a criticism of death penalty. The playwright wants to say that death penalty is inhuman and monstrous. His view becomes clear when the new hangman refuses to carry out his duty of hanging a prisoner. He gives a number of reasons for not hanging the prisoner. First, he thinks that hanging a person is inhuman. It is murder in cold blood. A hangman murders his fellow human beings for money. It is unjust and terrible.

Secondly, sometimes the condemned prisoners are innocent. He thinks that the truth often appears clearer at the gallows than in the witness box. If judges were present at the time of hanging, they would change many of their verdicts.

Thirdly, the hangman thinks that it is unjust to give a man the duty of hanging others. People expect a hangman to do the execution. But no other man is prepared to this job. For all these reasons, the hangman refuses to hang the prisoner. He expresses the general feeling that death penalty is out of date in a civilized society.

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Q: -Write a title of the play "The New Hangman: Laurence Housman".

Ans: - The title of the play is apt and gives us a hint that the play is about a character whose job is to hang people. The play is named after a hangman who refuses to hang a person. When he appears in the play, he appears somewhat strange. He is a young man with a thin face, a bit nervous. He is not new to his job. Previously he was an assistant to a hangman for five years.

The hangman has clear and firm views on death sentence. He has seen innocent people being hanged. He feels that sometimes truth shows clearer at the gallows than in the court. He thinks that it is immoral to hang a person. Even though he takes up the job of a hangman, he considers that hanging is killing a person in cold blood. But hanging has got legal sanctions. Therefore, he refuses to do the hanging.

The hangman is a bold man. It is his duty to hang the accused. But he boldly refuses to hang the prisoner. He knows that he will be dismissed from his job. But he does not care for his job. He knows that nobody likes to do this evil job. He tells the governor that everything is ready. Now only a lever has to be pressed. Even a child can do it. The governor becomes very angry with hangman. Even then the hangman is firm in his decision. Everybody in the play hates the job of hanging a man. But only the hangman has the courage to speak against it.



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His boldness makes him famous. Outside the prison, a crowd of people gather and cheer him. Through Hangman the playwright wants to say that death penalty is inhuman and monstrous. His view becomes clear when the new hangman refuses to carry out his duty of hanging a prisoner. He gives a number of reasons for not hanging the prisoner. First, he thinks that hanging a person is inhuman. It is a murder in cold blood. A hangman murders his fellow human beings for money. It is unjust and terrible.

Secondly, sometimes the condemned prisoners are innocent. He thinks that the truth often appears clearer at the gallows than in the witness box. If judges were present at the time of hanging, they would change many of their verdicts.

Thirdly, the hangman thinks that it is unjust to give a man the duty of hanging others. People expect a hangman to do the execution. But no other man is prepared to this job. For all these reasons, the hangman refuses to hang the prisoner. He expresses the general feeling that death penalty is out of date in a civilized society. Thus, the title is appropriate.

Q: -Discuss the role of Governor in the play.

Ans: - Governor represents the government authority, for whom hanging is a duty that must be performed.

When he enters the warders salute him. He inquires about hangman, just then the hangman enters. The governor asks him whether everything is ready. The hangman replies that everything is ready. The governor asks him where his assistant is. The hangman

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replies that he has not brought his assistant. He says that on that day, he will not need any assistant. The governor asks the head warder how is the man who is to be hanged. The head warder tells him that he is very upset and has been weeping for the whole night. The governor asks the head warder to give two large measure of wine to the prisoner to keep his spirits up.

Just then the Chaplain enters the office. He is intoxicated and does not want to share the work of execution. He appears very nervous. The governor rebukes him that he has no sense of decency.

The governor is surprised at the refusal by hangman. He asks the hangman what he means. The hangman replies that he will not hang anyone that day. The governor asks him angrily why he took the job of a hangman when he was not willing to hang a man. At this the hangman replies that he took up the job to see whether anyone would do the hanging if he refuses to do so. The governor asks him why he applied for the post of a hangman when he did not want to hang a person. At this the hangman replies that he did so in order to save someone's life. He wants to shame a few other persons also from taking part in the job of hanging. The governor asks him why he is putting all of them in an awkward position. Now the hangman tells him that he is bent on putting another man (the prisoner) even in a more awkward position. The governor tells him that he is not doing it, the law is compelling him to do it. The hangman says that laws are made by those human beings who want others to do those things which they themselves do not want to do. The governor says

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that he can be dismissed from services for this. The hangman says that some social institutions will give him a lot of money for giving up the job of a hangman at the call of his conscience. He tells the governor that the last man whom he hanged was innocent. If the judges were to see how innocent people were hanged according to their verdict, they would also dislike giving death penalty.

The governor is in a peculiar position. He asks the warders whether they would like to do the hanging. Both the warders refuse to do so. The hangman asks the governor why he himself or the Chaplain do not do it. He informed the commissioner that the hangman has refused to do the hanging and no other person is ready to do it. The governor is worried about the reaction of the people because this news will be published in the newspapers. The commissioner says that he will contact the home ministry. He asks the governor to wait till then.

The new hangman bids good bye to the governor and goes out. The Chaplain tells the governor that he is shocked at the hangman's conduct. The head warder enters the office. The governor asks him to tell the prisoner that there is hope for him. The governor is worried what the home office will say to this.

Thus, governor plays the role of intermediary between the hangman and the government.

Q: - Death penalty is a sign of civilized society or not. Discuss

Ans: - Death penalty is the ultimate denial of human rights. It is the premeditated and cold-blooded killing of a human being by the state.

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This cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment is done in the name of justice.

It violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The enormity of killing one's fellow man with premeditation is the principal reason for the existence of the death penalty; it is also the principal argument for abolishing it. Everywhere experience shows that executions brutalize those involved in the process. Nowhere has it been shown that the death penalty has any special power to reduce crime or political violence. In country after country, it is used disproportionately against the poor or against racial or ethnic minorities. It is also used as a tool of political repression. It is imposed and inflicted arbitrarily. It is an irrevocable punishment, resulting inevitably in the execution of people innocent of any crime. It is a violation of fundamental human rights.

