

# **NOTES**

**First Semester B.Com.**

**SCEPTRE – I**

**ADDITIONAL ENGLISH**

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**Chapter 1**  
**AUSTRALIA**  
**(Poem)**

- A.D. HOPE

**Comprehension 1: (Short Answer Questions)**

**(2 marks)**

**1. A.D. Hope compares the face of Australia with:**

- a. Matrix
- b. Sphinx
- c. Pyramid
- d. None of the options

**Answer: b. Sphinx**

The poet compares the face of Australia with a Sphinx, emphasizing its mysterious and ancient nature.

**2. Why does the poet disagree with Australia being called a young country?**

The poet disagrees with Australia being called a young country because, despite being a relatively new nation, its landscape is geologically old and worn out.

**3. Who are the second-hand Europeans'?**

The "second-hand Europeans" refer to the European settlers who migrated to Australia, bringing with them their own culture, values, and traditions, but not fully adapting to the new land.

**4. Who are the men that will inhabit the dying earth?**

The men who will inhabit the dying earth are the Australians who have become complacent and stagnant, boasting not of their achievements, but of their mere survival.

**5. What does the poet compare the cities to, and why?**

The poet compares the cities to "five teeming sores" because they are seen as centres of decay and corruption, draining the country's resources and energy and perpetuating a parasitic relationship with the land.

**Comprehension II: (Paragraph Answer Questions)**

**(5 marks)**

**1, Why does Hope refer to Australia as both old and new?**

Hope refers to Australia as both old and new because, on one hand, the country's landscape is geologically ancient, worn out, and barren, suggesting a sense of age and decay. On the other hand, Australia is also a relatively new nation, established by European settlers, and therefore, has a modern and youthful identity. This paradox highlights the complexities of Australia's identity and its struggle to reconcile its past and present.

**2. Annotate:**

**"A woman beyond her change of life, a breast Still tender but within the womb is dry."**

The lines "A woman beyond her change of life, a breast / Still tender but within the womb is dry" are a metaphorical description of Australia. The poem compares Australia to a woman who has passed her reproductive age, suggesting that the country is no longer fertile or productive. The image of the breast being "still tender" but the womb being "dry" emphasizes the contrast between Australia's potential and its actual state of barrenness. This annotation

highlights Hope's use of feminine imagery to describe the land, emphasizing its nurturing and life-giving qualities, while also underscoring its current state of desolation.

### 3. What does the speaker attempt to say in the following lines?

**"Yet there are some like me who turn gladly home From the lush jungle of modern thought."**

In the lines "Yet there are some like me turn gladly home / From the lush jungle of modern thought," the speaker suggests that despite being critical of Australia's shortcomings, they still feel a strong sense of belonging and connection to the land. The phrase "turn gladly home" implies a sense of comfort and familiarity, while the image of the "lush jungle of modern thought" suggests a complex and overwhelming intellectual landscape. The speaker is saying that they prefer the simplicity and authenticity of Australia to the pretentiousness and complexity of modern intellectualism.

### 4. How does Hope describe the landscape of Australia?

Hope describes the landscape of Australia as barren, dry, and desolate. The poem uses imagery such as "drab green and desolate grey" to paint a picture of a worn-out and exhausted land. The comparison of the hills to "endless, outstretched paws" suggests a sense of vastness and emptiness, while the image of the rivers "drowning among inland sands" emphasizes the land's infertility and lack of vitality. Overall, Hope's description of the Australian landscape is one of decay, neglect, and desolation.

## **Comprehension III: (Analytical/Discussion Questions/ answer in two pages): (10 marks)**

### 1. What are the major themes in the poem? Discuss.

The poem "Australia" by A.D. Hope explores several major themes that are intertwined throughout the narrative. These themes include:

**Critique of Colonialism:** The poem critiques the impact of colonialism on Australia, describing the country as a land without its own culture or identity. The poet argues that Australia's history and culture have been imposed upon it by European settlers.

