

MAR GREGORIOS COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCE

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

SUBJECT NAME: INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

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SEMESTER: II

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INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

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Our Casuarina Tree

LIKE a huge Python, winding round and round
 The rugged trunk, indented deep with scars,
 Up to its very summit near the stars,
 A creeper climbs, in whose embraces bound
 No other tree could live. But gallantly
 The giant wears the scarf, and flowers are hung
 In crimson clusters all the boughs among,
 Whereon all day are gathered bird and bee;
 And oft at nights the garden overflows
 With one sweet song that seems to have no close,
 Sung darkling from our tree, while men repose.

When first my casement is wide open thrown
 At dawn, my eyes delighted on it rest;
 Sometimes, and most in winter,—on its crest
 A gray baboon sits statue-like alone
 Watching the sunrise; while on lower boughs
 His puny offspring leap about and play;
 And far and near kokilas hail the day;
 And to their pastures wend our sleepy cows;
 And in the shadow, on the broad tank cast
 By that hoar tree, so beautiful and vast,
 The water-lilies spring, like snow enmassed.

But not because of its magnificence
 Dear is the Casuarina to my soul:
 Beneath it we have played; though years may roll,
 O sweet companions, loved with love intense,
 For your sakes, shall the tree be ever dear.


Blent with your images, it shall arise
 In memory, till the hot tears blind mine eyes!
 What is that dirge-like murmur that I hear
 Like the sea breaking on a shingle-beach?
 It is the tree's lament, an eerie speech,
 That haply to the unknown land may reach.

Unknown, yet well-known to the eye of faith!
 Ah, I have heard that wail far, far away
 In distant lands, by many a sheltered bay,
 When slumbered in his cave the water-wraith
 And the waves gently kissed the classic shore
 Of France or Italy, beneath the moon,
 When earth lay tranced in a dreamless swoon:
 And every time the music rose,—before
 Mine inner vision rose a form sublime,
 Thy form, O Tree, as in my happy prime
 I saw thee, in my own loved native clime.

Therefore I fain would consecrate a lay
 Unto thy honor, Tree, beloved of those
 Who now in blessed sleep for aye repose,—
 Dearer than life to me, alas, were they!

Mayst thou be numbered when my days are done
 With deathless trees—like those in Borrowdale,
 Under whose awful branches lingered pale
 “Fear, trembling Hope, and Death, the skeleton,
 And Time the shadow;” and though weak the verse
 That would thy beauty fain, oh, fain rehearse,
 May Love defend thee from Oblivion's curse.

Poetess **Toru Dutt** was born on March 4, 1856



A POETIC LIFE CUT SHORT

- She was the **first Indian poetess** to write in English
- A natural linguist, she was proficient in **BENGALI, ENGLISH, FRENCH & SANSKRIT**
- Her **work in English & French** is an important part of modern Indian literature
- Her posthumously published works include **the first novel in French** by an Indian writer & the **first novel in English** by an Indian woman writer

"But not because of its magnificence
Dear is the Casuarina to my soul:
Beneath it we have played; though years may roll..."

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newsflicks

Image Source: <https://twitter.com/>

Toru Dutt

Toru Dutt was born on 4 March 1856 in Calcutta to a Bengali family of writers. Her father, Govind Chandra Dutt was an Indian Government employee and her mother, Kshetramoni Dutt was a writer who translated the book *The Blood of Christ* into Bengali. Aru and Abju were her two siblings. She was the youngest child of three. In the year 1864, her brother Abju died of consumption. Later, in 1869, her family moved to France, where she and her sister Aru mastered the French language in a short time. Later, the family moved to London where she pursued her higher studies. When she was 18 years old, Toru started publishing her works. Her first published works *essays on Henry Derozio* and *Leconte de Lisle*, appeared in Bengal Magazine in 1874. In the same year, Toru's sister Aru passed away from consumption. Her first collection *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields*, was a volume of French poems that she and her sister Aru translated into English. She, like her siblings, died from consumption in 1877, at the age of 21. Her book of poetry named *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan*, a collection of translations and adaptations from Sanskrit literature, was published posthumously in 1882.

Summary

Toru Dutt's '*Our Casuarina Tree*' is the reminiscence of the poet's childhood memories in India. The poet remembers the tree being wound by a creeper like a python. The creeper holds the tree too tight. As a result, the tree bears the brunt of the scar left by the creeper. This shows that the tree is strong.

When the poet opens her window at dawn, her eyes are delighted to see the majestic tree. She is very much happy to see a “baboon”, its “puny offspring”, “kokilas”, “sleepy cows;” and the “water-lilies spring,” on and near the tree.

The poetess says that the tree is not dear to her because of its magnificent stature, but she played along with her siblings under the tree who are no more. The poetess takes the readers to the foreign land which is “Unknown, yet well-known” where the “waves gently kissed the classic shore”. The music of the waves kindles the past memories of the tree. She wants the Casuarina tree to live long like the trees of “Borrowdale”

“Mayst thou be numbered when my days are done
With deathless trees—like those in Borrowdale, “

She honours the majestic Casuarina tree, saying that

“though weak the verse
That would thy beauty fain, oh, fain rehearse,
May Love defend thee from Oblivion’s curse.”

Thus, the majestic Casuarina tree haunts the nostalgic memories of the poetess along with her siblings, whereas the trees of England reflect her sense of loneliness.

The Coromandel Fishers

Rise, brothers, rise; the wakening skies pray to the morning light,
The wind lies asleep in the arms of the dawn like a child that has cried all night.
Come, let us gather our nets from the shore and set our catamarans free,
To capture the leaping wealth of the tide, for we are the kings of the sea!

No longer delay, let us hasten away in the track of the sea gull's call,
The sea is our mother, the cloud is our brother, the waves are our comrades all.
What though we toss at the fall of the sun where the hand of the sea-god drives?
He who holds the storm by the hair, will hide in his breast our lives.

Sweet is the shade of the cocoanut glade, and the scent of the mango grove,
And sweet are the sands at the full o' the moon with the sound of the voices we love;
But sweeter, O brothers, the kiss of the spray and the dance of the wild foam's glee;
Row, brothers, row to the edge of the verge, where the low sky mates with the sea.

The theme of the poem is the desire of the poet to set India free from the clutches of the Britishers. So the poet asks the fishermen (the freedom fighters) “Rise, brothers, rise;” set our catamarans free (India free). The poem consists of three stanzas having four lines each. The rhyme scheme of the poem is AABB.

The link given below is for the ready reference
<https://youtu.be/sq8g3jcuUj0>

Night of the Scorpion By Nissim Ezekiel

I remember the night my mother
was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours
of steady rain had driven him
to crawl beneath a sack of rice.

Parting with his poison - flash
of diabolic tail in the dark room -
he risked the rain again.

The peasants came like swarms of flies
and buzzed the name of God a hundred times
to paralyse the Evil One.

With candles and with lanterns
throwing giant scorpion shadows
on the mud-baked walls
they searched for him: he was not found.
They clicked their tongues.

With every movement that the scorpion made his poison moved in Mother's
blood, they said.

May he sit still, they said
May the sins of your previous birth
be burned away tonight, they said.
May your suffering decrease
the misfortunes of your next birth, they said.
May the sum of all evil
balanced in this unreal world

against the sum of good
become diminished by your pain.
May the poison purify your flesh

of desire, and your spirit of ambition,
 they said, and they sat around
 on the floor with my mother in the centre,
 the peace of understanding on each face.
 More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours,
 more insects, and the endless rain.
 My mother twisted through and through,
 groaning on a mat.
 My father, sceptic, rationalist,
 trying every curse and blessing,
 powder, mixture, herb and hybrid.
 He even poured a little paraffin
 upon the bitten toe and put a match to it.
 I watched the flame feeding on my mother.
 I watched the holy man perform his rites to tame the poison with an
 incantation.
 After twenty hours
 it lost its sting.

 My mother only said
 Thank God the scorpion picked on me
 And spared my children.

Nissim Ezekiel

Nissim Ezekiel (1924-2004) was born in Bombay in an Indian Jewish family. He was a professor of English at the University of Bombay. He is a winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award. His verse collections are A Time to Change, Sixty Poems, The Third, The Unfinished Man, The Exact Name, Hymns and Darkness, and The Later Day Psalms.

He was also a playwright.