Over the past decade an average of at least three countries a year have abolished the death penalty, affirming respect for human life and dignity. Yet too many governments still believe that they can solve urgent social or political problems by executing a few or even hundreds of their prisoners. Too many citizens in too many countries are still unaware that the death penalty offers society not further protection but further brutalization. Abolition is gaining ground, but not fast enough.

The death penalty, carried out in the name of the nation's entire population, involves everyone. Everyone should be aware of what

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the death penalty is, how it is used, how it affects them, how it violates fundamental rights.

Death penalty is the premeditated and cold-blooded killing of a human being by the state. The state can exercise no greater power over a person than that of deliberately depriving him or her of life. At the heart of the case for abolition, therefore, is the question of whether the state has the right to do so.

No matter what reason a government gives for executing prisoners and what method of execution is used, the death penalty cannot be separated from the issue of human rights. The movement for abolition cannot be separated from the movement for human rights.

The Universal Declaration recognizes each person's right to life and categorically states further that "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment". In Amnesty International's view, the death penalty violates these rights.

Self-defense may be held to justify, in some cases, the taking of life by state officials; for example, when a country is locked in warfare (international or civil) or when law enforcement officials must act immediately to save their own lives or those of others.

Even in such situations the use of lethal force is surrounded by internationally accepted legal safeguards to inhibit abuse. This use of force is aimed at countering the immediate damage resulting from force used by others. The death penalty, however, is not an act of

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self-defense against an immediate threat to life. It is the premeditated killing of a prisoner who could be dealt with equally well by less harsh means.

There can never be a justification for torture or for cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The cruelty of the death penalty is evident. Like torture, an execution constitutes an extreme physical and mental assault on a person already rendered helpless by government authorities.

The death penalty, as a violation of fundamental human rights, would be wrong even if it could be proved that it uniquely met a vital social need. What makes the use of the death penalty even more indefensible and the case for its abolition even more compelling is that it has never been shown to have any special power to meet any genuine social need. Undeniably the death penalty, by permanently "incapacitating" a prisoner, prevents that person from repeating the crime. But there is no way to be sure that the prisoner would indeed have repeated the crime if allowed to live, nor is there any need to violate the prisoner's right to life for the purpose of incapacitation: dangerous offenders can be kept safely away from the public without resorting to execution, as shown by the experience of many abolitionist countries.

Nor is there any evidence that the threat of the death penalty will prevent politically motivated crimes or acts of terror. If anything, the possibility of political martyrdom through execution may encourage people to commit such crimes. Every society seeks

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protection from crimes. Far from being a solution, the death penalty gives the erroneous impressions that "firm measures" are being taken against crime. It diverts attention from the more complex measures which are really needed.

The penalty is a symbol of terror and, to that extent, a confession of weakness. It is always a violation of the most fundamental human rights.

Each society and its citizens have the choice to decide about the sort of world people want and will work to achieve: a world in which the state is permitted to kill as a legal punishment or a world based on respect for human life and human rights – a world without executions.

Thus, we can say that death penalty is not a sign of civilized society. The new hangman thus by refusing to hang the prisoner saves not only the life of the prisoner but also tries to save the civilization.

UNIT II: ESSAYS

Wings of Fire (An extract): A P J Abdul Kalam

One World, One Culture: (Extract from Making Connections: Skills and Strategies for Academic Writing, Edition: 3)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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APJ Abdul Kalam is a renowned Indian scientist who went on to become 11th President of India (2002-2007). He is very well known across India and is a recipient of India's three highest civilian awards – Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan and Bharat Ratna. *Wings of Fire* is an autobiography of APJ Abdul Kalam written jointly by Arun Tiwari and Abdul Kalam. It covers Kalam's life before he became president of India and in 2013 another autobiography titled "My Journey: Transforming Dreams into Actions" was released.

INTRODUCTION

Wings of Fire: An Autobiography of APJ Abdul Kalam (1999) is an autobiography of A P J Abdul Kalam, former President of India. It was written by Dr. Kalam and Arun Tiwari. Kalam examines his early life, effort, hardship, fortitude, luck and chance that eventually led him to lead Indian space research, nuclear and missile programs. Kalam started his career, after graduating from Aerospace engineering at MIT (Chennai), India, at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited and was assigned to build a hovercraft prototype. Later he moved to ISRO and helped establish the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre and pioneered the first space launch-vehicle program. During

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the 1990s and early 2000, Kalam moved to the DRDO to lead the Indian nuclear weapons program, with particular successes in thermonuclear weapons development culminating in the operation Smiling Buddha and an ICBM Agni (missile).

Summary of the book wings of fire written by A.P.J abdu kalam.

"Wings of Fire" is the life story of Dr. Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdu Kalam, the 11th President of India. A notable scientist and an engineer, Dr. Kalam is often referred to as the Missile Man of India. He played a key role in developing India's first and indigenously made: ballistic missiles, hovercraft, Nuclear-strike capable missiles and made immense contribution to the Guided Missiles Development programme and various ISRO projects.

Dr. Kalam was born at Rameswaram in Dhanushkodi, Tamil Nadu, to a working-class Tamil Muslim family. He received his degree in aeronautical engineering from the Madras Institute of Technology in 1958.

He joined India's Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) upon graduation to work on a hovercraft project. In 1962, Dr. Kalam moved to the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), where his team successfully launched several satellites. He made a significant contribution as Project Director to develop India's first indigenous Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-III) which successfully placed the Rohini satellite into near earth orbit in July 1980.

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In 1982, Kalam returned to the DRDO as Director, focusing on indigenous guided missiles. He was responsible for the development and operational success of the Agni and Prithvi missiles. This earned him the sobriquet "India's missile-man". He also helped in the formulation of healthcare products using technology developed for missiles.

