

GOVERNMENT ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGE, KOVILPATTI – 628502

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STUDY MATERIAL FOR III B.A ENGLISH

WORLD LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION

SEMESTER – V, ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-21

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UNIT – I

PROSE

WALTER BENJAMIN – UNPACKING MY LIBRARY: A TALK ABOUT BOOK

COLLECTING

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

Walter Benjamin was born in Germany in 1892. He was known as a ‘man of letters’. Having been educated in Switzerland he had a short career in the lead up to the Second World War, which saw him carve a niche as a literary critic. In the 1930s he turned to Marxism, partly due to the influence of Bertolt Brecht and partly due to the rise of extreme right-wing politics in Europe. He spent much of his professional life in Paris. Benjamin died in 1940 having committed suicide at the French-Spanish border while attempting to escape the Nazis.

The author seeks to describe book collectors and the means by which they acquire their collections. He takes a serious look at the act of collecting books and the relationship between the collector and his or her possessions. The inspiration for this essay was the act of unpacking his library after its two-year storage. Benjamin allots the major part of the essay describing the various means of acquiring books and retelling stories of some of the books within his library. It gives an overview of the interdisciplinary field of the history of the book, history of reading and the materiality of texts, among other topics and methodologies. The article then considers applications of this field to the literature classroom.

Benjamin sets the scene not by describing orderly rows of books usually associated with

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libraries but by talking about the disarray of storage. His imagery helps set the mood and can inspire a sense of anticipation of rediscovering each object and each book. Benjamin states that there is a spring tide of memories which surges toward any collector as he contemplates his possessions. He elaborates his proposals a little saying every passion borders on the chaotic. But the collector's passion borders on chaos of memories. The anticipation of unpacking his library is not only caused by being reunited by the actual books but also by being able to relieve the experiences associated with each book.

It is a little ironic that the book or object is not the ultimate pleasure of collecting but it also incorporates the thrill of acquisition and the history at the object. Everything remembered and thought everything conscious, becomes the pedestal, the frame, the base, the lock of his property. The period, the region, the craftsmanship, the former ownership - for a true collector the whole background of an item adds up to a magic encyclopedia whose quintessence is the fate of his object. These things overshadow the functional, utilitarian aspect of the object. This is emphasized when Benjamin suggests that most books in a library are not actually read by the owner.

One of the most important aspects of the relationship between the collector and his objects is that act of acquisition. Benjamin takes the majority of the essay describing the various means of acquiring books and retelling stories of some of the books within his library. Another of the free methods of adding books to one's collection' and the most common is by borrowing them and not returning them. Benjamin suggests that it is a conscious act for the habitual

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collector. Auctions can allow collectors to get carried away with winning the bid. The last means of acquiring books is through inheritance. This is the soundest way because a collector's attitude towards his possessions stems from an owner's feeling of responsibility toward his property.

Benjamin returns to the memories incited by the objects talking about how his library conjures memories of where these books had been housed. Several thousand volumes are piled around him. He reasserts that it is the relationship of the collector to his or her objects that is important to the collection because the phenomenon of collecting loses its meaning as it loses its personal owners. No one will be able to order a collection with the same understanding that the original owner did. Collections can tell, for the collector, not only the historical story of the object itself but also the story of the collector. Ownership is the most intimate relationship that one can have to objects. Not that they come alive in him. It is he who lives in them.

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE – OF FRIENDSHIP

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

Michel Eyquem de Montaigne was born in France on 28 February 1533. He was one of the most influential writers of the French Renaissance. His *Essais* (Essays) established a new literary form. He is known for popularizing the essay as a literary genre. He became famous for his effortless ability to merge serious intellectual speculation with casual anecdotes and autobiography-and his massive volume *Essais* (translated literally as “Attempts”) contains some of-the most widely influential essays ever written. He died on September 23, 1592.

The essay explores the difference between ordinary companions and true friends. It

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discusses the differences between friends and acquaintances. Montaigne measures all relationships in this essay using the friendship of his very close friend, Estienne de la Boetie, as the standard.

Michel de Montaigne is regarded as the father of the essay. An essay, in Montaigne's conception, is a trial, a test-drive of an idea, a throwing of noodles against the wall. Montaigne posits friendship as possibly the highest human good, a spiritual endeavour. "Friendship," he says, "is enjoyed...proportionally as it is desired; and only grows up, is nourished and improved by enjoyment, as being itself spiritual, and the soul growing still more refined by practice." Friendship is transcendent: of family relationships, social duties, and customs.