Image Source <https://in.images.search.yahoo.com/>

The Night of the Scorpion appeared in *The Exact Name*. The poem is about a mother's selfless love for her children. On a rainy night, the scorpion stings narrator's mother. She groans with pain. Peasants gather around her with lanterns and candles like a swarm of flies.

Narrator's father is a

" . . . sceptic, rationalist,
 trying every curse and blessing,
 powder, mixture, herb and hybrid.
 He even poured a little paraffin
 upon the bitten toe and put a match to it"

After twenty hours, the pain of sting disappears and the narrator's mother thanks God because the Scorpion has stung her and has spared her children.

An Introduction by Kamala Das

I don't know politics but I know the names
 Of those in power, and can repeat them like
 Days of week, or names of months, beginning with Nehru.
 I am Indian, very brown, born in Malabar,
 I speak three languages, write in
 Two, dream in one.
 Don't write in English, they said, English is
 Not your mother-tongue. Why not leave
 Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins,
 Every one of you? Why not let me speak in

Any language I like? The language I speak,
 Becomes mine, its distortions, its queernesses
 All mine, mine alone.
 It is half English, half Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest,
 It is as human as I am human, don't
 You see? It voices my joys, my longings, my
 Hopes, and it is useful to me as cawing
 Is to crows or roaring to the lions, it
 Is human speech, the speech of the mind that is
 Here and not there, a mind that sees and hears and
 Is aware. Not the deaf, blind speech
 Of trees in storm or of monsoon clouds or of rain or the
 Incoherent mutterings of the blazing
 Funeral pyre. I was child, and later they
 Told me I grew, for I became tall, my limbs
 Swelled and one or two places sprouted hair.
 When I asked for love, not knowing what else to ask
 For, he drew a youth of sixteen into the
 Bedroom and closed the door, He did not beat me
 But my sad woman-body felt so beaten.
 The weight of my breasts and womb crushed me.
 I shrank pitifully.
 Then ... I wore a shirt and my
 Brother's trousers, cut my hair short and ignored
 My womanliness. Dress in sarees, be girl
 Be wife, they said. Be embroiderer, be cook,
 Be a quarreller with servants. Fit in. Oh,
 Belong, cried the categorizers. Don't sit
 On walls or peep in through our lace-draped windows.
 Be Amy, or be Kamala. Or, better
 Still, be Madhavikutty. It is time to
 Choose a name, a role. Don't play pretending games.
 Don't play at schizophrenia or be a
 Nympho. Don't cry embarrassingly loud when
 Jilted in love ... I met a man, loved him. Call

Him not by any name, he is every man
 Who wants. a woman, just as I am every
 Woman who seeks love. In him . . . the hungry haste
 Of rivers, in me . . . the oceans' tireless
 Waiting. Who are you, I ask each and everyone,
 The answer is, it is I. Anywhere and,
 Everywhere, I see the one who calls himself I
 In this world, he is tightly packed like the
 Sword in its sheath. It is I who drink lonely
 Drinks at twelve, midnight, in hotels of strange towns,
 It is I who laugh, it is I who make love
 And then, feel shame, it is I who lie dying
 With a rattle in my throat. I am sinner,
 I am saint. I am the beloved and the
 Betrayed. I have no joys that are not yours, no
 Aches which are not yours. I too call myself I.

Kamala Das

Let us reread . . .



- Kamala Das (1934 – 2009):
- "If I had been a loved person, I wouldn't have become a writer. I would have been a happy human being...I suppose I started writing because I had certain weaknesses in my system. I thought I was weak and vulnerable. That's why we attempt poetry. Poets are like snails without the shells, terribly vulnerable, so easy to crush. Of course it has given me a lot of pain, each poem. Each poem is really born out of pain, which I would like to share. But then you live for that person, the sharer of your pain, and you don't find him anywhere. It is the looking that makes the poet go on writing, search. If you find someone, the search is over, poetry is over."

Source Image: <https://in.images.search.yahoo.com/>

Kamala Das was born in Punnayurkulam, Thrissur District in Kerala, on March 31, 1934. She spent her childhood in Calcutta. Her mother was a renowned Malayali poetess. Her love for poetry began at an early age. Her mother and her uncle influenced her in her successful writing career. At the age of 15, she was married to a bank officer Madhava Das. He encouraged her interest in writing. She wrote both in Malayalam and in English. Kamala Das has received many awards for her literary contribution, including: Nominated and shortlisted for Nobel Prize in 1984. Asian Poetry Prize-1998 Kent Award for English Writing from Asian Countries-1999 Asian World Prize-2000 Ezhuthachan Award-2009 Sahitya Academy Award-2003 Vayalar Award 2001 Kerala Sahitya Academy Award-2005 Muttathu Varkey Award. She was a longtime friend of Canadian writer Merrily Weisbord, who published a memoir of their friendship, *The Love Queen of Malabar*, in 2010. She died at a hospital in Pune on 31 May 2009. Her body was flown to her home state of Kerala. She was buried at the Palayam Juma Masjid at Thiruvananthapuram with full state honour

Kamal Das begins the poem saying that although she does not know much about politics, she knows the names of those politicians who are in power and mentions the name of Nehru. She introduces herself saying that she is an Indian, brown complexioned and born in Malabar. She further adds that she speaks “three languages, write in Two, dream in one.” She is much disturbed when she is asked not to write in English language. She chides her critics, friends and cousins to leave her alone and do things in her own way. She asserts that

“The language I speak,
 Becomes mine, its distortions, its queernesses
 All mine, mine alone.
 It is half English, half Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest
 It is as human as I am human, don't
 You see? It voices my joys, my longings, my
 Hopes, and it is useful to me as cawing
 Is to crows or roaring to the lions, . . .”

She speaks with much pain, about her married life as she puts forth as she

“ . . . grew, for I became tall, my limbs
 Swelled and one or two places sprouted hair.
 When I asked for love, not knowing what else to ask
 For, he drew a youth of sixteen into the
 Bedroom and closed the door, He did not beat me
 But my sad woman-body felt so beaten.

The weight of my breasts and womb crushed me.
I shrank Pitifully."

Kamala Das asserts her identity challenging the patriarchal society. Her quest for identity is all pervasive in the poem. She dresses the way she likes. She does not like to remain submissive and slave to the male-dominated society. As she says

"Then ... I wore a shirt and my
Brother's trousers, cut my hair short and ignored
My womanliness."

She ignores and chides those who have tried to fit her in stereotyped images of women.

"Dress in sarees, be girl
Be wife, they said. Be embroiderer, be cook,
Be a quarreller with servants. Fit in. Oh,
Belong, cried the categorizers."

She, now describes her next segment of life as a matured woman who has drunk life almost to the brim, falls in love with a man

"Jilted in love ... I met a man, loved him. Call
Him not by any name, he is every man
Who wants a woman, just as I am every
Woman who seeks love."

Kamala Das questions why not a woman can assert her identity when men can? She concludes the poem saying

"I too call myself I."

The Bus by Arun Kolatkar

The tarpaulin flaps are buttoned down
on the windows of the state transport bus.
all the way up to jejury.

a cold wind keeps whipping
and slapping a corner of tarpaulin at your elbow.

you look down to the roaring road.
 you search for the signs of daybreak in what little light spills out of bus.
 your own divided face in the pair of glasses
 on an oldman`s nose
 is all the countryside you get to see.

you seem to move continually forward.
 toward a destination
 just beyond the castemark beyond his eyebrows.

outside, the sun has risen quietly
 it aims through an eyelet in the tarpaulin.
 and shoots at the oldman`s glasses.

a sawed off sunbeam comes to rest gently against the driver`s right temple.
 the bus seems to change direction.

at the end of bumpy ride with your own face on the either side
 when you get off the bus.

you dont step inside the old man`s head.

Arun Balkrishna Kolatk

Born:1st November, 1932

Died:25th September, 2004

Specialty: Bio-lingual Poet

(*Marathi & English*)

- Poet from Maharashtra, India.
- Trained as an Artist from the **J.J.School of Art**.-He was also a noted graphic designer with many awards for his work.
- Started work as an art director and graphic designer in several advertising agencies like "Lintas"
- Mid60s started working joined Mass Communication and Marketing.
- He won the prestigious **CAG** award for advertising six times and was admitted to the **CAG** Hall of Fame.
- Marathi devotion poetry and popular theater
- (Tamasha) had early influences on Kolatk
- Influence by William Carlos William



Image source-<https://in.images.search.yahoo.com/>

Arun Kolatkar

Arun Kolatkar was born in 1932 at Kolhapur. He wrote both in English and Marathi. *Jejuri* was his first book of English poetry. "*The Bus*" is the first of the 31 poems in his collection 'Jejuri' and it was published in 1976. It received the Commonwealth Writers prize in the year 1977. He died on 25 September 2004 in Pune.