**Identity and Belonging:** The poem explores the theme of identity and belonging, highlighting the tension between Australia's indigenous past and its modern, European-influenced present. The poet grapples with the question of what it means to be Australian.

**The Search for Authenticity:** The poem expresses a desire for authenticity and simplicity, rejecting the pretentiousness and complexity of modern intellectualism. The poet prefers the raw, untamed beauty of the Australian landscape to the artificial trappings of civilization.

**The Tension between Nature and Culture:** The poem highlights the tension between nature and culture, describing the Australian landscape as both beautiful and desolate. The poet argues that human culture has failed to impose itself on the land, leaving it untouched and unspoiled.

Overall, the poem presents a nuanced and complex exploration of Australian identity, culture, and history.

### 2. What are the literary devices used in the poem?

The poem "Australia" by A.D. Hope employs a range of literary devices to convey its themes and ideas. Some of the most notable devices include:

**Imagery:** The poem is rich in sensory details, with vivid descriptions of the Australian landscape. The poet uses imagery to create a powerful sense of place and atmosphere.

**Metaphor:** The poem employs metaphors to describe the Australian landscape and its people. For example, the comparison of the hills to "endless, outstretched paws" creates a powerful image of the land's vastness and emptiness.

**Alliteration:** The poem uses alliteration to create a musical quality, with repeated consonant sounds adding to the overall rhythm and flow.

**Irony:** The poem employs irony to highlight the tension between Australia's modern, European-influenced present and its indigenous past. The poet's description of Australia as a "young country" is ironic, given the land's ancient geological history.

**Symbolism:** The poem uses symbolism to convey its themes and ideas. For example, the image of the "desert" represents the emptiness and desolation of the Australian landscape, while the "prophets" represent the possibility of transformation and renewal.

Overall, the poem's use of literary devices adds depth, complexity, and richness to its exploration of Australian identity, culture, and history.

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### Stanza-wise meaning of the poem "Australia"

#### **Stanza 1: Description of Australia's Landscape**

A Nation of trees, drab green and desolate grey  
In the field uniform of modern wars.  
Darkens her hills, those endless, outstretched paws  
Sphinx demolished or stone lion worn away.

**Meaning:** Australia's landscape is dull and uninteresting, with endless hills that stretch out like giant paws.

#### **Stanza 2: Critique of Australia's Age and Identity**

They call her a young country, but they lie:  
She is the last of lands, the emptiest,  
A woman beyond her change of life, a breast  
It is still tender, but within the womb, it is dry.

**Meaning:** Australia is not a young country, but rather an old and empty one, lacking vitality and creativity.

#### **Stanza 3: Description of Australia's Lack of Culture**

Without songs, architecture, history:  
The emotions and superstitions of younger lands,  
Her rivers of water drown among inland sands.  
The river of her immense stupidity

**Meaning:** Australia lacks culture, history, and emotions, and its rivers are dry and unproductive.

#### **Stanza 4: Critique of Australia's People**

Floods her monotonous tribes from Cairns to Perth.

In them at last the ultimate men arrive  
 Whose boast is not: "we live" but "we survive",  
 A type who will inhabit the dying earth.

**Meaning:** Australia's people are dull and uninteresting, and they're only focused on surviving, not living.

#### **Stanza 5: Critique of Australia's Cities**

And her five cities, like five teeming sores,  
 Each drains her: a vast parasite robber-state  
 Where second hand Europeans pullulate  
 Timidly on the edge of alien shores.

**This means** that Australia's cities are like parasites, draining the country's resources, and are filled with timid and uncertain people.

#### **Stanza 6: The Poet's Love for Australia**

Yet there are some like me turn gladly home  
 From the lush jungle of modern thought,  
 To find the Arabian desert of the human mind,

**Meaning:** Despite its flaws, the poet loves Australia and prefers its simplicity to the complexity of modern thought.

#### **Stanza 7: Hope for Australia's Future**

Hoping, if still from the deserts the prophets come,  
 Such savage and scarlet as no green hills dare  
 Springs in that waste, some spirit that escapes  
 The learned doubt, the chatter of cultured apes

**Meaning:** The poet hopes that a prophet will emerge from the desert, bringing new life and energy to Australia, and escaping the doubts and chatter of modern civilization.