In July 1992, Kalam became a Scientific Advisor to India's Defense Minister. As the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Indian government, he held the rank of a Cabinet Minister. His work led to the successful Pokhran-II nuclear tests in 1998, which reiterated India's position as a nuclear weapon state. Kalam was also the Chairman, Ex-officio, of the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet (SAC-C) and piloted the "India Millennium Mission 2020".
(Short summary picked from wikipedia)

Kalam has the unique distinction of having received honorary doctorates from at least thirty universities, as also India's three highest civilian honors: the Padma Bhushan in 1981; the Padma Vibhushan in 1990; and the Bharat Ratna in 1997.

In this book, Dr. Kalam has described the various projects he undertook and shows how a person can manage a large team of experts without any formal knowledge in project management and team dynamics. He never fails to acknowledge his co-workers, team members and others of importance, throughout the book. The book is dotted with snippets of poetry and hymns that Dr. Kalam is fond of and has collected over his life time.

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Dr. Kalam is one of the few Indian scientists who had the opportunity to work with Indian space research stalwarts like Dr. Vikram Sarabhai and interact with pioneers of missile technology like Wernher Von Braun.

UNIT III: POETRY

The Chimney Sweeper (SoE): William Blake
Postcard from Kashmir/ Dacca Gauzes- Agha Shahid Ali
A Prayer for my Daughter- W B Yeats

The Chimney Sweeper (SoE): William Blake

William Blake, the first major English Romantic poet, was born on 27 November 1757, the third son of a fairly prosperous London shopkeeper who dealt in hosiery goods. As child, Blake never went to school, perhaps because he was too high spirited and rebellious, and he was probably taught how to read and write by his mother at home. The young William however possessed two unique abilities as a child—the ability to see visions, and a marked artistic talent. It is because of the latter that Blake's father admitted him first into drawing school, and then when he was fourteen, apprenticed him to an engraver. Later, after the completion of his apprenticeship, Blake entered the Royal Academy Schools for artists, and on two occasions exhibited some of his pictures at the School's annual exhibitions.

Critical Analysis of the Chimney-Sweeper poems (Innocence & Experience)

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It is clearly evident that "The Chimney Sweeper" of Innocence is a deeply ironic poem. On the surface, his lyric of twenty-four lines tells the story of a small boy, a chimney sweeper, who dreams a beautiful dream about an angel who releases them from the toilsome drudgery of their daily lives. And the poem apparently points to a conventional devotional moral:

And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father, & never want joy.

Such a reading of the poem, however, cannot be sustained, given the direct if somewhat understated, condemnation of the condition of the children who were forced into the work of sweeping chimneys. This is evident in the very first stanza of the poem:

When my mother died I was very young,
And my Father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry "weep! weep! weep!"
So, your chimneys I sweep, & in soot I sleep.

It was a fact that the chimney sweepers of London were little boys as little as four years old who were virtually sold by their poor parents to master-sweeps for as small a sum as twenty or thirty shillings. Small children were required for chimney sweeping, for chimneys were then too narrow for adults to climb up them and to clean them from inside. For this, the little child-sweeps would be forced to enter the chimneys, and also get beaten up if they refused or showed any reluctance. To make them work faster once they were inside the chimneys, they would be prodded with poles or pricked

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with pins or sometimes fires would be lit at the bottom of the chimneys. Inevitably, it was not uncommon for the sweeps to die of burns or suffocation, and nearly all suffered from some kind of disease or the other, including skin-ulcers and cancer. The working hours of the children were also long—from well before sunrise when they would be forced to walk the streets of the city in rain, hail, snow, or frost, calling out their trade-cry “Sweep!”, to midday, when they were turned loose, unwashed and without proper food, or clothes, or shelter. It is about the plight of such child-sweeps that Blake wrote his poem, giving a voice to one such boy;

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shav'd : so I said
“Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.”
And so he was quiet, & that very night
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned & Jack,
Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black.
And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he open'd the coffins & set them all free;
Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run,
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

By speaking these words, the child narrator apparently performs the role of a comforter. Yet it is undeniable that Tom Dacre's dream which the narrator holds out as a panacea or cure for

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all the ills of the chimney sweepers' miserable lives is really no more than a dream—a reverie or imaginative vision having little or no connection with reality. Certainly, Tom Dacre's dream does nothing to alter the material conditions of the existence of the sweeps. Indeed, as some of the last lines of the poem stress, the little children have to go out to work as usual:

And so Tom awoke, and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
Tho' the morning was cold.....

Of course, it is true that in so far as Tom is concerned, his dream does bring in a kind of benefit—a psychological comfort:
Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;
So, if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

But it hardly needs any elaboration to understand that these lines are not as innocent as they appear. The vision of the angel and the message that God would be Tom's father is typical of the promises held out by religion. Tom Dacre's dream-vision only momentarily reconciles him to his own suffering and blinds him to the injustice that is done unto him. To see the matter in another way, we may note that while the concluding lines of the poem are spoken by the child-sweep, they were of course written by William Blake. The child-narrator speaks about "all doing their duty"; but Blake's point is that if "all" (including the real father of the sweep) really did their duty, there would be no suffering, no pain, and no children forced to sweep chimneys for the profit of a few cruel men and the

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comfort and convenience of the heartless house-holders who hired the little children whenever their chimneys needed to be cleaned.

"The Chimney Sweeper" of the **Songs of Experience** is different from that of the **Songs of Innocence** discussed above in that the Experience poem is a devastating exposure of the terrible reality that the **Innocence** lyric had hinted at. The poem opens with the voice of a narrator who observes, records, and then asks a question:

A little black thing among the snow,
Crying "weep! weep!" in notes of woe!
"Where are thy father & mother, say?"

As in "The Chimney Sweeper" of the **Songs of Innocence**, the child sweep here too is too small to be able to pronounce the whole word "Sweep", and it comes out as "weep! weep!" from his mouth. But there is also the implication here that the child is really weeping, having been forced out to walk through the winter snows dressed only in his soot-covered black rags. Hence, in the perception of the narrator, he is no longer a child, but a little black "thing"—a dehumanized object like a clot of soot. But the answer of the child proves that it is not he who is less than human, it is rather his parents who "clothed (him) in the clothes of death/And taught (him) to sing the notes of woe"—that is, sold him and forced him to become a chimney sweep.