The poem is about the visitor's experience to the ruins of Jejuri, a pilgrimage site in Maharashtra, India via bus. The poem seems to be simple. But the theme is the faith and opinion between old and modern generation.

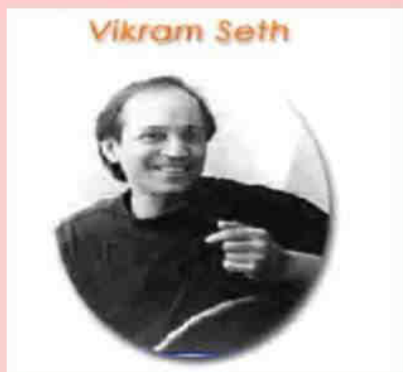
The youtube link is given below for reference

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQIRixOxJsU&t=167s>

The Frog and the Nightingale

Vikram Seth was born on 20 June 1952. He is an Indian writer in English. He has received several awards including Padma Shri, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, WH Smith Literary Award and Crossword Book Award.

The Poet



- Vikram Seth was born in Calcutta in 1952.
- He left India to study at Oxford
- His first novel, *The Golden Gate*, is written entirely in tetrameter sonnets,
- He won the Commonwealth Poetry Prize in 1986 and the Sahitya Academy award in 1988.

Image Source: <https://slideplayer.com/slide/4693560/>

THEME/ MESSAGE

In the poem, the nightingale was a very melodious singer. She was immensely gifted but severely lacked self-confidence. She was easily convinced by the crafty, manipulative frog. He duped and exploited her. He was envious and wanted to eliminate her. The gullible bird walked right into the trap and lost her life.



This poem elegantly presents the bitter reality that in the modern society, there are more number of snakes in the grass and less well-wishers. We should not get influenced and take a stand for ourselves and what we do.

Image source: <https://www.slideshare.net/TheAmazingSlideman/the-frog-and-the-nightingale-by-vikram-seth-27830292>

Her Garden by Meena Alexander

The mountains crackle
they are full of flint,
the cicada bristles
it does not sing
in grandmother's garden
as mulberry trees
gnarled like her hands
start their long slide
seawards.

I imagine her sitting
under the mulberry leaves,
hot fruit splashed

to her eyes,
a blindness cleaned
in that solitary hour
when trees clamber
out of bark
and swim
to a rock that is black
and bare
and like nothing
else in this homeland.

I like to think
she died in the day
her face set heavenward
exacting little attention
from the sun:
once risen it sets
in finicky chaos
in a sky so flat and blue
that light mirrors itself
as if on water, soundlessly:
so losing body
she crept into her own soul
and she slept.

As young goats leap over cracks
in the garden wall,
as the cicada shunts sparks
from its wings,
I remember her.
She died so long
before my birth
that we are one, entirely
as a sky

disowned by sun and star:
 a bleakness beneath my dreams
 a rare fragrance
 as of dry mulberry
 pierced by this monsoon wind.



Image Source: <https://in.images.search.yahoo.com/>

Meena Alexander

Meena Alexander was born on 17 February 1951 in Allahabad, India. She was raised in Kerala and Sudan. Migration, trauma, and reconciliation are the themes of her works. Her important works are *The Statesman*, *Atmospheric Embroidery*, *Birthplace with Buried Stones*, *Illiterate Heart*. She died on 21 November 2018 in New York. The poem "My garden" is embedded with the themes of migration, trauma and reconciliation.

She is a diasporic poet who is yearning to return to her homeland. She feels alienated in the foreign land. In this poem, she speaks of her grandmother who died so long before the poetess birth. However, the memory of her grandmother haunts her. she imagines her grandmother sitting under the mulberry trees and her eyes are purified with

"hot fruit splashed

to her eyes,
A blindness cleaned ”

This process of purification symbolises that she is preparing for the journey of death. But, her grandmother died long before the birth of poetess.

“She died so long
before my birth
that we are one,”

This symbolises that she is advocating the idea that she and her grandmother are one. The thoughts of her grandmother provide hope to the poet in the hopeless alien world to return to her homeland.

The YouTube link is given below for reference
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7Te-IA3XRc>

“Narcissus” By Easterine Kire

Last night the shadows chased me
And the wintermoon screamed in my ears
Ah Calcutta, I could not sleep.
I watched
Your silent city weave
A tapestry of poems, songs, dead roses
And a pair of deep brown eyes.
I saw
A thousand gipsy summers
Ride down Midnight avenue
I travelled
National highway 37
And spoke to the wild geese at dawn
I heard
The paddy-birds in the rice-fields
Singing Ave Maria.
And when the thorn-bird brought me back
You did not hear my goodbye

Farewell Virgo
I leave you
Part of my evening song
And the dreams autumn borrowed last year
Take care
Of your solipsism
And give my love
To Dylan on the twelve thirty
He'll be wearing an Arabian night.



Image Source-<https://in.images.search.yahoo.com/>

Easterine Kire

Easterine Kire is a poet, writer, and novelist from Nagaland. She is one of the finest story tellers from the region and has written several books in English including three collections of poetry and short stories. Her first novel, *A Naga*

Village Remembered, was the first-ever Naga novel to be published. She won the prestigious Hindu Prize for her novel, *When the River Sleeps* in 2015. The narrator begins the poem describing about her sleepless nights because of nightmares. She stays in Calcutta for a long time. This is revealed from the lines

“Ah Calcutta, I could not sleep.

I watched

Your silent city weave

A tapestry of poems, songs, dead roses

And a pair of deep brown eyes.

I saw

A thousand gipsy summers

Ride down Midnight avenue

I travelled

National highway 37”

The narrator is able to communicate with the wild geese at dawn and hears the paddy-birds in the rice-fields singing Ave Maria. But the narrator is very much disappointed that her lover is not able to hear her. communication exists between human beings and birds, but the lack of communication between one human being to the other suggests selfishness, pride and male-chauvinism. she chides her lover for being a self-centred person. This is understood when the narrator says

“Take care

Of your solipsism”

The reference is also made to Arabian Nights to show the adamant nature of the self-centred male chauvinistic society

UNIT II: Prose 2.1 “The Secret of Work” - Swami Vivekananda 2.2 “India and Greece” & “The Old Indian Theatre” - Jawaharlal Nehru (Selection from The Discovery of India) 2.3. “Religion in a Changing World” - Dr.Radhakrisnan (Religion, Science and Culture) 2.4. Passages from The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian- Nirad C.Chaudhuri (Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature – Amit Chaudhuri

“The Secret of Work” - Swami Vivekananda

The Secret of Work by Swami Vivekananda

- ▶ Swami Vivekananda was born on 12 January 1863 in Calcutta
- ▶ At the age of 15, he experienced the spiritual ecstasy.
- ▶ He joined the liberal Hindu reforming movement Brahmo Samaj.
- ▶ In 1881, he became the disciple of the great saint Ramakrishna Paramahansa.
- ▶ After Ramakrishna’s death in 1885, he assumed the leadership of the Ramakrishna order.
- ▶ In 1893, he was nominated as Indian Representative to the Parliament of Religions in Chicago.
- ▶ He founded the Vedanta Society of New York in 1896.
- ▶ In 1898, he established a monastic community, the Shanti Ashrama, on donated land near San Francisco.
- ▶ In 1900, he attended the congress of the History of Religions, where he spoke on Indian religious and cultural history.
- ▶ He died on 4 July 1902

Spiritual Knowledge and its importance

According to Vivekananda “Spiritual knowledge is the only thing that can destroy our miseries for ever;” . So “helping man spiritually is the highest help that can be given to him”

One who helps a person with spiritual knowledge is considered as the greatest benefactor of mankind .

“A spiritually strong and sound man will be strong in every other aspect”

Views of Swami Vivekananda on Physical and Intellectual help

- ▶ Physical help cannot cure the miseries of world
- ▶ Intellectual is the second important help according to Vivekananda.
- ▶ “The gift of knowledge is a far higher gift than that of food and clothes”
- ▶ “It is higher than giving life to a man”
- ▶ “Ignorance is death, knowledge is life”.

The tendency for doing good becomes strong-results in controlling the Indriyas

Indriyas refers to the sense-organs, the nerve centres

He gives an example of tortoise who “tucks its feet and head inside the shell, and you may kill it and break it in pieces, and yet it will not come out, ...”