Losing a close friend early in life makes friendship a topic that Montaigne takes very seriously. His own close friendship with a man named Etienne Boetie is the standard he uses for measuring all relationships. Montaigne goes through several types in order to show what real friendship is not. A parent and child cannot experience real friendship. According to Montaigne real friendship cannot exist between them because of their too great inequality. Montaigne says that father and son may be of entirely different dispositions and brothers also. Moral philosophy is being performed around a real friendship. Montaigne uses to express philosophical positions. The question is that of personal identity and the fusion of the friends' identities in perfect friendship. The friend as a singular person is an important issue in the philosophy of friendship during Montaigne's time. Common friendships will admit of division.

Aristotle posits three types of friendship namely friendships of pleasure, friendships of

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utility and friendships of virtue. Montaigne is interested in the latter type. Montaigne says that true friendship is only possible in certain contexts; For Montaigne, friendship is a spiritual practice rooted in divulgence and sharing. Ordinary friendships by Montaigne's definition are mere acquaintanceships and familiarities, formed by some chance or convenience.

Montaigne believes that women are not capable of sustaining the kind of friendship he has in mind. That is blunt and may be women have a different view. Montaigne says that in love there is nothing but a frantic desire and friendship would destroy the attraction. Montaigne is emphatically not opposed to this kind of attraction. He appreciates a beautiful woman as well as sex and openly states that he prefers for the bed, beauty before goodness. Any sexual relationship cancels out the possibility of true friendship. According to Montaigne's reckoning sexual desire is a burning flame. Friendship is a warm glow.

Montaigne formulates his feeling of friendship in ways that essentially anticipate a private sublime of human affection for another. And comfort our sense that there are, and perhaps should be, some areas of human emotional interaction that resist rational explanation. This private sublime of affection runs counter to the classical philosophical account of friendship. The essence of true friendship for Montaigne is that in its presence the soul grows refined. Divisions of taste, experience and ambition are capable of complicating not only Montaigne's perception of soul refinement but that of friendship itself.

UNIT – II

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POETRY

KAHLIL GIBRAN – YOUR CHILDREN ARE NOT YOUR CHILDREN (1923)

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

Kahlil Gibran was born on January 6, 1883. He was a Lebanese author, philosopher, illustrator, journalist, poet and artist. His poetry is notable for its use of formal language and insights on topics of life using spiritual terms. Gibran's works were especially influential in the American popular culture in 1960s. He immigrated to Boston, USA in 1895. He studied art in Boston, and French and Arabic in Lebanon. The spelling “Kahlil Gibran” is the result of a suggestion by his English teacher that he Anglicized his name to make it more acceptable in society. He died in New York City on April 10, 1931.

This poem is a review of the usual expectations of parents about their children. It guides the parents on the essence of parenting with love much against the routine expectations. The poem stresses the importance of children’s individual views and independent ideologies not influenced by their parents.

Kahlil Gibran is a Lebanese-American poet who brings out high philosophy of life in his simple and beautiful poetic essays. His “On Children” is a critique of the usual expectations of parents about their children. Through this poem he offers to guide parents on the essence of parenting with love much against the mundane expectations. In this poem, a mother approaches the Prophet to know about his perspectives on children. He captures the attention in his shocking declaration, “Your children are not your children”. He beautifully brings up the concept of Life’s

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creations and its aspirations. Contrary to the accepted notion of parents making claims, the prophet says that they are just biological means and the children do not belong to them. Children live with their parents but they do not belong to them. Parents may give their love to children and they should never force their ideas on children. Children have their own ideas and identity. The Prophet says that parents have a biological bond with the children now. However, souls of the children lie in future which cannot be reached by parents.

So, the advice here to parents is they shall not pressurize children with their thoughts. Parents are suggested rather to follow the ways of children than trying to change children to be like them. The Prophet says that this is because Life keeps moving forward and never retracts. He further substantiates his philosophy by making metaphorical references. Parents are compared to bows and children are compared to arrows. The archer, God himself sets.

His eyes on the target which is infinite and sends His arrows swift and far by bending the bow with His might. Parents should take delight in this act of bending that involves great strain. The Prophet strikes a perfect conclusion by referring to the Law of creation where God loves both the bow and the arrow as they complement each other on Life's infinite journey. Kahlil Gibran stresses here the importance of children's individual views and independent ideologies not influenced by their parents.