Nine of the twelve lines of "**The Chimney Sweeper**" of **Experience** are spoken by the child-sweep, but this cannot disguise the fact that this poem, like "The Tyger" and the "Nurse's Song" of

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Experience, is about adults and an adult-dominated society. The whole poem is actually built around the sense of a contrast between childhood innocence and adult hypocrisy and repression. There is on the one hand the happiness and gaiety of the child, his smiles and dancing and singing, and on the other the inhuman behaviour not only of his parents who sell him into a life of virtual slavery, and then quite unconcernedly go to church' to pray for the salvation of their souls :

Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smil'd among the winter's snow,
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.
And because I am happy & dance & sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God and his Priest and King,
Who make up a heaven of our misery.

The last line in particular ironically concludes the sense of contraries which had been initiated in the first line of the Jyric with the contrast between the "black thing" and the (white) "snow". Now, at the end of the poem, the chimney sweeper underlines the bitter truth that in the world of Experience, the 'heaven' of the privileged is the darkest 'misery' of the exploited.

Blake's phrase "God and his Priest and King" also deserves attention for it throws light on his attitude to religion and politics.

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Blake was born to a family of dissenting Christians, and he always regarded the established Church with suspicion and hostility.

One of his "Proverbs of Hell" in **The Marriage of Heaven and Hell** thus reads:

As the caterpillar chooses the fairest leaves to lay her eggs on, so the priest lays his curse on the fairest joys.

Similar sentiments are also to be found expressed in the **Experience** lyrics "The Little Vagabond" and "The Human Abstract", and in "The Garden of Love" in which "Priests in black gowns" are said to "blind with briars... joys and desires." Blake viewed monarchy with suspicion and he perceived it as the fount of oppression, hence there is no big wonder that he writes of the hypocritical parents of the chimney sweeper praising God and the king, who is God's priest'.

Summary

At the simplest level, "The Chimney Sweeper" of the **Songs of Experience** is a poem of protest. This lyric like 'The Tyger' and 'The Nurse's Song' of Experience reflect upon a fallen state in which the felicities of Innocence are sadly lacking. The three poems do not say the same things, or carry the same messages, but they do depict a bleak world of tyranny, bondage, and frustration. Yet, as 'The Tyger' indicates, while Experience may seem to be hopeless, the very feeling of hopelessness may act as a spring for change and reform.

In one way, Blake's pattern of **Innocence and Experience** conforms to the idea of a "Fortunate Fall", the concept that (as Milton's Adam

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put it), "much more good...shall spring" out of the suffering of man. For as Blake prophetically wrote in his long poem Milton, "Generation is swallowed up in Regeneration" (plate 41).



Agha Shahid Ali (February 1949, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir - 8 December 2001 Amherst, Massachusetts)

POST CARD FROM KASHMIR

BY AGA SHAHID ALI

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

Q: -Why has Kashmir shrunk in to his mailbox?

Ans: The poem depicts his love and devotion to his homeland i.e Kashmir. He is no longer living in Kashmir but his affinity with Kashmir lives in the core of his heart. His emotional tie ups and his longing for his homeland is depicted in this poem where the very first line witnesses this fact. When he received postcard from his homeland, his nostalgic feelings rise so much that his homeland seems to him has shrunk in to the mailbox. This means the

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distance between his homeland and diasporic land is so much that the only physical tie up with Kashmir is this mail box. He can no longer physically wonder in the beautiful valley of Kashmir because of his first line the distance longing for home. His beloved homeland has metaphorically shrunk and is now ironically reduced to a postcard, because he lives physically far away from his birthplace.

Q: - Explain the ironic effect of the line Now I hold the half inch Himalayas in my hand.

Ans: The poem depicts his love and devotion for his homeland that is Kashmir. He is no longer living in Kashmir but his affinity with Kashmir lives in the core of his heart. His emotional tie ups and his longing for his homeland is depicted in this poem where the very first line witnesses this fact. When he received postcard from his homeland his nostalgic feeling rise no much that his homeland seems to him has shrunk into the mailbox. Himalaya seems to him shrunk into post card that he is having in his hand. Ironically this means his physical distance from his homeland is so vast that he has to be contented with the post card. In fact, the poem derives its impetuous from his irreducible gap between his homeland and diasporas land, between reality and aspiration. The potency increases when the poet confesses the impossibility of ever coming closer to his homeland than this. Therefore, the post card must serve as a poor substitute for the absent proximity of the native land.

Q: -Why does the poet use the word overexposed while describing his love for Kashmir?

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Ans: -The poet uses the word "overexpose" while describing his love for his native land. He uses this word to give vent to his nostalgic feelings and his affinity to his homeland by confessing publically through writing poetry. While describing his love for Kashmir, he uses the medium of English language that is not his native language. The poet was currently residing in America and was writing poetry in English that is an international language. So, his poetry would be read internationally and his love for his homeland will be exposed in the distant parts of the world. His description of love for Kashmir will not be limited within Kashmir but would be exposed to far off places. This is the reason the poet confesses that his love for Kashmir is overexposed.

Q: Why is Kashmir compared to a "faint negative, black and white, still undeveloped at the end of the poem?"

Ans: The comparison of Kashmir with 'faint negative, black and white, still undeveloped'; by the end of the poem is made to show how the native land will look to him when he will return to his native land after long years. Towards the end of the poem the poet feels that he might not witness the beauty and brilliance of Kashmir as depicted in the postcard and in his faint memory when he was living in Kashmir. His native land might look different on his return. He will be returning to his homeland that his memory would be like a negative of a photograph that is not developed still and one is unable to recognize that. So he predicts that his native land would be like a negative and he would not be able to recognize those places where

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he used to play during this childhood. In simple sense he would have been living away from Kashmir so many years that his native land would have changed so much that the poet would not be able to recognize it.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

Q: How does the sense of poet's nostalgic feelings get reflected in the poem?