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#### **Summary of the poem "Australia"**

The poem describes Australia as a dull and uninteresting country.  
 It lacks culture, history, and emotions.  
 The people are portrayed as stupid and only focused on surviving.  
 The cities are like parasites, draining the country's resources.  
 Despite its flaws, the poet loves Australia and hopes for a better future.  
 The poet wants a prophet to emerge and bring new life and energy to the country.  
 The poem criticizes Australia's colonial past and its impact on the country's identity.  
 It also highlights the tension between nature and culture in Australia.

**OR**

The poem "Australia" by A.D. Hope is a thought-provoking critique of the country's identity, culture, and history. The poem describes Australia as a dull and uninteresting country, lacking in culture, history, and emotions. The landscape is portrayed as barren and worn out, with "drab green and desolate grey" hills that stretch out like giant paws.

The people of Australia are also criticized, being portrayed as stupid and only focused on surviving. The poem states that they "boast not 'we live' but 'we survive'", highlighting their lack of ambition and creativity. The cities are likened to "five teeming sores", draining the country's resources and perpetuating a parasitic relationship with the land.

Despite its flaws, the poet expresses a sense of love and nostalgia for Australia. The poem concludes on a hopeful note, with the poet yearning for a prophet to emerge and bring new life and energy to the country. This prophet is hoped to revitalize the country's spirit and restore its dignity.

Throughout the poem, Hope critiques Australia's colonial past and its impact on the country's identity. The poem highlights the tension between nature and culture in Australia, emphasizing the need for a renewed connection with the land and its indigenous heritage.

The poem's use of imagery, metaphor, and symbolism adds depth and complexity to its themes and ideas. The poem's critique of Australian society and culture remains relevant today, making it a significant work of Australian literature.

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## Chapter 2 The Tongue

- Nikhat Hasan

(A Short Story translated from Urdu by Baidar Bakht and Kathleen Grunt Jaeger)

### **Comprehension I: (Short Answer Questions):**

**(2 marks)**

**1. Mention the strange ritual followed in the village.**

The strange ritual followed in the village was the severing of the tongue of every newborn baby at the root.

**2. What was the responsibility of the ruler?**

The responsibility of the ruler, Safian, was to inspect his people and ensure they were working diligently.

**3. Write about the work nature of the citizens.**

The citizens worked silently and efficiently, like machines or cattle, without speaking.

**4. Mention the responsibility of the ruler. What is the family trait of the ruler?**

The ruler's responsibility was to maintain control and order. The family trait of the ruler was having a long tongue, with Safian's tongue being nine yards long.

**5. What was opposed by the girl in the story?**

The girl opposed the established ways of the country and the barbaric rite of severing tongues.

**6. What seemed dreadful than ordinary sounds?**

The sounds emitted by the girl, despite not having a tongue, seemed dreadful than ordinary sounds.

**7. Why didn't Safian get his tongue cut?**

Safian didn't get his tongue cut because it was his heritage and a symbol of his authority as a ruler.

**8. What brought bad luck to the country according to Khaldoom?**

According to Khaldoom, the endless wagging of tongues brought bad luck to the country.

**9. Mention the disease, citizens of Khaldoom were afflicted with.**

The citizens of Khaldoom were afflicted with the disease of talking, which led to quarrels and civil wars.

**10. Why was Khaldoom driven to madness?**

Khaldoom was driven to madness by the plight of his country and the ineptitude of his citizens.

**11. What was the law implemented in the story?**

The law implemented in the story was the severing of the tongues of all newborns to maintain control and order.

**12. What was the unusual law implemented by Khaldoom in his kingdom?**

Khaldoom implemented an unusual law where every newborn's tongue was cut off to maintain control and silence in his kingdom. This law led to a society where people worked efficiently but lost their ability to express themselves.