The nature of the tortoise is compared to “the character of the man who has control over his motives and organs . . . his own inner forces, and nothing can draw them out against his will. ”

The tendency for doing good becomes strong and as a result one can control the Indriyas. This leads to the establishment of the character and pushes “man gets to truth”. Such a man is safe and can never do evil according to Vivekananda.

- ▶ “We read in the Bhagavad-Gita again and again that we must all work incessantly”.
- ▶ Krishna says “ ‘Look at Me, Arjuna! If I stop from work for one moment, the whole universe will die. I have nothing to gain from work; I am the one Lord, but why do I work? Because I love the world’. God is unattached because He loves; that real love makes us unattached. ”
- ▶ Nothing should be expected in return.
- ▶ “Attachment occurs only where we expect a return”

Vivekananda's views on work and charity

- ▶ “If working like slaves results in selfishness and attachment, working as master of our own mind gives rise to the bliss of non-attachment.
- ▶ Real love that makes us unattached.
- ▶ Work should be looked as “ ‘worship’ ”
- ▶ “ . . . Be grateful to them for giving you the occasion of practising charity to them”

“India and Greece” and “The Old Indian Theatre”



Image Source <https://www.slideshare.net/chetanmahawar1/biography-of-jawaharlal-nehru>

Highlights of Life

- First Prime Minister of India.
- Started the newspaper "Independent".
- He wrote the widely read book "The Glimpses Of India".
- Took part in non-cooperation movement, elected president of the Allahabad , municipal cooperation.
- He was the main architect of non-aligned movement.
- Elected President ,Indian National Congress.

Image Source <https://www.slideshare.net/chetanmahawar1/biography-of-jawaharlal-nehru>



Greece is different from India

- ▶ Geographically and climatically Greece is different from India
- ▶ In Greece, there are no real rivers, no forests, no big trees .
- ▶ The sea with its immensity and changing moods affected the Greeks more than the Indians
- ▶ India's life was more continental , of vast plains, huge mountains, mighty rivers and great forests.
- ▶ There were some mountains in Greece and the Greece chose Olympus as the abode of the gods, just as the Indians placed their gods and even their sages on the Himalayan heights.
- ▶ The old Greeks are said to have been neither pleasure-seekers nor ascetics

The old Greeks are neither pleasure-seekers nor ascetics

- ▶ They did not avoid pleasure as something evil and immoral.
- ▶ They did not go out deliberately to amuse themselves as modern people are apt to do.
- ▶ They took life in their stride, applying themselves wholly to whatever they did, and thus somehow they appear to have been more alive than Indians.

India and its ascetic aspect

- ▶ Indians gather much from old Literature
- ▶ There was an ascetic aspect of life in India too, but confined to a limited number of people . This aspect was to grow more important under the influence of Jainism and Buddhism, but, however it did not change materially the background of life.
- ▶ Life was accepted as it was and lived fully both in India and Greece
- ▶ There was a belief in the supremacy of some kind of inner life, before the advent of the scientific method.
- ▶ In the rural areas of India, life was communal. People met in the market place, in the enclosure of the temple or mosque, at the panchayat ghar or common assembly house to discuss the news of the day and their common needs. Thus public opinion was formed and found expressions

The rise and collapse of Classical Civilization

Hellenism(Greece; a culture pertaining to Greece) has among its more splendid achievements .

The experimental Science developed far more in the Hellenic world of Alexandria (in Egypt) than in Greece(330-130 BC stood in the record of scientific development and mechanical invention)

- ▶ Even Rome stood in the record of scientific development and mechanical invention.

After the collapse of Classical Civilization in Europe, it was the Arabs who kept the flame of scientific knowledge alight through the Middle Ages. The needs of a growing society paved the way for finding Zero sign and the place value system in India.

Approach common to Ancient Greece and India

- ▶ In Greece, as in India, the year was divided up by popular festivals which heralded the changing seasons and kept man in tune with nature's moods.
- ▶ We Indians too have these festivals in India for spring and harvest-time and Deepavali, the festival of light at the end of autumn, and the holy carnival in early summer, and celebrations of the heroes of epic tradition.
- ▶ There is still singing and dancing at some of these festivals, folk-songs and folk-dances like *rasa-lila*, the dance of Krishna with the *gopis* (cowherdesses)

Women in Ancient India and Greece

- ▶ There is no seclusion of women in ancient India except to some extent among royalty and the nobility.
- ▶ In Greece, there was more segregation of the genders than in India then.
- ▶ Women of learning are frequently mentioned in the old Indian books.
- ▶ They took part in public debates.
- ▶ Marriage in Greece was wholly a contractual affair; but in India it has always been considered a sacramental union.

Role of Greek Women in India via old plays of India

- ▶ Megasthenes while describing the life of the Maurya king Chandragupta, tells us: “the king’s food was prepared by women who also served him with wine which is much used by all Indians”. Some of the wine certainly came from Grecian lands or colonies, for an old Tamil poet refers to “the cool and fragrant wine brought by the Yuvanas (Ionians or Greeks) in their good ships.
- ▶ The king of Pataliputra (probably Ashoka’s father, Bindusara) wrote to Antiochus asking him to buy and send him sweet wine, dried figs, and a Sophist philosopher. Antiochus replied: “We shall send you the figs, and wine, but in Greece the laws forbid a Sophist to to sold.”
- ▶ Homosexual relations were not looked upon with disfavour in Greece, unlike in Indis

Exchanges in the world of thought and culture between the two ancient civilizations.

- ▶ Learned Indians visited Socrates and put questions to him.
- ▶ Pythogoras was influenced by Indian philosophy
- ▶ An European classical scholar, Urwick, has based his interpretations of the Republic of Plato upon Indian thought.
- ▶ The philosopher, Apollonius of Tyana probably visited the university of Taxila in north-west India about the beginning of the Christian era.
- ▶ The famous traveller and scholar, Alberuni, a Persian born came to India in the eleventh century A.C. He had already studied Greek Philosophy. In India, he took the trouble to learn Sanskrit in order to study Indian philosophy.
- ▶ However, **Indian Civilization was strong enough to hold its own against Greek Civilization**, but except in the religious spheres.

Image worship from Greece

- ▶ Image worship came to India from Greece. The Vedic religion was opposed to all forms of idol and image worship. There was not even any temples for the gods. Early Buddhism strongly opposed to it and there was a special prohibition against the making of images and statues of the Buddhas.
- ▶ Thus the search for unity in India, Greece, and elsewhere, yielded positive results and produced a harmony, a balance, and a richness in life.

Drama and its origins

- Drama began to take shape in the song and music and dances of the Krishna legends
- References are made to Nataka or the drama in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.
- Panini, the great grammarian of the sixth or seventh century B.C., mentions some dramatic forms

The old Indian Theatre by Jawaharlal Nehru

Though it was debated that Indian theatre was not independent, later it was "admitted that the Indian theatre was entirely independent in its origins, in the ideas which governed it, and in its development"

Its earliest beginnings was traced back to the hymns and dialogues of the Rig Veda which have a certain dramatic character.

A treatise on the Art of the Theatre- the Natya-Shastra

- It dated from third century A.C.
 - Such a book could only be written when the dramatic art was fully developed.
 - A Considerable literature must have preceded it.
 - An ancient playhouse in the Ramgarh Hills in Chota Nagpur, fits in with the general description of theatres given in the Natya-Shastra
 - It is believed that the regular Sanskrit drama was fully established by the third century B.C.
-

Discoveries gave a new dimension to the history of the old Indian drama.

- Bhasa, the author highly praised by many dramatists. His bunch of thirteen of his plays was discovered
- The earliest Sanskrit play discovered are those of Ashvaghosa, who lived just before or after the beginning of the Christian era. These are really fragments only of manuscripts on palm leaves, and they were discovered, strangely enough, at Turfan on the borders of the Gobi desert.

Ashvaghosa was a pious Buddhist and wrote the *Buddha Charita*

Buddha Charita – a life of the Buddha. It gained popularity in India, China and Tibet. An Indian scholar translated into Chinese.

Europe and the Indian drama

Europe first learned of the old Indian drama from Sir William Jones's translation of Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*, published in 1789

It was translated into German, French, Danish, and Italian.

Goethe was powerfully impressed and he paid a tribute to *Shakuntala*.

The idea of giving a prologue to *Faust* is said to have originated from Kalidas's prologue, which was in accordance with the usual tradition of the Sanskrit drama.