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE – THE REUNION (1902)

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was born in Frankfurt, Germany, on 28 August 1749. He

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was a German writer and statesman. His works include novels, epic and lyric poetry, prose and verse dramas, memoirs, an autobiography, literary and aesthetic criticism, and treatises on botany, anatomy, and colour. Further, there are numerous literary and scientific fragments, more than 10,000 letters, and about 3,000 drawings by him. He died on 22 March 1832. The poet philosophically presents how dear the Almighty God is to him. He exclaims on the super powers of Almighty and describes the beauty and glow spread on the Earth. He concludes the poem adding different perspective to God's creativity.

“The Reunion” is one of the best poems of the great German poet Goethe who created a body of poetry that is unsurpassed in lucidity of speech and imagery and in instinct for melody and rhythm. He is the founder of the poetry of experience and he reintroduced intimacy to the public world, and his poems had something to offer every person.

The theme of this poem “The Reunion”, Goethe speaks about the marvelous creative faculty of God, the Heavenly Father of all of us. It also tells us about the two creations made by God. The second creation helps man to be reunited with his Heavenly Father. The second creation is the marvelous mercy of God to man his beloved child, giving him the amazing gift of God's creative faculty to Man, so that man can continue the noble work of God's creative activity which gives man both pain and joy of creation!

The narrator calls God as ‘the star of stars’ and he wants to press the Heavenly Father to his heart again. In the beginning God had kept all his beloved children, the fauna and flora, the twinkling stars, the moon and the sun and every creature to his eternal breast because He loved

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His children more than Himself.

Then he ordained its hour of birth. It was a momentous decision. The time of creation! Let His beloved children come out His loving breast and grow eternally enjoying their Father's creative faculty. God spoke the sentence "Become". "And the All with might throes burst into reality". The earth was enveloped in stark dark. On hearing the voice of God, dark disappeared and the dawn appeared and its kindness soon made known. Every child of God comes out of His loving breast and the universe abounds in twinkling stars, planets, trees, bushes, valleys, hills and green carpeted meadows, all creatures appeared everywhere, animals, and birds, human beings, flowers of various colours and fruits and bushes, rivers, brooks, and oceans formed at the right place obediently with love and mercy flowed from the breast of Heavenly Father, the great architect of the universe.

All the children of God went out of him with great pain and sorrow. Departure is always painful, but at the same time all His creations enjoy the bliss and love of new birth! Everywhere unbounded life, all stars and planets move humming divine music at their fixed orbits. The beauty of creation is emerged out of pain of separation.

The Reunion of God and Man is completed with God's second command "Become." This marvelous reunion is the loving gift of God to man, his children. Thus man began the noble work of God, making researches in every field of life probing how and why the universe is created. Science and technology began to be developed. Art, literature, music began to grow. Great epic poems have been created. Communication, transportation, Railways, Aero plane, Computers

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came into being. The beauty and rhythm of God's creation flows on through Man, enjoying the bliss of creative faculty.

PABLO NERUDA – IF YOU FORGET ME (1952)

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

Pablo Neruda was born Neftali Ricardo Reyes Basoalto in Chile on July 12, 1904. He is said to be the greatest poet of his lifetime who wrote in Spanish. Neruda started writing around the age of ten. He then became an important Chilean poet. In 1943, he was elected to the Senate and became part of the Communist Party. Communism was outlawed in Chile in 1948, and a warrant was issued for Neruda's arrest. Because of this, he lost his Senate seat and had to flee from the authorities. Despite having to hide, Neruda continued writing during this time. In 1952 he returned to Chile because there was no longer a threat of being arrested. Neruda received various awards during his lifetime. Some are International Peace Prize (1950), Lenin Peace Prize (1953), Stalin Peace Prize (1953), and Nobel Prize for Literature (1971). He died of leukemia in Santiago, Chile on September 23, 1973.

Pablo Neruda wrote this poem when he was in exile from Chile. At that time he had an affair with a woman Matilde Urrutia. The poem might be written with Matilde in his mind. The poem depicts the longevity of love when cared for without ignorance. Other critics believe this poem was written not to his lover, but to his homeland Chile, warning her not to forget him while he is in exile. Regardless of the interpretation, the poem is one of the most popular love poems in literature.

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The poem “If You Forget Me” by Pablo Neruda is a young boy’s reflection of the intensity of his inner love. In the initial stages of the poem, he states that no matter what he does in life, everything takes him closer to his girl. The poet compares his beloved to the purity and spirituality of the moon, and says that when he looks into the divine, crystal white moon, all he can think about is her. In his mind, everything he feels, or touches, even the burnt out leaves in the fireplace or dried out crisp logs, makes him feel closer to her.