And: -Postcard from Kashmir; shows his deep love for his country and he is describing his nostalgic feelings through different images. Ali describes his hometown before he left, to convey his love for his hometown. In the first line he says that Kashmir shrinks into mailbox. In this line, "shrinks" means that he no longer lives in Kashmir, but the post card is a poor substitute for his native land. It refreshes his memory about Kashmir including his deep love for his country in his heart. Throughout the poem Agha Shahid Ali explores his homesickness. In the next stanza he says that he holds the half inch Himalayas in his hand which tells us that the postcard pictures to him like the Himalayas which symbolize the scenery of the hometown before his migration. He also tells about the rivers and other things which were very dear to him. He feels very anxious about the changes that would come in future when he is intending to come back to his homeland.

In conclusion, some may feel Ali's sincere love for his country in the poem. Ali's portrays his home land before his migration and

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imagines how it would be at present. He expresses his yearning for his homeland.

Q: -Explain various poetic techniques that the poet uses to emphasize the beauty of his homeland.

Ans: -In post card from Kashmir” The poet uses impressive images, many phrases, hyperbolic language and juxtaposition of past and future in order to emphasize the beauty of Kashmir. Throughout the poem the reader smells that it is beauty of Kashmir that makes the speaker nostalgic. 'My home a neat four by six inches. I always loved neatness'. The poet uses "neat" in order to emphasize his home in his mind being neat. Besides, Agha Shahid Ali loves neatness because he was born and raised in a neat and clean environment. Moreover, some brilliant metaphors are used to emphasize on the beauty of homeland. The cleanliness of the river Jhelum is shown by comparing its colour with ultramarine'; that over again emphasizes the beauty of Kashmir. Moreover, the poet uses hyperbolic language in order to emphasis the beautiful scenery of his homeland. There is imaginary juxtaposition of past beauty with present and future. Through his technique he clearly idealizes the beauty of his homeland in his imagination. The poet is very apprehensive that he would not be able to enjoy the beautiful scenery in future when he will be able to return back to homeland. The poet says that he will be like an under-developed negative that means he will have faint ideas about the scenes where used to play during his childhood.

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"THE DACCA GAUZES"

Agha Shahid Ali

This poem by Agha Shahid Ali is about the Dacca Gauze, a cloth so fine and thin that he describes it as woven air. It is a story of the poet's understandings of the 'dead art' of weaving and how his grandmother grieves over the loss of the beautiful fabric.

The poet begins with telling us how thin the material was. He calls it "woven air, running water, evening dew." The art of weaving such cloth was no more, a "dead art now, dead over a hundred years." He remembers a sari that his grandmother once wore. He recalls how all of it could be pulled through a ring and when it tore, it was cut into small handkerchiefs. The poet is distressed about the historical fact that the British amputated the hands of Bengali weavers and shipped the fabric to England. Since then, no one has been able to produce a cloth parallel in quality to the Dacca gauzes.

The other perception in the poem is that of the grandmother. She is least concerned about the sad history of Bengal and how 'the looms of Bengal were silenced.' Her only sorrow is that the incredible Dacca gauzes do not exist anymore. She says, "No one now knows what it was to wear or touch that cloth." Deeply occupied in her memories, the grandmother often tries to pull the non-existent muslin out of the air. 'The Dacca Gauzes' is a ride to the past of the poet's grandmother and her intense fondness for the brilliant cloth.

Dhaka Gauzes by Agha Shahid Ali: An Analysis

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Agha Shahid Ali wrote *Dacca Gauzes*, a very beautiful poem full of lament and woe. Something that is rather infectious. His poem on the "Dacca Gauzes" exemplifies Shahid's nostalgia, his sense of history, his grace, a sensibility as fine as the gauze fabrics he describes here. Grandmothers and their stories, the amazing 'woven air', the texture of morning air in autumn and of course the tragic end of these muslins and their weavers. It is near impossible to grow up in India, without having heard about them – the fabled weave from Dacca.

Throughout the poem Agha Shahid Ali uses some images typical to the sub-continental context. Moreover, the poem reminds us the cruel colonial policy that the British colonizers exercised on the peasants of the Bengal.

Prayer for my Daughter- W B Yeats

SUMMARY AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

A *Prayer for My Daughter* exposes the typical modernist sentiment of the poet. The poet has portrayed a way of life and would like his daughter to adopt it. The kind of philosophy, he formulates in the poem is oriented towards an emphasis on the importance of tradition, custom and culture in the modern world which is dominated by chaos. The tradition, custom, culture is certainly aristocracy.

He is of the opinion that aristocracy is the only culture which can redeem the modern world of chaos and anarchy. For him, aristocracy is the source of aesthetic, intellectual and cultural

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beauty. *Therefore*, probably because of Nietzsche's influence upon him, he expresses his hatred for commoners and *wishes* his *daughter* to be *trained in the school of aristocracy*. He considers it an ideal way of life. This is a leisurely, well-reasoned ideal, based not only on mythology and history, but also on his own experience.

The poet advocates an essentially non-Christian order, the keynote of which is a man's sense of his own nobility and self-sufficiency. The poet has left sentiments and pathos behind and has cultivated an almost tragic outlook. He can now combine the appreciation of beauty with a sense of the tragic rather than a pathetic element of life. He can now impart meaning to the ordinary events of life which his earlier poetry did not attempt. In the process his poetry becomes a vehicle of public speech. The poem is strikingly flexible. The poem can move through description of the place we are beginning to recognize the tower; it can freely describe the poet's mood of gloom and then move to the idea of beauty in women from there to symbols of great love found disappointing, to Helen, Aphrodite and by implication to Maud Gonne.

The poem is decorated with a number of phrases and images that are suggestive and evocative. Much is implied, and more is meant than strikes the ear. The poem is a mixture of symbols; its richness of texture is remarkable; and its easy flow of ideas. The storm howling symbolizes destruction, recalls the "mere anarchy loosed upon the world" of the poem *The Second Coming*. The flooded streams also recall the havoc to be wrought in *The Second Coming*.