Kalidasa and the Sanskrit Literature

- Kalidasa is acknowledged to be the greatest poet and dramatist of Sanskrit Literature.
- Kalidasa wrote plays also and some long poems. His date is not certain, but it is contemplated that he lived towards the end of the fourth century. A.C. at Ujjayini during the reign of Chandragupta II, Vikramaditya of the Gupta dynasty.
- His genius was appreciated.
- His long poem is the Meghaduta, the cloud Messenger.

Kalidas' Meghaduta

- The poem is about a lover.
- He is made captive and separated from his lady-love
- In such a circumstances, the lover asks a cloud, during the rainy seson to carry his message of desperate longing to her.
- The Americal scholar Ryder, has paid a splendid scholar tribute.
- He refers to the two parts of the poem and says : "The former half is a description of external nature, yet interwoven with human feeling; the latter half is a picture of a human heart, yet the picture is framed in natural beauty. So exquisitely is the thing done that none can say which half is superior. . . Kalidasa ranks not with Anacreon and Horace and Shelley, but with Sophocles, Virgil and Milton"

Before Kalidasa

- Shudraka's 'Mrichhkatika' or the Clay Court-give us a glimpse into the mind and civilization of the day
- About 400 A.C., during the reign of Chandragupta II, another notable play was produced, Vishaka-datta's 'Mudra-Rakshasa' or the signet ring. It is a purely political play .
- It deals with the times of Chandragupta Maurya, and his chief minister, Chanakya, the author of the Arthasastra.
- Harsha, the king, who established a new empire early in the seventh century A.C., was also a playwright. He wrote three plays.
- About 700 A.C., there lived Bhavabhuti, another shining star in Sanskrit Literature.

Sanskrit and Oxford University

- Wilson, the professor of Sanskrit at Oxford University, has said "It is impossible to conceive language so beautifully musical or so magnificently grand, as that of the verses of Bhavabhuti and Kalidasa."
- Early in the ninth century, there was a sharp decline in the Sanskrit drama
- Partly due to the lack of royal patronage during the Indho-Afghan and Moghal periods and the Islamic disapproval of the drama as an art form.

Indo-Afghan, Turkish, and Moghul rulers

- They encouraged Indian culture.
- They adopted as a whole and with enthusiasm by the Moslem Courts and the nobility and some of its greatest masters have been Moslems.
- Literature and Poetry were also encouraged.
- Among the noted poets in Hindi are Moslems. Ibrahim Adil Shah, the ruler of Bijapur wrote a treatise in Hindi on Indian music.
- Both Indian poetry and music were full of references to the Hindu gods and goddesses and yet they were accepted and the old allegories and metaphors continued.
- Except in regard to actual image-making no attempt was made by Moslem rulers, to suppress any art-forms

The foremost reason for declining Sanskrit Drama

- The Sanskrit drama declined because much in India was declining in those days and the creative spirit was lessening.
- It declined long before the Afghans and Turks established themselves on the throne of Delhi.
- So Sanskrit had to compete to some extent as the learned language of the nobility with Persian.
- By 1000 A.C. the popular spoken languages, out of which modern languages have grown, were beginning to take literary forms. In spite of all this, the Sanskrit drama continued to be produced through the medieval period and up to recent times.

Various plays appeared

- In 1892 appeared a Sanskrit adaptation of Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream.'
- Manuscripts of old plays are continually being discovered.
- A list of these prepared by Professor Sylvain Levi in 1890 contained 377 plays by 189 authors.
- A more recent list contains 650 plays

The Language of the old plays

- The language of the old plays (of Kalidasa and others) is mixed–Sanskrit and one or more Prakritis, that is, popular variations of Sanskrit
- In the same play, educated people speak in Sanskrit and ordinary uneducated folk, usually women, though there are exceptions, in Prakriti.
- Yet, the old drama represents an aristocratic art meant for sophisticated audiences, royal courts and the like.

Sanskrit and Greece

- In both Greek and Sanskrit there is a sensitive awareness of nature and a feeling of being a part of that nature.
- There is a strong lyric element and poetry seems to be an integral part of life, full of meaning and significance.
- It was frequently recited.
- Reading the Greek drama one comes across many customs and ways of thought and life which remind one of old Indian customs. However, Greek drama is different from the Sanskrit.

Basis of the Greek drama and the Sanskrit drama

- The essential basis of the Greek drama is tragedy, the problem of evil.
- Why does man suffer? Why is there evil in the world? Man must learn by suffering and, if he is fortunate, he will rise above his striving.
- Man learns by suffering, he learns how to face life, but he learns also that the ultimate mystery remains and he cannot find an answer to this questions or solve the riddle of good and evil.
- The play and Sanskrit poetry in general were in full accord with the Indian spirit . The hero is always a man of courage who faces all hazards. 'The ignorant rely on Providence' says Chanakya contemptuously in the 'Mudra-Rakshasa', they look to the stars for help instead of relying on themselves. The hero is always the hero and the villain always acts villainously.

Characteristic of Sanskrit drama

- Powerful dramatic situations, moving scenes and a background of life – all woven together by a poet's fancy in magnificent language.
- It almost seems, that life in India was more peaceful, more stable then; as if it had discovered its roots and found answer to its questions. It flows along serenely and even strong winds and passing storms ruffle its surface only. There is nothing like the fierce tempests of Greek tragedy. But it is very human and there is an aesthetic harmony and a logical unity about it. The Nataka, the Indian drama, says Sylvain Levi, still remains the happiest invention of the Indian genius.
- Professor A. Berriedale Keith regarded Sanskrit drama as the highest product of Indian poetry. The Brahmins were abused as they have been in this as in other matters, was the source of the intellectual distinction of India.

Joseph Krutch on Shudraka's 'Mrichhkatika'

- An English translation of Shudraka's 'Mrichhkatika' was staged in New York in 1925.
- Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch, the dramatic critic of the *Nation* commented on it -
- as genius example of pure art theatre.
- It is not realistic but real Whoever the author may have been, and whether he lived in the fourth century or the eighth, he was a good man and wise with the goodness and wisdom which come not from the lips or the smoothly flowing pen of the moralist, but from the heart.
- Nowhere in our European past , can find a work more completely civilized than this.

Religion in a Changing World by Radhakrishnan



Source Image - <https://in.images.search.yahoo.com/>

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was an erudite scholar, philosopher and statesman from India. He was the first Vice-President and the second President of India. In his work, he compares the traditions of East and West, showing their similarities and differences; and further the importance and the greatness of Indian philosophy is brought out to the west through his works. In this book, Dr. Radhakrishnan talks not only about religion, but also about the themes from basic humanity to disarmament. He compares the religions of the East and the West; explains how every religion basically stands for the basic good of humanity and finally how the Industrialization has drastically changed the society which led people to the extent of questioning religion and philosophy.

Radhakrishnan strongly advocates that “all humans on some level have religious instincts but the plane of reason makes them reject it”. In the chapter “the emerging

world society” he explains how our narrow visions of different world are changing. Economy has made the world a “global village”.

He criticises the recent military development and the feeling of nationalism among people. He calls “nationalism as collective selfishness”. The feeling of nationalism has led to war in the history. He takes the stand of idealist and describes how men should go from a “national man” to “universal man”. He highly believes in global organisations like United Nations to solve all human problems from hunger to diseases.

He condemns religion of today’s world as it leads to violence. He has a negative and pessimistic view of the world. He hates the materialistic attitude of the leaders.

Dr Radhakrishnan in the chapter “faith and reason” talks about the pessimistic approach of human beings He does not insist on the presence of one god or one religion, bur according to him, God is a supreme being, and religion is all about understanding oneself. Later, Dr. Radhakrishnan shifts from religion to humanity and in it he describes the importance of Democracy. According to him, a person gains dignity when he lives a life free from oppression. He praises communism. He advocates the fact that all religions should aim to unite the world to create a warless society and the money spent in war and purchasing weapons should be used to increase the standard of living of all men. The influence of Gandhiji and Hinduism is felt throughout his writing. His writing appeals to all ages.