The poem is an elaborative description of how the mind and heart of the poet functions every day in remembrance of his beloved one. The poet finds her smell in the sweet aroma of the air, her eyes flickering in the fireplace, and finds her glow in the metal pieces. The poet illustrates the belligerent screaming of his heart and how it aches for him to think if only everything could turn into a boat for him to travel oceans to be near her.

The second half of the poem gives us a picturesque depiction of how selfless and pure the love of the poet is for his beloved. He mentions that even if she might stop loving him someday, he won’t stop longing for her. Instead he will pray to God to make the day his beloved stops thinking about him the way she used to, his last day.

The poet states that his love is undivided, and their love can be everlasting if she remembers him every day just like he does, if she longs for him as badly as he. The poet wants nothing else than to grow old with his beloved, and eventually to die in her arms, even though he doesn’t know if she even remembers him.

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UNIT – III

SHORT STORIES

ANTON CHEKHOV – VANKA (1886)

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SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov was born on January 29, 1860, in Taganrog, Russia. He is recognized as a master of the modern short story and a leading playwright of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's. His stories became famous for their surprise endings.

He found his characters from among the middle class and poor people of Russia. Chekhov died of tuberculosis in 1904 in Germany. This story is about a nine year old orphan apprenticed to a shoemaker stealthily writes a letter to his grandfather, asking to be taken to live with him, so that he can escape his life of deprivation and mistreatment.

The story opens on Christmas Eve with Vanka, a poor orphan of the age of nine, sitting down to write a letter to his grandfather; this man works as a night watchman for the Zhivarev family estate and resides in an unidentified village in Russia. Vanka has been transferred to new masters in Moscow to live with the family of Alyahin the shoemaker. This lifestyle oppresses the little orphan, who grows frustrated with the situation and tries to contact his grandfather to ask for help.

As he writes the letter, Vanka recalls his jesting, lively grandfather and his life at the village before he was apprenticed to this new home. The young boy recollects the two dogs, Kashtanka and Eel, who follow his grandfather around the estate and sometimes partake of the grandfather's snuff. As he writes, Vanka also records some of the harsh treatment that he has received at the hands of Alyahin, Alyahin's wife, and the older apprentices. A lifestyle of beatings, scolding's, mockery, and unsatisfactory food has driven Vanka to crave escape; he

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writes that, if he is rescued from Alyahin, he will protect his grandfather and gladly perform odd jobs.

Vanka also describes some of the goods available in the Moscow shops. Yet his thoughts are dominated by memories of a Christmas at the Zhivarev household, when Vanka had accompanied his grandfather into a nearby forest to cut down a Christmas tree. Olga Ignatyevna, a lively young woman from the Zhivarev family, had decorated the tree; she is also dear to Vanka because she taught him to read, write, count, and dance. However, after his mother's death, Vanka was sent out of Olga's company and then transferred to Alyahin's premises. Overcome with emotion, Vanka returns to his letter, writing out a plea for his grandfather to take him away. He also, however, sends his regards to a few people from his former life in the village.

After the letter is finished, the little boy puts down the name of his grandfather, Konstantin Makaritch. For the address, he writes down "the village." (He is not aware of the fact that letters, in order to be sent, need to be stamped.) In good hopes, Vanka rushes into the street, throws the letter into the nearest post-box, and then goes back to Alyahin's to sleep, happily dreaming about his grandfather sitting by the stove and reading the letter to the cooks.

GABRIEL GRACIA MARQUEZ – A VERY OLD MAN WITH ENORMOUS WINGS (1972)
SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

Gabriel Garcia Marquez was born in 1927 in the small town of Aracataca, situated in a tropical region of northern Colombia. He grew up with his maternal grandparent. His grandfather was a pensioned colonel from the civil war at the beginning of the century. He went to a Jesuit

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college and began to read law, but his studies were soon broken off for his work as a journalist. In 1954 he was sent to Rome on an assignment for his newspaper, and since then he has mostly lived abroad in Paris, New York, Barcelona and Mexico in a more or less compulsory exile. Besides his large output of fiction he has written screenplays and has continued to work as a journalist. The Nobel Prize in Literature 1982 was awarded to him for his novels and short stories, in which the fantastic and the realistic are combined in a richly composed world of imagination, reflecting a continent's life and conflicts. Gabriel Garcia Marquez died on 17 April 2014.

“A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” is a short story by Colombian writer and author Gabriel Garcia Marquez. It falls within the genre of magic realism. It was first published in 1955 in Spanish and then in English in 1972. The story involves a very old man with enormous wings who appears in a family's backyard on a stormy night and the reactions of the family and visitors.