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"The murderous innocence of the sea" also recalls the images of "blood-dimmed tide". The bandy-legged smith is McBride and Helen is Maud Gonne by implication. Yeats has Maud Gonne in his mind when he says that "It's certain that fine women eat a crazy salad". "The rich Horn of Plenty" is suggestive of courtesy, aristocracy, and ceremony. The "hidden laurel tree" can provide through custom the innocence of soul. So the images follow one after another in succession. The image of Helen evokes another figure Aphrodite, who rose out of the spray. The union of Aphrodite with Hephaestus bandy legged Smith, brings to mind the Maud Gonne-McBride episode. Thus the image cluster becomes increasingly complex. In this poem, the poet praises courtesy, charm, wisdom and the glad kindness that Yeats had found in marriage. His main outburst is against hatred, and especially the 'intellectual hatred'. The idea is that a beautiful woman should despoil the subjectivity of her nature by the politics of objectivity, or sacrifice the unity of her being to a cause outside itself. Because of his showing of hatred in the poem some critics have pointed out that the poem is snobbish. The poem has a ring of optimism about it in thinking that mere anarchy cannot harm the child if she is innocent and is nicely bred.

The poem has also been criticized as based on triviality, for the poet has not desired for his daughter a way of life consistent with the highest religious or moral ideals. He has not prayed for any Christian virtues for her. Reverent as he is, he does not convey any religion. Instead, we are offered in the poem an aristocratic faith.

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However, all such criticism is irrelevant. The poet desires for her organic innocence and freedom from hatred. The ideals which he upholds are not theoretical but practical, and they can be easily adopted into practice and a state of grace attained. The poet has formulated and essentially non-Christian order, the keynote of which is man's sense of his own nobility and self-sufficiency. The poet has been true to his convictions and so the poem is another expression of his artistic honesty.

On A Prayer for my Daughter the coming of ruin upon civilization still preoccupies Yeats: "Imagining in excited reverie/ That the future years had come, / Dancing to a frenzied drum, / Out of the murderous innocence of the sea". But the poem does move from the personal to the general and somehow philosophical issues. It moves through description of the place; we also recognize the symbolic ideals of a good culture: the tower, the laurel tree and custom and ceremony. The poem moves from the real concern of violence of the times; it describes the poet's mood of gloom; and then it moves to the ideal of beauty in women; and from there it moves to symbols of great love found disappointing, to Helen, Aphrodite and by implication to Maud Gonne. There is a praise of courtesy, charm, wisdom and the glad kindness (that Yeats had found in marriage) as well as a hope for merriment. Then comes the terrible denunciation of intellectual hatred and of Maud Gonne, the loveliest woman born, (whose opinionated mind is savagely attacked). The last stanzas praise innocence, and custom and ceremony. It is both relevant and

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meaningful in the context of the terrible violence caused by "intellectual hatred" in early twentieth century Europe, though it might sound a little 'chauvinistic' to modern readers.

Theme of the Poem

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

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

Metrical analysis of the poem, according to Robert Einarsson, proves difficult because he believes Yeats adheres to "rhythmical motifs" rather than traditional use of syllables in his meter. In stanza

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two, Einarsson points out instances where the meter of the poem contains examples of amphibrach, pyrrhicretic, and spondaic feet. He argues that the complexity of Yeats's verse follows patterns of its "metremes", or rhymical motifs, rather than common metrical devices.

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

Q: - Why is W.B. Yeats so sad about the birth of his daughter?

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

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Q: - What does the poet think about the aftermath of the world war?

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

UNIT IV: SHORT STORY

Lottery: Munshi Premchand

The Bet: Anton Chekov

Lottery: Munshi Premchand



Munshi Premchand was an Indian writer counted amongst the greatest Hindustani writers of the early 20th century. He was a novelist, short story writer, and dramatist who penned over a dozen novels, hundreds of short stories, and numerous essays. He also translated a number of literary works of other languages into

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Hindi. A teacher by profession, he began his literary career as a freelancer in Urdu. He was an independent minded patriotic soul and his initial literary works in Urdu were replete with descriptions of the Indian nationalist movement that was building up in various parts of India. Soon he switched over to Hindi and established himself as a much-loved author with his poignant short stories and novels that not only entertained the readers, but also carried significant social messages. He was much moved by the inhumane manner in which Indian women of his time were treated, and often depicted the miserable plight of girls and women in his stories hoping to create awareness in the minds of his readers. A true patriot, he quit his government job as a part of the non-cooperation movement called by Mahatma Gandhi even though he had a growing family to feed. He was eventually elected as the first President of the Progressive Writers' Association in Lucknow.

Q: - Analysis of short story lottery by munshi Premchand?

Write a summary of short story lottery by munshi

Premchand?

Lottery is a Hindustani short story. It was written by Indian author Premchand. The story is told in narrative form from the perspective of an unnamed school teacher. The story has been adapted into play format, with theatrical performances presented by Lalit Parimoo's Natsamaj Theatre Group, as well as Mujeeb Khan's Ideal Drama and Entertainment Academy.

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Lottery, is told in the first person, from the perspective of a school teacher, his friend Vikram, and Vikram's extended family. The teacher and Vikram discuss the lottery and speculate over their actions if either were to win a prize worth ten lakhs of Indian rupees. Vikram states that if he were to win the lottery, he would take a trip around the world, in order to study the traditions and religions of different countries, and establish a public library, offering the world's finest books. The teacher states that he would save the money, in return for the interest. As the story unfolds, Vikram realizes that he lacks the funds to purchase a ticket, and approaches the teacher with the suggestion that they pool their funds and buy a ticket together. The teacher and Vikram each raise five rupees to buy the ticket, agreeing to divide the winnings, much to the dismay of Vikram's family who is suspicious of the teacher's motive.