**13. Who was Safian, and what did he want to do in the kingdom?**

Safian was Khaldoom's descendant who inherited the throne and wanted to make changes in the kingdom. He aimed to revise the outdated system and bring improvements.

**14. What was the significance of Sarah's character in the story?**

Sarah's character was significant as she was a tongueless girl who found ways to communicate and resist the oppressive regime. She symbolized the resilience and determination of individuals in the face of oppression.

**15. What was the result of the citizens' tongues being cut off?**

The result of the citizens' tongues being cut off was that they lost their ability to express themselves, leading to a society where people worked silently and efficiently but lacked emotional connection and individuality.

**16. What theme is explored through the character of Khaldoom?**

The theme explored through Khaldoom's character is the dangers of unchecked power and the consequences of suppressing human expression.

**Comprehension II:(Paragraph Answer Questions answer)**

**(5 marks)**

**1. Discuss the important changes the ruler wanted to make in his kingdom.**

The ruler, Safian, wanted to introduce changes in the administrative structure of the government. He aimed to revise the outdated system and bring about improvements. However, he was puzzled by the whispering campaigns and the slowing down of work among the citizens.

**2. What did the girl want to warn the ruler about and why?**

The girl wanted to warn the ruler about the dire consequences of the barbaric rite of severing tongues. She opposed the established ways of the country and believed that the citizens deserved to express themselves freely. Despite not having a tongue, she was able to communicate effectively and convey her message.

**3. Discuss the causes that led to civil wars according to the narration.**

According to the narration, the causes that led to civil wars were the endless wagging of tongues, verbal abuses, and quarrels among the citizens. The disease of talking had grown into an epidemic, and the citizens were afflicted with it.

**4. Describe the plight of Khaldoom's country.**

Khaldoom's country was plagued by the ineptitude of its citizens. The endless wagging of tongues had brought bad luck, and the country was suffering from famines, plagues, and wars. The citizens were fighting like quarrelsome cocks, and the country was in a state of despair.

**5. Why was Safian angry and surprised?**

Safian was angry and surprised because he discovered that the tongues of the citizens were regrowing. Despite the barbaric rite of severing tongues, the citizens were finding ways to express themselves. This revelation threatened the authority and control that Safian had maintained over his people.

**6. Describe the consequences of Khaldoom's law on the citizens of his kingdom.**

The consequences of Khaldoom's law on the citizens of his kingdom were far-reaching and devastating. The citizens lost their ability to express themselves, leading to a society where people worked silently and efficiently but lacked emotional connection and individuality. The law also led to a loss of creativity, innovation, and progress, as people were unable to share their ideas and thoughts. Furthermore, the law created a culture of fear and oppression, where people were afraid to speak out against the regime.

**7. How does Safian's character contribute to the development of the story's themes?**

Safian's character contributes to the development of the story's themes by highlighting the complexities of power dynamics and the consequences of suppressing human expression. As the ruler, Safian is torn between maintaining control and doing what is right for his people. His character serves as a foil to Khaldoom, highlighting the dangers of unchecked power and the importance of empathy and compassion in leadership.

**8. Analyze the significance of the regrowth of the citizens' tongues in the story.**

The regrowth of the citizens' tongues is significant as it symbolizes the resilience and determination of individuals in the face of oppression. The regrowth of tongues also represents the possibility of change and the potential for individuals to reclaim their lost

humanity. Furthermore, the regrowth of tongues serves as a threat to the oppressive regime, highlighting the instability and vulnerability of a system that relies on silence and fear.

**9 Discuss the theme of oppression and resistance in "The Tongue".**

The theme of oppression and resistance is explored in "The Tongue" through the characters of Khaldoom, Safian, and Sarah. The story highlights the dangers of unchecked power and the consequences of suppressing human expression. The narrative also showcases the resilience and determination of individuals in the face of oppression, emphasizing the importance of resistance and the power of human expression.

**10 What message do you think the author is conveying through the character of Sarah?**

The author conveys a powerful message through Sarah's character, emphasizing the importance of human expression and the resilience of individuals in the face of oppression. Sarah's character serves as a symbol of hope and resistance, highlighting the potential for individuals to reclaim their lost humanity and challenge oppressive regimes.