The short story, “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” tells the story of Pelayo and his wife Elisenda, who find an old man with wings in their courtyard after killing crabs in a rainstorm. Pelayo gets his wife, and they try to communicate with him unsuccessfully. They eventually get their neighbour woman, who informs them that the old man is an angel. She tells them that it was on its way for their sick child.

They put the angel in the chicken coop, and during the middle of the night their child's fever breaks. They decide to let him go, but when they return to the courtyard at dawn the entire

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community has arrived to see the angel. Father Gonzaga soon arrives, declaring that the old man is a fake. He promises to get the real truth from the higher courts of the church. The news of the angel spreads like wildfire, and the courtyard soon resembles a marketplace. Elisenda then has the idea of charging a five cent admission fee for seeing the angel; they are soon rich. Rome takes it time deciding on whether the old man is an angel, and while waiting for their verdict, Father Gonzaga works desperately to restrain the crowd.

The crowd leaves on its own, however, when a carnival boasting a Spider-Girl arrives in town. Spectators are allowed to question her, and she tells them how she was turned into a tarantula one night for disobeying her parents. This appeals to the masses more than an old winged man who ignores the people around him. Thus, the curious crowds soon leave the angel for the spider, leaving Pelayo's courtyard deserted.

Pelayo and Elisenda build a mansion with all the money they have accumulated. They neglect the angel and prevent their child from getting to close to the chicken coop. He soon becomes a part of their life, and they no longer fear him. The child visits him often. After a while the chicken coop breaks, and they allow him to move around their house, although it causes Elisenda much distress. He gets increasingly frail and sickly, and they fear that he will die. He recovers, however, and one day Elisenda watches him fly away, to her great relief.

IVAN S. TURGENEV – THE DISTRICT DOCTOR (1855)

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

Ivan Turgenev was born in Oryol, Russia, in 1818. He was Russian novelist, short story

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writer, poet, playwright, translator and popularizer of Russian literature in the West. His major works include the short-story collection “A Sportsman’s Sketches” (1852) and the novels Rudin (1856), Home of the Gentry (1859), On the Eve (1860), and Fathers and Sons (1862). These works offer realistic, affectionate portrayals of the Russian peasantry and penetrating studies of the Russian intelligentsia who were attempting to move the country into a new age. Turgenev poured into his writings not only a deep concern for the future of his native land but also integrity of craft that has ensured his place in Russian literature. He died in Bougival, near Paris, France, in 1883.

“The District Doctor” is a tragic tale of a tangled doctor-patient romance. For many days a district doctor stays with a beautiful twenty year-old woman patient and tries to save her from death. He develops feelings for the girl. Her condition slowly deteriorates. She says him that she loves him and wants to marry him before she dies. The doctor doesn’t know if her feelings are true. However he agrees. Finally she dies. The doctor remembers this forever.

A traveler falls ill and is treated by the local physician, Doctor Trifon Ivanich, who unexpectedly shares a personal and potentially embarrassing story with the stranger. Once the doctor was asked to make a house call by a woman who believed her daughter might be dying. On his arrival, the physician finds a beautiful 20 year old woman named Alexandra who is feverish and initially unconscious. Although fully aware how ill she is, he nonetheless promises everyone that she will survive.

He is immediately infatuated with the woman and spends days and nights at her home

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caring for this single patient. As Alexandra's condition worsens and she becomes convinced her death is imminent, she professes love for the doctor satisfying a basic need to experience love before she dies. Just before her death, the doctor lies about their relationship to Alexandra's mother. Later the doctor marries an "ill-tempered woman" who sleeps all day. Did he marry for love, convenience, money, or penance?

Turgenev's story highlights the requirement that all people have for love no matter how imperfect or tragic. His tale also addresses three other intriguing issues--the duties and personal lives of doctors, lying, and the physician-patient relationship. Doctor Ivanich comments early in the story that a physician's duty comes before everything else. His private life seems shallow and overshadowed by his responsibilities as a physician. He shares his feelings of inadequacy and helplessness even as members of the patient's family are demonstrating unwavering confidence in his ability.

The doctor's lying is disturbingly frequent. He lies to his patient, her mother, and possibly to himself. How accurate or even factual is the doctor's account? When is it appropriate (beneficial or at least humane) to lie to a patient or their family? This short story explores the subject of romantic involvement between physicians and patients and raises some interesting questions about the concept of desire. The doctor's confession to a stranger reveals the vexing situations that physicians sometimes find themselves in.