Vikram purchases the ticket in his name, the teacher and his friend purchase theirs, and Vikram's father, Bade Thakur Sahib, uncle Chhote Thakur Sahib (real brother of Vikram's father,) and elder brother (Prakash) also each buy tickets. They begin to fight over what they would do if any of them were to win. As the lottery drawing approaches, the teacher realizes that he had not signed an agreement with Vikram acknowledging that they had gone into a partnership to purchase a ticket with the intention of sharing any money won, and relies on Vikram's honesty. Family arguments escalate, involving heated threats. Vikram's brother Prakash arrives home with injuries to his head and hand. When his father asks him

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what has happened, he explains that he had gone to Jhakkar Baba, who has the power to grant wishes. Prakash shares with his family that before Jhakkar Baba grants wishes, he tests them by throwing rocks at them. While most visitors run away, those that withstand the attack will have their wishes granted. When Prakash survived the stoning, he was assured that he would be the sole winner of the lottery. However, much to everyone's despair, when the winner of the lottery is announced, it is a man from Africa who is found to have bought the winning ticket. The plot is a dramatic irony, with the story ending with plot twist and a moral message.

Lottery appears in Indian textbooks and in compilations of moral education books. It is included in a compilation of Premchand's writing, entitled The Premchand Reader, Selected Stories 2, as translated and adapted by Anupa Lal. The story has also been adapted into several plays, and was performed by Lalit Parimoo's Natsamaj Theatre Group^[4] and Mujeeb Khan's Ideal Drama and Entertainment Academy.

Q: - Theme of short story lottery by munshi Premchand?

One key theme of "The Lottery" is the danger of tradition and blindly following along. The characters in the story simply follow the tradition of the lottery because that is all they have ever done. They don't quite recall how the lottery started. They don't recall all of the original ceremonies. They just perform it as best they can because it has always been done.

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An important character to note here is **Old Man Warner**. He proudly declares that he has **survived 77 lotteries**. When some of the younger village members bring up the idea that some other places have given up their traditions regarding lotteries, Warner states: "There's always been a lottery." Clearly just because people have always done something justifies its existence in Warner's eyes.

Certainly, the villagers must believe murder and violence are wrong, for the village seems a nice, safe place. The villagers seem rational and peaceful enough too. Yet when Mrs. Hutchinson's 'wins' the lottery, the entire community doesn't hesitate to turn on her. No one - other than Hutchinson herself - seems to question what is happening, even-though one must assume that Hutchinson, as part of the community, has helped stone to death previous lottery winners.

The Bet: Anton Chekov



Anton Pavlovich Chekhov was born in 1860, the third of six children to a family of a grocer, in Taganrog, Russia, a southern seaport and resort on the Azov Sea. His father, a 3rd-rank Member of the Merchant's Guild, was a religious fanatic and a tyrant who used his

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children as slaves. Young Chekhov was a part-time assistant in his father's business and also a singer in a church choir. At age 15, he was abandoned by his bankrupt father and lived alone for 3 years while finishing the Classical Gymnazium in Taganrog. Chekhov obtained a scholarship at the Moscow University Medical School in 1879, from which he graduated in 1884 as a Medical Doctor. He practiced general medicine for about ten years.

Q: -Write a summary of "The Bet" by Anton Chekhov?

"The Bet" is an 1889 short story by Anton Chekhov about a banker and a young lawyer who make a bet with each other about whether the death penalty is better or worse than life in prison. The story has a twist ending.

As the story opens, the banker recalls the occasion of the bet fifteen years before. Guests at the party that he was hosting that day fell into a discussion of capital punishment; the banker argued that capital punishment is more humane than life imprisonment, while the young lawyer disagreed, insisting that he would choose life in prison rather than death. They agree to a bet of two million rubles that the lawyer cannot spend fifteen years in solitary confinement. The bet was on, and the lawyer cast himself into isolation for fifteen years.

The man spends his time in confinement reading books, writing, playing piano, studying, drinking wine, and educating himself. We find him continuously growing throughout the story. We see various phases in his term of imprisonment over the years. At first, the

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lawyer suffered from severe loneliness and depression. But soon began studying vigorously. He begins with languages and other related subjects. Then, a mix of science, literature, philosophy and other seemingly random subjects. He ends up reading some six hundred volumes in the course of four years. Then, the Gospel followed by theology and histories of religion. In the final two years, the imprisoned lawyer read immensely on chemistry, medicine and philosophy, and sometimes works of Byron or Shakespeare.

In the meantime, the banker's fortune declines and he realizes that if he loses, paying off the bet will leave him bankrupt.

The day before the fifteen-year period concludes, the banker resolves to kill the lawyer so as to not owe him the money. On his way to do so, however, the banker finds a note written by the lawyer. The note declares that in his time in confinement he has learned to despise material goods as fleeting things and he believes that knowledge is worth more than money. To this end he elects to renounce the reward of the bet. The banker was moved and shocked to his bones after reading the note, kisses the strange man on the head and leaves the lodge weeping, relieved not to have to kill anyone. The prison warden later reports that the lawyer has left the guest house, thus losing the bet but proving his point that solitary confinement is more humane than death punishment as it gives a chance to a person (the lawyer in this story) to develop himself. The lawyer also unwittingly saves his own life by writing the note.

Q: -What is the theme of "The Bet" by Anton Chekhov?

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Ans: -Anton Chekhov short story "The Bet" is fundamentally about the meaning of life, and this is the main theme of the story. Chekhov explores what that meaning might be, and in order to do so, he also explores other themes, such as crime and punishment, freedom and imprisonment, and loneliness and greed.

Crime and Punishment

The story begins with a group of people at a party discussing the death penalty and whether it is a punishment which is "immoral, and unsuitable for Christian States." Some of the guests say, however, that the death penalty is "more moral and more humane than imprisonment for life." The lawyer's case is complicated in the sense of crime and punishment, as he has, at least as far as readers know, not committed any crimes. His voluntary imprisonment is less about punishment and more about proving a point, and the banker warns him that voluntary imprisonment will be more difficult to bear than compulsory confinement. For a criminal, there is no option to give up and walk away, and the imprisonment might represent a higher purpose of atonement. However, for the lawyer, the reward at the end is not salvation, but monetary gain. His case is not one of crime and punishment, but rather sacrifice and reward. This calls into question whether the bet can truly be considered an accurate measure of whether the death penalty or imprisonment for life is more humane, as the stakes and context are vastly different.