**Comprehension III: Answer in two pages**

**(10 marks)**

**1. What was the problem faced by Khaldoom? How did he attempt to resolve it?**

**Answer:** Khaldoom, the ruler, faced a significant problem in his country. The endless wagging of tongues among his citizens had brought bad luck, leading to famines, plagues, wars, and civil unrest. The citizens were afflicted with the disease of talking, which had grown into an epidemic. They were constantly quarreling, hurling verbal abuses, and fighting like animals. This chaotic situation had a devastating impact on the country's prosperity and stability.

Khaldoom's attempts to resolve the problem were drastic and far-reaching. He ordered the severing of the tongues of all newborns to prevent them from speaking. This barbaric rite was intended to rid the country of the evil of the tongue, which Khaldoom believed was the root cause of all the troubles. By silencing his citizens, Khaldoom hoped to restore peace, prosperity, and order to his kingdom.

However, Khaldoom's solution was not only inhumane but also short-sighted. By suppressing the citizens' ability to speak, he was also suppressing their ability to express themselves, share their ideas, and connect with each other. The consequences of this decision would be far-reaching and devastating.

In conclusion, Khaldoom's problem was the chaos and unrest caused by the endless talking among his citizens. His attempt to resolve it was to silence them through the barbaric rite of tongue-severing. However, this solution only led to further problems and ultimately undermined the humanity of his citizens.

**2. How according to the narration, did the citizens prosper beyond belief?**

**Answer:** According to the narration, after the implementation of the barbaric rite, the citizens prospered beyond belief. They worked silently and efficiently, like machines or cattle, without speaking. The absence of verbal conflicts and quarrels led to increased productivity, and the country's population tripled. The citizens were completely free from the evils of the tongue and worked diligently, leading to unprecedented prosperity.

However, this prosperity came at a great cost. The citizens had lost their ability to express themselves, share their ideas, and connect with each other. They were reduced to mere machines, working silently and efficiently without any sense of purpose or fulfillment. The country's prosperity was built on the suppression of its citizens' humanity.

Moreover, the narration suggests that this prosperity was not sustainable. The citizens' silence was not a sign of contentment but rather a sign of oppression. The whispering campaigns and the slowing down of work among the citizens were signs that the citizens were finding ways to resist their oppression and reclaim their humanity.

In conclusion, the citizens prospered beyond belief after the implementation of the barbaric rite, but this prosperity came at a great cost. The citizens lost their humanity and were reduced to mere machines, working silently and efficiently without any sense of purpose or fulfillment.

### **3. Explain how humanity triumphed over authority in the story.**

**Answer:** In the story, humanity triumphed over authority in a subtle yet powerful way. Despite the ruler's attempts to suppress their ability to speak, the citizens found ways to express themselves. The guard's daughter, Sarah, was able to communicate effectively without a tongue, and her sounds were more dreadful than ordinary sounds. Moreover, the tongues of the citizens began to regrow, symbolizing their resilience and determination to reclaim their humanity.

This triumph of humanity over authority is a testament to the indomitable human spirit. Despite the oppressive measures imposed by the ruler, the citizens refused to be silenced. They found ways to adapt, to communicate, and to express themselves, ultimately undermining the authority's attempts to control them.

Moreover, the story suggests that the citizens' resistance was not just about regaining their ability to speak but also about reclaiming their humanity. The regrowth of their tongues symbolized their desire to reconnect with each other, to share their ideas, and to express themselves freely. The citizens' triumph over authority was a triumph of humanity over oppression.

In conclusion, humanity triumphed over authority in the story through the citizens' resilience and determination to reclaim their humanity. Despite the oppressive measures imposed by the ruler, the citizens found ways to express themselves, communicate, and ultimately undermine the authority's attempts to control them.