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UNIT – IV

DRAMA

KALIDASA – SHAKUNTALA

(Translated by Arthur W. Ryder in 1912):

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

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Kalidasa was an Indian Classical Sanskrit writer, widely regarded as the greatest poet and dramatist. His works are mainly based on the Vedas, the Mahabharata and the Puranas. His works cannot be dated with precision, but they were most likely to be authored within the fourth to fifth century CE. Kalidasa flourished during the reign of Chandragupta II (ca. 380-413).

Arthur William Ryder was born on March 8, 1877. He was a professor of Sanskrit at the University of California, Berkeley. He is best known for translating a number of Sanskrit works into English. He died on March 21, 1938.

In Hinduism, Shakuntala is the wife of Dushyanta and the mother of Emperor Bharata. Shakuntala was born of Vishvamitra and Menaka. Her story is told in the Mahabharata and dramatized by Kalidasa. The play Shakuntala is a great legend of the king Dushyanta. It is the great legend of the king Dushyanta and Shakuntala. It is a thrilling love narrative from the Mahabharata epic. The only negative emotions introduced in the play are worry, anxiety, sorrow and heartburn, but these emotions are just momentary.

In the first book of the vast epic poem Mahabharata, Kalidasa found the story of Shakuntala. The story has a natural place there, for Bharata, Shakuntala's son, is the eponymous ancestor of the princes who play the leading part in the epic.

Dushyanta, a king in northern India, is racing along in his chariot, preparing to shoot a deer. Suddenly, a forest-dwelling ascetic warns him not to shoot, since the deer belongs to the nearby hermitage of Kanva, a great sage. The ascetic invites King Dushyanta to visit the hermitage, which is under his royal protection. He explains that Kanva isn't home, but the sage's

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daughter, Shakuntala, is receiving guests.

When the King enters the hermitage, he notices Shakuntala and her two friends, Anusuya and Priyamvada, watering the sacred trees. He hides in the shadows to observe them, instantly drawn to Shakuntala's beauty. When Dushyanta reveals his presence, a flustered Shakuntala is immediately attracted to him, too. Though Shakuntala is modest and shy, the King questions Shakuntala's friends about her and offers her his signet ring.

Before the King has to concoct a reason to linger near the hermitage, he's asked to protect the ascetics from evil spirits in Kanva's absence. He quickly dispels the demons, and then overhears Shakuntala, who's desperately lovesick, confiding her feelings for him to her friends. When Shakuntala recites a love poem she's composed for him, he emerges from hiding and openly declares his love for her. Their mutual declarations effectively constitute a secret marriage. Before long, Shakuntala is pregnant.

After Dushyanta is forced to return to his capital, Shakuntala is so distracted that she unintentionally offends Durvasas, a short-tempered sage, when he visits the hermitage. Durvasas puts a curse on her that will cause Dushyanta to forget Shakuntala, but when Priyamvada intercedes, he grants that the sight of a memento—the signet ring—will lift the curse. After Kanva returns, he celebrates Shakuntala's good fortune and sends her to join her husband, escorted by seers.

In the capital, when Dushyanta receives word that a party from Kanva's hermitage is on its way, he is surprised and uneasy. To Shakuntala's grief, the baffled and defensive King denies

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having any connection with her. When she tries to show him the signet ring as a reminder, she discovers it's missing from her finger. Dushyanta relents and agrees to house Shakuntala until she gives birth, but before he can do so, Shakuntala is spirited away to the celestial realm by nymphs.

A poor fisherman discovers the King's signet ring in the belly of a fish and is threatened with execution, but he is let go with a reward after the King, seeing the ring and remembering everything, corroborates his story. Soon thereafter, Sanumati, a nymph and friend of Shakuntala's mother, spies at the palace to find out why the spring festival has been canceled. She learns that the King, overwhelmed by depression and remorse over Shakuntala, has forbidden the celebration. Dushyanta continues to obsess over the situation until Matali, the god Indra's charioteer, appears at the palace and takes him away on an urgent mission to fight demons.

Six years has passed. King Dushyanta has successfully vanquished the demons and been duly honored by Indra. When Matali and the King tour the earth in a flying chariot, they descend to visit Marica's hermitage, a celestial realm of the demigods. Here the King is astonished to meet a little boy who greatly resembles him. When he picks up the boy's protective amulet—able to be touched only by the boy and his parents—he confirms that the boy, Sarvadamana, is indeed his child, the prophesied world ruler. Then Shakuntala enters, and, though it takes her a moment to recognize the King, they are soon tearfully reunited. The three of them talk with Marica the sage, and he explains Durvasas's curse, telling the couple not to blame

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themselves or one another. Marica confirms Sarvadamana's destiny and blesses the family, sending them home to live in Dushyanta's court.