The Autobiography of an unknown Indian Writer by Nirad C. Chaduri

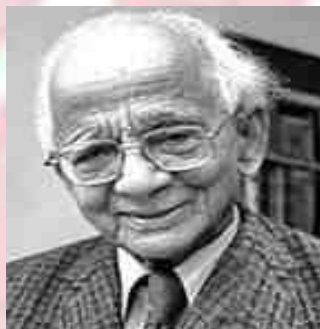


Image Source - <https://en.banglapedia.org/>

Nirad Chandra Chaudhuri (1897-1999) was born in a small town in pre-independence India called Kishorganj, East Bengal. *The Autobiography of an unknown Indian Writer* by Nirad C. Chaudhuri is divided into four books.

Book One: Early Environment with four sub- divisions such as My Birthplace 2. My Ancestral Village 3. My Mother’s Village 4. England.

Book Two: First Twelve Years with four sub- divisions such as 1.My Birth, Parents, and Early Years 2. Torch Race of the Indian Renaissane 3. Enter Nationalism.

Book Three: Education with four sub- divisions such as 1. Calcutta 2. Experiences of Adolescence 3. Citizen-Student 4. Initiation into Scholarship.

Book Four: Into the World with four sub- divisions Man and Life in Calcutta 2. New Politics 3. Vanishing Landmarks 4. An essay on the Course of Indian History.

In **Book-1**, he describes three places. First, his “little country town” - Kishorganj in which he was born and lived until he was twelve; second, his ancestral village and third, village of his mother’s folk. Further, he adds an account of his “boyish notions of England”.

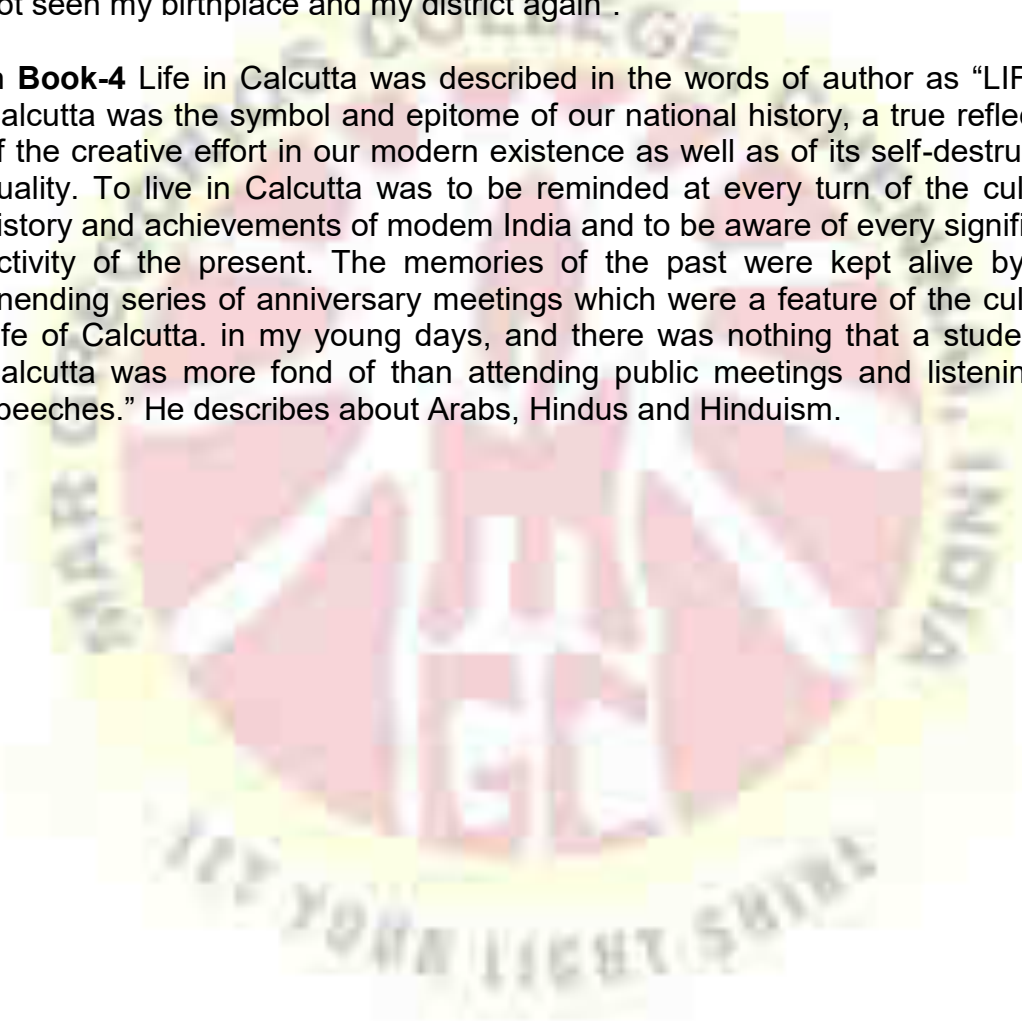
His birthplace and his ancestral village were in the same district of East-Bengal-Mymensingh. But his mother’s village was in the neighbouring district across the great river Meghna. He describes Kishorganj, his birth place as “was only a normal specimen of its class one among a score of collections of tin-and-mat huts or sheds, comprising courts, offices, schools, shops and residential dwellings, which British administration had raised up in the green and brown spaces of East Bengal” and the huts “. . . creaked at almost every wind, and one strong cyclone was enough to obliterate the distinction between country and town. I myself, arriving home one dark night from Calcutta after the great cyclone of 1919, had very great difficulty in finding the town among the fallen trees.” During rainy seasons, the river at Kishorkanj was brimming with water unlike during the other seasons. Chaudhuri describes the river as “To compare small things with great, it was our Nile. Our town was the gift of the river.” He further adds that the “cows and elephants of the town also bathed in the river but, as a rule, only after we had our turn and never alongside us. Often we ran after our cow when the servant took her down for a wash. We took up the water in our folded hands and, sniffing it, found it charged with the acrid smell of cattle. We also looked on with delight when the elephant of Joyka, a near neighbor of ours, waded majestically into the river and disported herself in it.” Then, he describes the boats that reached Kishoranj when the water in the river rose as “They were all country boats, having the outlines and general shape of the model boats found in the tombs of the Middle Kingdom of Egypt.” But, author feels sorry when he heard that these pretty boats “. . . had been ruthlessly destroyed at the time of the Japanese invasion scare of 1942.”

In **Book-2**, the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon, an historical event is presented through the voice of Nirad Chaudhari. “IT WAS IN October 1905 that we had our formal initiation into the nationalist movement. The previous year, after coming back from Calcutta, we had heard that Lord Curzon had been at Mymensingh and made a speech there, which our elders discussed with great vehemence and some amusement. It had something to do with the proposed partition of Bengal. In 1905 the partition came and with it the nationalist agitation. Our opposition to the division of Bengal was fierce.” The riots between Hindus and Muslims were presented realistically. Author’s mother falls sick and as a result they decide to leave Kishorganj. As author says “My mother and we, the children, were then getting ready to go away to Kalikutch, and we did not pay much attention to the rumours, nor did it strike us, as I have already said, that the possibility of a Hindu-Muslim riot in the town had anything to do

with our going. At Kalikutch people surprised us by asking whether we had come away on account of the likelihood of trouble at Kishorganj”.

In **Book -3** The author stayed in Calcutta from June 1910 to March 1942. But he puts that “My father's business ventures there did not succeed. He went back to Kishorganj in 1913 to resume his practice, and did better than before. My mother and the younger children accompanied him, but my elder brother and I remained behind. During our school and college days we regularly went to Kishorganj twice a year to spend the vacations with the family, except when my mother came down to Calcutta and stayed with us. In 1921 I took up employment, and in the next few years visited my parents only occasionally. I came away from Kishorganj for the last time on 14 November 1927, and have not seen my birthplace and my district again”.

In **Book-4** Life in Calcutta was described in the words of author as “LIFE in Calcutta was the symbol and epitome of our national history, a true reflection of the creative effort in our modern existence as well as of its self-destructive duality. To live in Calcutta was to be reminded at every turn of the cultural history and achievements of modern India and to be aware of every significant activity of the present. The memories of the past were kept alive by the unending series of anniversary meetings which were a feature of the cultural life of Calcutta. In my young days, and there was nothing that a student in Calcutta was more fond of than attending public meetings and listening to speeches.” He describes about Arabs, Hindus and Hinduism.