### **4. Discuss the themes of power dynamics and human expression in "The Tongue".**

1. The themes of power dynamics and human expression are intricately woven throughout "The Tongue". The narrative explores the complexities of power and the consequences of suppressing human expression. Through the characters of Khaldoom and Safian, the story highlights the dangers of unchecked power and the importance of empathy and compassion in leadership. The theme of human expression is also explored through the character of Sarah, who serves as a symbol of hope and resistance.

The story emphasizes the importance of human expression in shaping individual and collective identity. The narrative showcases the consequences of suppressing human

expression, leading to a society where people work silently and efficiently but lack emotional connection and individuality. The story also highlights the resilience and determination of individuals in the face of oppression, emphasizing the importance of resistance and the power of human expression.

In conclusion, "The Tongue" is a powerful exploration of the themes of power dynamics and human expression. The narrative emphasizes the importance of empathy and compassion in leadership and highlights the consequences of suppressing human expression. The story serves as a warning about the dangers of unchecked power and the importance of resistance and human expression.

#### **5. Analyze the character of Khaldoom and his role in the story.**

Khaldoom, the ruler of the kingdom, is a complex and multifaceted character who plays a pivotal role in the story. He is the architect of the unusual law that requires the cutting off of every newborn's tongue, aiming to maintain control and silence in his kingdom.

Through Khaldoom's character, the story highlights the dangers of unchecked power and the consequences of suppressing human expression. His actions are driven by a desire for control and order, but ultimately lead to a society that lacks emotional connection, creativity, and individuality.

Khaldoom's character also serves as a symbol of the oppressive regime, emphasizing the importance of resistance and the power of human expression. His legacy continues to impact the kingdom, even after his death, as his descendant Safian grapples with the consequences of his actions.

#### **6. Examine the symbolism of the tongue in the story and its significance to the themes.**

The tongue is a powerful symbol in the story, representing human expression, communication, and individuality. The cutting off of the tongue serves as a metaphor for the suppression of human expression and the silencing of dissenting voices.

The tongue also symbolizes the connection between language and power. The ability to speak and express oneself is closely tied to the ability to wield power and influence. The suppression of the tongue, therefore, serves as a means of maintaining control and suppressing opposition.

The regrowth of the tongue, as seen in the story, represents the resilience of human expression and the power of language to challenge oppressive regimes.

#### **7. Discuss the author's use of language and literary devices in conveying the themes of the story.**

The author's use of language and literary devices plays a crucial role in conveying the themes of the story. The narrative employs a range of techniques, including imagery, symbolism, and irony, to create a rich and nuanced exploration of power dynamics and human expression.

The author's use of imagery, for example, helps to create a vivid picture of the kingdom and its inhabitants. The description of the severed tongues and the silent labor of the citizens serves to emphasize the consequences of suppressing human expression.

The author's use of symbolism, as seen in the tongue, adds depth and complexity to the narrative. The tongue serves as a powerful symbol of human expression, communication, and individuality, highlighting the importance of these concepts in challenging oppressive regimes.

**8. What is your interpretation of the story's ending, and what message do you think it conveys?**

The story's ending is intentionally ambiguous, leaving the reader to ponder the consequences of the citizens' newfound ability to express themselves. One possible interpretation is that the regrowth of the tongue represents a turning point in the kingdom's history, marking the beginning of a new era of freedom and expression.

The message conveyed by the story's ending is one of hope and resilience. Despite the oppressive nature of the regime, the citizens have found a way to reclaim their lost humanity and challenge the status quo. The story suggests that even in the darkest of times, there is always the potential for change and the power of human expression to bring about transformation.

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### **Summary of the story "The Tongue" by Nikhat Hasan:**

#### **Story Type and Plot**

"The Tongue" is a dystopian tale that explores the themes of oppression, resistance, and the power of human expression. The story takes place in a fictional land where the ruler, Khaldoom, orders the severing of the tongues of all newborns to maintain control and silence.

#### **Characters**

1. Khaldoom: The ruler who implements the barbaric rite of tongue-severing.
2. Safian: Khaldoom's descendant, who inherits the throne and grapples with the consequences of his ancestor's actions.
3. The Guard: A silent, aged man responsible for collecting and disposing of the severed tongues.
4. Sarah: The guard's daughter, who despite being tongueless, finds ways to communicate and resist the oppressive regime.