UNIT – V

FICTION

HERMANN HESSE – SIDDHARTHA (1951)

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

Hermann Hesse was born in Germany in 1877. He then became a citizen of Switzerland. He wrote many poems, novels, stories, and essays bearing a vital spiritual force that has captured the imagination and loyalty of many generations of readers. In 1946, he won the Nobel Prize for Literature for his novel *The Glass Bead Game*. He died in 1962.

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Siddhartha was written in German, in a simple, lyrical style. It was published in the US in 1951 and became influential during the 1960s. It is a spiritual and religious novel. It is about the achievement of total spiritual understanding by Siddhartha, a wealthy Indian Brahmin who casts off a life of privilege and comfort to seek spiritual fulfillment and wisdom. On his journey,

Siddhartha encounters various people. He experiences life's vital passages. They are love, work, friendship, and fatherhood. He discovers that true knowledge is guided from within. Siddhartha, the handsome and respected son of a Brahmin, lives with his father in ancient India. Everyone in the village expects Siddhartha to be a successful Brahmin like his father. Siddhartha enjoys a near-idyllic existence with his best friend, Govinda, but he is secretly dissatisfied. He performs all the rituals of religion, and he does what religion says should bring him happiness and peace. Nonetheless, he feels something is missing. His father and the other elders have still not achieved enlightenment, and he feels that staying with them will not settle the questions he has about the nature of his existence. Siddhartha believes his father has already passed on all the wisdom their community has to offer, but he longs for something more.

One day, a group of wandering ascetics called Samanas passes through town. They are starved and almost naked and have come to beg for food. They believe enlightenment can be reached through asceticism, a rejection of the body and physical desire. The path the Samanas preach is quite different from the one Siddhartha has been taught, and he believes it may provide some of the answers he is looking for. He decides to follow this new path. Siddhartha's father does not want him to join the Samanas, but he cannot dissuade Siddhartha. Govinda also wants

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to find a path to enlightenment, and he joins Siddhartha in this new life.

Siddhartha adjusts quickly to the ways of the Samanas because of the patience and discipline he learned in the Brahmin tradition. He learns how to free himself from the traditional trappings of life, and so loses his desire for property, clothing, sexuality, and all sustenance except that required to live. His goal is to find enlightenment by eliminating his Self, and he successfully renounces the pleasures of the world.

Sunburned and half-starved, Siddhartha soon ceases to resemble the boy he used to be. Govinda is quick to praise the Samanas and notes the considerable moral and spiritual improvements they both have achieved since joining. Siddhartha, however, is still dissatisfied. The path of self-denial does not provide a permanent solution for him. He points out that the oldest Samanas have lived the life for many years but have yet to attain true spiritual enlightenment. The Samanas have been as unsuccessful as the Brahmins Siddhartha and Govinda left behind. At this time, Siddhartha and the other Samanas begin to hear about a new holy man named Gotama the Buddha who has attained the total spiritual enlightenment called Nirvana. Govinda convinces Siddhartha they both should leave the Samanas and seek out Gotama. Siddhartha and Govinda inform the leader of the Samanas of their decision to leave. The leader is clearly displeased, but Siddhartha silences him with an almost magical, hypnotizing gaze.

Siddhartha and Govinda find Gotama's camp of followers and are taken in. Siddhartha is initially pleased with Gotama, and he and Govinda are instructed in the Eightfold Path, the four main points, and other aspects of Buddhism. However, while Govinda is convinced to join

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Gotama and his followers, Siddhartha still has doubts. He has noticed a contradiction in Gotama's teachings: Siddhartha questions how one can embrace the unity of all things, as the Buddha asks, if they are also being told to overcome the physical world. Siddhartha realizes Buddhism will not give him the answers he needs. Sadly, he leaves Govinda behind and begins a search for the meaning of life, the achievement of which he feels will not be dependent on religious instruction.

Siddhartha decides to embark on a life free from meditation and the spiritual quests he has been pursuing, and to learn from the pleasures of the body and the material world. In his new wanderings, Siddhartha meets a friendly ferryman, fully content with his simple life.