UNIT III: Drama 3.1 Dance Like a Man Mahesh Dattani

3.1 Dance like a Man By Mahesh Dattani

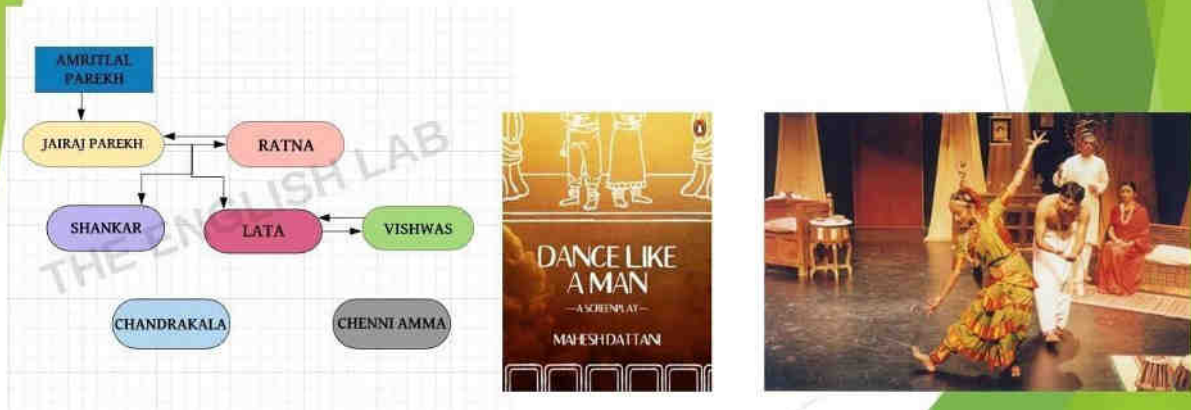


Image Source - <https://www.indulgexpress.com/>

Mahesh Dattani was born in Bangalore on 7 August 1958 and studied in Baldwin's High School and St. Joseph's College of Arts and Science at Bangalore. He is a director, actor, dancer, teacher and writer. He has acted in several plays. His best known plays are *Where There's A Will* (1989), *Dance like a Man* (1989), *TARa* (1990), *Bravely Fought the Queen* (1991) *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*, *Seven Circles Round the Fire* (1998). *The Swami and Winston* (2000), and *Thirty Days in September* (2001).

Dance Like A Man

Mahesh Dattani



In the above play *Dance like a Man*, Dattani has presented three generations. Amritlal is the grand old man; Jairaj and Ratna are his son and daughter-in-law; Lata is his grand daughter. Amritlal hates the profession of dancing. He dislikes her daughter-in-law, when he learns that his daughter-in-law, Ratna, goes to a woman to learn dancing. Ratna says that the woman is seventy-five years old and her husband Jairaj knows where she goes. He also convinces her father-in-law saying that she practises divine dance of Shiva and Parvati. However, Ratna manipulated her husband Jairaj. She is much bothered about her success, not about her husband's. In short, one can say Ratna is a selfish and possessive woman. Lata and Viswas love each other. Viswas is a son of a Halwai who is busy supervising the making of Jalebis in the shop. Lata marries Viswas. But Lata is quite different from her mother. She speaks her mind and never hides anything from anyone.

Use the link below to watch the play *Dance like a Man* by Mahesh Dattani

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lrjEk4RX5w>

UNIT IV: Short Story 4.1 “Under the Banyan Tree” R.K Narayan 4.2 “The Night Train at Deoli” Ruskin Bond 4.3 “Unaccustomed Earth” Jhumpa Lahiri 4.4 “Laburnum for my Head” Tamsin Ayres

R. K. Narayan “Under the Banyan Tree”



Image Source <https://in.images.search.yahoo.com>

Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami was commonly known as R.K. Narayan. He was born in Chennai on 10 October 1906. He is an Indian writer known for his work set in the imaginary South Indian town of Malgudi. His first novel was *Swamy and his Friends*. He died on 13 May 2001. His best works are *The English Teacher* (1945), *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), *The Guide* (1958), *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* (1961), *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967), and *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983). Narayan also wrote a number of short stories; collections include *Lawley Road* (1956), *A Horse and Two Goats and Other Stories* (1970), *Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories* (1985), and *The Grandmother's Tale* (1993). In addition to works of nonfiction (chiefly memoirs), he also published shortened modern prose versions of two Indian epics, *The Ramayana* (1972) and *The Mahabharata* (1978). He died on 13 May 2001.

“Under the Banyan Tree,” is a short story from his collection *Under the Banyan Tree, and Other Stories* (1985). Earlier, it appeared in his volume, *An Astrologer's Day, and Other Stories* (1947). It is narrated in third person. The story is set in a remote village of South India. The protagonist of the story is Nambi, a story teller.

Nambi is an old man. Though he is an old man, he is gifted with an art of storytelling. He takes shelter under the banyan tree and narrates a story per month. He narrates the story continuously for three hours in the bright moon light. He lives in the front portion of little temple. He serves as the priest at temple and leads the villagers in the worship of the Goddess Shakti. His

imagination is a great gift. Villagers are amused by his art and they are entirely occupied by Nambi in the art of story telling. Nambi makes them laugh and cry.

Unfortunately, Nambi fails to complete the story. He begins the story for an hour, later he begins to stumble. The villagers grow impatient with him and they gradually slip one by one from the gathered crowd. This happens several times. Nambi feels very bad that he has lost his ability to narrate the story. He tells to the villagers that the art of story telling is the gift from Goddess Shakti and now she has taken it back. After speaking these words, he goes back into the temple and leads his rest of his life in silence.

The Night Train at Deoli By Ruskin Bond



Image Source: <https://www.thefamouspeople.com/>

The Night Train at Deoli

~ Ruskin Bond

- Ruskin Bond was born on 19 May 1934 at Kausauli. He has written several short stories, novels. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award, Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan in 1992, 1999 and 2014 respectively.
- His short story "The Night Train at Deoli" is about author's sense of longing for a girl who is selling baskets and unfortunately unable to attain her in his love. The way the author unravels the story is quite interesting and romantic. It draws the attention of many young readers and mesmerises them with romance and love.
- The plot is very simple and the whole story revolves around the night train, and the railway platform where the author is awe-struck with beauty of a young girl selling baskets at the railway platform. They pass glances at each other and these memories, though seem to be ordinary becomes extraordinary and precious with time.

- Author was eighteen, and during his summer vacations, he used to visit his grandmother's place at Dehra.
- He use to "leave the plains early in May and return late in July"
- The train reaches at Deoli at about five in the morning,
- The train stopped at Deoli for ten minutes. But "Deoli had only lone platform, an office for the stationmaster, and a waiting room. The platform boasted a tea stall, a fruit vendor, and a few stray dogs; not much else, . . . Why it stopped at Deoli, ... Nobody got off the train and nobody got in. There were never coolies on the platform . . . Lonely little platform . . ."
- When the train stopped at Deoli, in the early cold morning, the author saw a girl selling baskets down the platform.
- The girl was beautiful and she asked " 'Do you want to buy a basket?' she asked. 'They are very strong, made of the finest cane ... ' But the author refused initially.

- But, later the author bought a basket for and "gave her a rupee, hardly daring to touch her fingers. As she was about to speak, the guard blew his whistle; " and the train reached Dehra later.
- After two months, when he was making the return journey from Dehra, he was much pleased to see the the same girl ", and it was almost like a meeting of old friends. She did not go down the length of the train selling baskets, but came straight to the tea stall; her dark eyes were suddenly filled with light. We said nothing for some time but we couldn't have been more eloquent. I felt the impulse to put her on the train there and then, and take her away with me; I could not bear the thought of having to watch her recede into the distance of Deoli station. I took the baskets from her hand and put them down on the ground. She put out her hand for one of them, but I caught her hand and held it. 'I have to go to Delhi,' I said. She nodded. 'I do not have to go anywhere.' The guard blew his whistle for the train to leave and how I hated the guard for doing that. 'I will come again,' I said. 'Will you be here?' She nodded again, and, as she nodded, the bell clanged and the train slid forward. I had to wrench my hand away from the girl and run for the moving train. "

- The memories of the girl haunted author. So in the next vacation, he moved to Dehra. But when the train stopped at Deoli, he did not see the girl. He was much disappointed when he
- "opened the door and stepped off the footboard. so he " ran up to the station-master and said, 'Do you know the girl who used to sell baskets here?'" But, none knew about it.
- Once the train started moving, he boarded it with sense of disappointment.
- After reaching Dehra, the memories of the girl haunted him at his grandmother's place and the author says that his " grandmother was not pleased with my visit after all, because I didn't stay at her place more than a couple of weeks. I felt restless and ill-at-ease. So I took the train back to the plains, meaning to ask further questions of the station-master at Deoli. But at Deoli there was a new station-master. The previous man had been transferred to another post within the past week. The new man didn't know anything about the girl who sold baskets. I found the owner of the tea stall, a small, shrivelled-up man, wearing greasy clothes, and asked him if he knew anything about the girl with the baskets. 'Yes, there was such a girl here, I remember quite well,' he said. 'But she has stopped coming now.'" 'Why?' I asked. 'What happened to her?' 'How should I know?' said the man. 'She was nothing to me.' And once again I had to run for the train. As Deoli platform receded, I decided that one day I would have to break journey there, spend a day in the town, make enquiries, and find the girl who had stolen my heart with nothing but a look from her dark, impatient eyes. " With this thought I consoled myself throughout my last term in college.