Freedom and Imprisonment

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Early in the story a bet is struck between a banker and a young man. The former bets the latter that he will not be able to survive fifteen years in solitary confinement. However, the lawyer can give up the bet anytime he chooses with no real consequence outside of forfeiting the money, meaning that he is, in effect, his own jailer. His prison is not literal in the sense that nothing is truly preventing him from leaving; instead, his prison is ideological. His own convictions and his desire for wealth trap him in the bet. His decision to leave early is not an act of submission or forfeiture, but rather a declaration that he has been freed from the constraints of things such as morality, idealism, and materialism. His recognition of life as a meaningless veneer has, for better or worse, freed him from the need for money or the need to be proven correct, allowing him to leave his self-imposed prison with no regrets.

Greed

The young lawyer accepts the bet because he believes that life in any form is better than death. So sure is he of his convictions that he even adds an extra ten years to the banker's proposed sentence. If the lawyer was only concerned with the money, then he would have accepted the initial term of five years; his decision to extend the bet to fifteen years suggests that his greed is not for material wealth but rather intellectual validation.

The Meaning of Life

Although the man survives the fifteen years without freedom and without human interaction, he is reduced to a state almost

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indistinguishable from death. He becomes "a skeleton with the skin drawn tight over his bones" and a "yellow" face described as "emaciated." With this image, readers are left to draw their own ideas about the meaning of life. It seems that the young man has survived after a fashion, but has paid a price far greater than even he expected. He has been reduced to a mere shell of a human.

Nonetheless, the young man himself comes to a very different conclusion. He says that the fifteen years of imprisonment have taught him to "despise freedom and life and health." He has also learned, he says, that life is "worthless, fleeting, illusory and deceptive, like a mirage." His fifteen years of solitude have taught him that life is merely a temporary illusion and that people would be better off focusing their efforts on heaven. Essentially, the things that people value are only constructs, and true value comes from other sources.

Q: -Write a character Sketch "The Banker".

Ans: - The banker is one of the two characters in the story. The story discusses the change a man undergoes when exiled to solitary confinement.

Chekhov tells the story from the point of view of the banker, who is the one keeping the prisoner. Fifteen years ago, when he agreed to the bet, the banker was a rich man with millions to spare, but by the time the bet comes due, he has gambled away most of his fortune.

The amount he owes to the prisoner accounts for most of his assets, so in order to avoid ending up broke he contemplates killing the

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prisoner and pinning the murder on one of his servants. However, when he decides to carry out the deed, he finds a note where the prisoner renounces his reward. Thus the banker does not have to kill his prisoner.

Q: - Write a character Sketch "The Lawyer".

Ans: - The lawyer is initially presented as a young man who attended the banker's party fifteen years before the story is told. He opposes the banker's arguments in a heated discussion about death penalty vs. imprisonment for life.

The lawyer voluntarily is imprisoned for 15 years by the banker in exchange for 2 million rubles. Before, he is an idealistic young man, full of hopes and dreams at the tender age of 25.

During his imprisonment he undergoes a massive transformation: he ultimately renounces his reward for winning the bet, satisfied instead with just proving his point. He has become a bitter, skeletal man, looking much older than his 40 years.

Q: - What are the respective positions of the banker and the lawyer with respect to capital punishment?

Ans: - The banker believes that the death penalty is more humane than life imprisonment and argues that no one could stand being alone for a long time. The lawyer, on the other hand, argues that the death penalty is more inhumane than life imprisonment because you are depriving someone of their life—something that you cannot give

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back. Therefore, life imprisonment is preferable because you will still be alive throughout, and there will always remain the chance that will be freed. This philosophical disagreement is what motivates the bet; in fact, the bet itself can be seen as an extension of this very argument.

Q: -Why does the lawyer extend the bet from 5 to 15 years?

Ans: -Initially, the banker makes the bet for 5 years. He believes that the lawyer would not be able to endure 5 years of voluntary imprisonment. In the heat of the moment, the lawyer raises the stakes to fifteen years. He probably does this to prove how serious he is, and how much he believes that he is in the right. This is corroborated by the fact that he ultimately intentionally loses the bet just 5 hours before he would have won it: he makes deliberate choices in an effort to prove his commitment to his principles.

Q: -Is the narrator impartial? Why or why not?

Ans: -No, the narrator imbues his opinion into his statements. When the bet is first made, the narrator calls it a "wild, senseless bet" punctuating his remarks with an exclamation point (7). The narrator is most decidedly not impartial in his descriptions of the lawyer's imprisonment, too, for he describes him with sympathy and empathy. Most deeply, the narrator is not impartial because he sometimes provides us with insights into the thoughts of the banker, which colors the overall narrative accordingly.

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Q: -What does the lawyer do to take solace in his time of imprisonment? How does his attention shift over the course of his imprisonment?

Ans: -The lawyer plays the piano, reads a lot of books, and learns several languages. Though he initially shies away from wine and tobacco, he later turns to them for comfort. The piano sits silent after the first year of his imprisonment, however; progressively, the lawyer focuses more on reading and the acquisition of knowledge, up to the point at which he spends an entire year reading the Gospel. Thus, we could describe him as starting out focusing on comforts, and transitioning towards a total focus on enlightenment.

Q: -How does the lawyer decide to conclude the bet, and why?

Ans: -At the end of the fifteen years, five hours before he would have gotten the 2 million rubles, the lawyer chooses to run away and revoke his right to the money, leaving a letter explaining himself. He has come to hate people and rejects the money on principle. This is the direct result of the learning he undertook while imprisoned: with his newfound knowledge of the world, material goods, including money, mean nothing to him, and he hates people for confusedly valuing these things so much.