Siddhartha crosses the ferryman's river and comes to a city. Here, a beautiful courtesan named Kamala entrances him. He knows she would be the best one to teach him about the world of love, but Kamala will not have him unless he proves he can fit into the material world. She convinces him to take up the path of the merchant. With her help, Siddhartha soon finds employment with a merchant named Kamaswami and begins to learn the trade. While Siddhartha learns the wisdom of the business world and begins to master the skills Kamaswami teaches him, Kamala becomes his lover and teaches him what she knows about love.

Years pass, and Siddhartha's business acumen increases. Soon, he is a rich man and enjoys the benefits of an affluent life. He gambles, drinks, and dances, and anything that can be bought in the material world is his for the taking. Siddhartha is detached from this life, however, and he can never see it as more than a game. He doesn't care if he wins or loses this game

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because it doesn't touch his spirit in any lasting way. The more he obtains in the material world, the less it satisfies him, and he is soon caught in a cycle of unhappiness that he tries to escape by engaging in even more gambling, drinking, and sex. When he is at his most disillusioned, he dreams that Kamala's rare songbird is dead in its cage. He understands that the material world is slowly killing him without providing him with the enlightenment for which he has been searching. One night, he resolves to leave it all behind and departs without notifying either Kamala or Kamaswami.

Sick at heart, Siddhartha wanders until he finds a river. He considers drowning himself, but he instead falls asleep on the riverbank. While he is sleeping, Govinda, who is now a Buddhist monk, passes by. Not recognizing Siddhartha, he watches over the sleeping man to protect him from snakes. Siddhartha immediately recognizes Govinda when he wakes up, but Govinda notes that Siddhartha has changed significantly from his days with the Samanas and now appears to be a rich man. Siddhartha responds that he is currently neither a Samana nor a rich man. Siddhartha wishes to become someone new. Govinda soon leaves to continue on his journey, and Siddhartha sits by the river and considers where his life has taken him.

Siddhartha seeks out the same content ferryman he met years before. The ferryman, who introduces himself as Vasudeva, radiates an inner peace that Siddhartha wishes to attain. Vasudeva says he himself has attained this sense of peace through many years of studying the river. Siddhartha expresses a desire to likewise learn from the river, and Vasudeva agrees to let Siddhartha live and work beside him. Siddhartha studies the river and begins to take from it a

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spiritual enlightenment unlike any he has ever known. While sitting by the river, he contemplates the unity of all life, and in the river's voice he hears the word Om.

One day Kamala the courtesan approaches the ferry along with her son on a pilgrimage to visit Gotama, who is said to be dying. Before they can cross, a snake bites Kamala. Siddhartha and Vasudeva tend to Kamala, but the bite kills her. Before she dies, she tells Siddhartha that he is the father of her eleven-year-old son. Siddhartha does his best to console and provide for his son, but the boy is spoiled and cynical. Siddhartha's son dislikes life with the two ferrymen and wishes to return to his familiar city and wealth. Vasudeva believes Siddhartha's son should be allowed to leave if he wants to, but Siddhartha is not ready to let him go. One morning, Siddhartha awakens to find his son has run away and stolen all of his and Vasudeva's money. Siddhartha chases after the boy, but as he reaches the city he realizes the chase is futile. Vasudeva follows Siddhartha and brings him back to their home by the river, instructing him to so the pain of losing his son by listening to the river.

Siddhartha studies the river for many years, and Vasudeva teaches Siddhartha how to learn the many secrets the river has to tell. In contemplating the river, Siddhartha has a revelation: Just as the water of the river flows into the ocean and is returned by rain, all forms of life are interconnected in a cycle without beginning or end. Birth and death are all part of a timeless unity. Life and death, joy and sorrow, good and evil are all parts of the whole and are necessary to understand the meaning of life. By the time Siddhartha has learned all the river's lessons, Vasudeva announces that he is through with his life at the river. He retires into the forest, leaving

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Siddhartha to be the ferryman.

The novel ends with Govinda returning to the river to seek enlightenment by meeting with a wise man who lives there. When Govinda arrives, he does not recognize that the wise man is Siddhartha himself. Govinda is still a follower of Gotama but has yet to attain the kind of enlightenment that Siddhartha now radiates, and he asks Siddhartha to teach him what he knows. Siddhartha explains that neither he nor anyone can teach the wisdom to Govinda, because verbal explanations are limited and can never communicate the entirety of enlightenment. Instead, he asks Govinda to kiss him on the forehead, and when Govinda does, the vision of unity that Siddhartha has experienced is communicated instantly to Govinda. Govinda and Siddhartha have both finally achieved the enlightenment they set out to find in the days of their youth.