Unaccustomed Earth by “Jhumpa Lahiri



Image Source-<https://in.images.search.yahoo.com/>

Jhumpa Lahiri

Jhumpa Lahiri was born on 11 July 1967 at London in England. **She is the daughter of Indians who moved to London from West Bengal. She is an American author known for her short stories, novels and essays in English. Her first short story collection, *Interpreter of Maladies* was published in the year 1999.** She published another collection of short stories called *Unaccustomed Earth* in 2008. Her first novel *The Namesake* was published in the year 2003. She was awarded the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for her short story collection *Interpreter of Maladies*.

The short story “UNACCUSTOMED EARTH” by “Jhumpa Lahiri” depicts the nuances of the relationships that exists among the members of the family specifically relationship between the father and the daughter.

A father visits his daughter (Ruma) who lives in Seattle after the death of his wife. The story narrates the difficulties faced by him after his wife’s death. Finally, he finds solace in his friend Mrs, Bagchi’s company.

The Chief characters who surface in the story are Characters: Ruma, Ruma's father, Ruma's mother, Adam, Ruma's husband, Akash, Ruma's son and Mrs. Bagchi.

Mrs. Bagchi plays a pivotal role in the life of Ruma's father. She marries a man whom she loves. Unfortunately, her husband is killed after two years of their married life in a scooter accident. At the age of 26, she moves to America and since then she never visits India except in her parents' funeral. Ruma's father finds comfort in her company.

Ruma's father decides to pay a visit to his daughter, who resides in Seattle, in Olympic Peninsula near the Pacific Ocean. But, Ruma is quite tensed about her father's arrival as she is pregnant with her second baby and in this state, she doubts whether she can take care of her father. However, she arranges a room downstairs for his father and anxiously waiting for her father to arrive to know the reaction of her father about the new house they owned recently.

A sudden business trip is scheduled for Ruma's husband, and he has to leave a day before her father's arrival, and in this situation he is quite happy when he learns that Ruma's father will be there to help her.

Ruma's father reaches Ruma's residence by cab. Ruma's son, Akash also was not much fond of his grandfather. However, after few days, Akash is attached to his grandfather, and his grandfather also reciprocates. Ruma's father helps her daughter in household works and in gardening. Above all, he takes care of himself. He never depends on anyone for any work.

Ruma's father decides to drop a postcard to his friend Mrs. Bagchi. He is in the confused state whether to disclose or not to disclose the friendly relationship which he has with Mrs. Bagchi. In such a state, he does not disclose. He writes a letter in Bengali and house address in English and decides to post it to Mrs. Bagchi, on the way back to the airport.

Ruma insists his father to stay in Seattle, but he refuses politely. Accidentally, he drops the postcard in Ruma's home and Ruma finds the postcard in the garden's soil bed and understands the reason for his father's refusal to stay at Seattle. Though, she feels that she is betrayed, she drops the postcard in the mailbox, with the hope that the letter will reach its destination and her father can renew his relationships. Thus the story is interestingly woven and has successfully portrays the relationship between Ruma's father and her daughter to protect each other despite their personal interests.

“Laburnum for my Head” by Temsula Ao



Image source: <https://alchetron.com/>

Temsula Ao was born on October 1945 in Assam. She is a poet and a short story writer. In 2013, she received the Sahitya Akademi Award for her short story collection, *Laburnum For My Head* (2009). It is the collection of eight short stories. The stories are about the lives of people from Nagaland in northeast India.

The story is about Lentina, a widow and her fascination and obsession for the Laburnum tree. She associates the tree with femininity and humility. It is narrated with a touch of tenderness and compassion. The whole story revolves around the Naga women, Lentina. She asserts her identity, unlike other women who are forcefully subjected to submissiveness without choice.

Lentina breaks the Naga patriarchal customs and decides to be present in the cremation ground. Lentina surprises everyone when she says that she is going to accompany her husband on his last journey of death. Apart from this, when she shared her plan of buying a plot to bury her after her death, her driver is shocked. She wants her tombstone to be covered with the blossoms of yellow laburnum flower. As she says “I need a place where there will be nothing but beautiful trees over my grave”. To banish the identity given by the village, she banishes the traditions of her village.

She grows the Laburnum tree in her yard and waits for the tree to flower. Her waiting for the flowers symbolises that she is waiting for hope and self-identity in her lifetime. She wants the Laburnum tree to be planted in her cemetery. This serves as a medium of liberation from mortal life to immortal life (death), where none (patriarchal society) dare to define her according to their perspectives. In this way, she redefines her identity given by her own family and patriarchal society.

The Laburnum tree never flowers in the yard of Lentina in her mortal life. But it flowers over the grave of Lentina in her immortal life.

UNIT V: Fiction 5.1 Kanthapura Raja Rao

5.1 Kanthapura By Rajarao

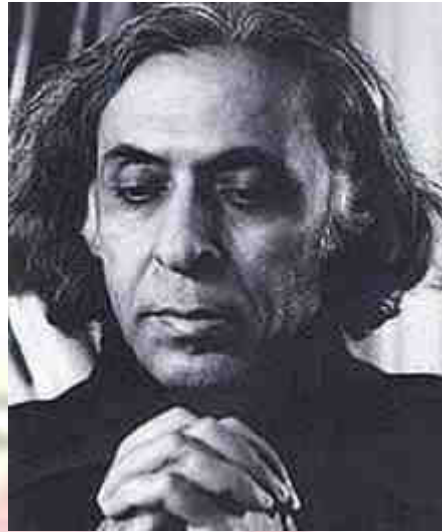


Image Source - <https://en.wikipedia.org/>

Raja Rao's first and best-known novel, *Kanthapura* (1938), is the story of a South Indian village named Kanthapura. It is the story of a small village Kanthapura with just 24 houses. It is divided into Brahmin Quarter, the Potter Quarter, the Sudra Quarter, the Weaver Quarter, and the Pariah Quarter.

The novel is narrated in the form of a Sthala Purana by an old woman of the village, Achakka. The theme of the novel is the freedom struggle.

Moorthy is a young Brahmin who has returned to his village Kanthapura. He is deeply inspired by the Mahatma Gandhi's nationalist movement to liberate India. People of Kanthapura love and respect Moorthy. They follow the ideals of Moorthy unflinchingly. Moorthy fights not only for the cause of freedom struggle, but also in eradicating the caste system prevalent in the village, and against untouchability. Moorthy is a believer of non-violence. He practised the Gandhian principles of truth, non-violence and the love. The villagers followed the non-violent Satyagraha movement of Gandhiji.

The woman called Mahatma "the big mountain" and Moorthy "the small mountain." Moorthy's movement draws the attention of the British officials and as a result he is arrested and sent to prison for three months.

Raja Rao describes the incidents that has taken place during the initial years of Satyagraha movement started by Gandhiji in 1930. Raja Rao's involvement in the nationalistic movement is reflected in this novel. He participated in the Quit India Movement of 1942.

The novel portrays the difficulties faced by the freedom fighters during their independence struggle. Raja Rao gives the glimpses of Gandhi's Dandi March and Salt Satyagraha.

Gandhiji launches the salt-satyagraha and he is arrested. After the arrest of Gandhiji, Moorthy leads the Satyagraha against toddy shops and trees. The villagers begin to cut down the Toddy trees and policemen mercilessly beat them. Gandhiji advocates the non-payment of land-revenue and the villagers refuse to pay the taxes. The villagers are attacked by the Britishers, however, they maintain peace. The fields of the villagers are auctioned by the Government. The whole village is burnt down and many men and women are arrested. After these incidents, the villagers migrate to the Mysore state and settle down in a place known as Kashipura and people from Bombay occupy Kanthapura. Thus the end of the novel sees the end of the village Kanthapura.