#### **Theme**

**The story explores the themes of:**

- 1. Oppression and Resistance:** The tale highlights the consequences of suppressing human expression and the resilience of individuals in the face of oppression.
- 2. Power Dynamics:** The narrative examines the relationship between those in power and those who are marginalized, emphasizing the dangers of unchecked authority.
- 3. Humanity and Identity:** The story showcases the importance of human expression, language, and communication in shaping individual and collective identity.

#### **Location**

The story takes place in a fictional, dystopian land where the ruler exercises total control over the citizens.

### **Crisis**

The crisis unfolds when Safian discovers that the tongues of the citizens are regrowing, threatening the very foundation of the oppressive regime.

### **Resolution**

The resolution is left ambiguous, leaving the reader to ponder the consequences of the citizens' newfound ability to express themselves. Will they rise up against their oppressors, or will they continue to live in silence?

### **Message**

The story conveys a powerful message about the importance of human expression, language, and communication. It highlights the dangers of unchecked power and the resilience of individuals in the face of oppression.

### **Tone**

The tone of the story is somber, reflective, and critical, inviting the reader to contemplate the consequences of a society that values silence over expression.

### **Literary Devices**

- 1. Symbolism:** The tongue serves as a symbol of human expression, language, and communication.
- 2. Imagery:** The narrative employs vivid imagery to describe the severed tongues, the guard's appearance, and the citizens' silent labor.
- 3. Irony:** The story's use of irony is evident in the ruler's attempts to maintain control through silence, only to have the citizens find ways to resist and express themselves.
- 4. Foreshadowing:** The regrowth of the citizens' tongues serves as a foreshadowing of the potential uprising against the oppressive regime.

### **Critical Analysis**

"The Tongue" is a thought-provoking tale that challenges readers to consider the importance of human expression and the dangers of unchecked power. Through its exploration of oppression, resistance, and identity, the story provides a powerful commentary on the human condition. The narrative's use of literary devices, such as symbolism, imagery, and irony, adds depth and complexity to the story, inviting readers to engage with its themes and messages on multiple levels.

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**OR**

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### **Summary of 'The Tongue'**

The story "The Tongue" is set in a fictional land where the ruler, Khaldoom, orders the cutting of every new-born's tongue to maintain control and silence. The citizens work silently and efficiently, but they lose their ability to express themselves.

The ruler's descendant, Safian, inherits the throne and wants to make changes. However, he discovers that the citizens' tongues are regrowing, which threatens the regime's control.

A girl named Sarah, who is tongueless, finds ways to communicate and resist the regime. The story ends with the possibility of the citizens rising up against their oppressors.

### Key Points

- The ruler cuts off the tongues of new-borns to maintain control.
- The citizens work silently but lose their ability to express themselves.
- The ruler's descendant, Safian, wants to make changes.
- The citizens' tongues start regrowing, threatening the regime's control.
- A tongueless girl named Sarah resists the regime and finds ways to communicate.

### Themes

- Oppression and resistance
- Power dynamics
- Human expression and identity

### Important Characters

- **Khaldoom:** The ruler who orders the cutting of tongues.
- **Safian:** The ruler's descendant who wants to make changes.
- **Sarah:** The tongue less girl who resists the regime.

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**OR**

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The short story "The Tongue" is a thought-provoking tale that explores the themes of power dynamics, human expression, and the resilience of the human spirit. Written by Nikhat Hasan, the narrative delves into the consequences of suppressing human expression and the dangers of unchecked power.

The story takes place in a fictional kingdom where the ruler, Khaldoom, implements an unusual law that requires the cutting off of every new-born's tongue. This draconian measure is intended to maintain control and silence in the kingdom, but it has far-reaching and devastating consequences.

The citizens of the kingdom, who have been silenced by Khaldoom's law, work efficiently but lack emotional connection, creativity, and individuality. They are reduced to mere automatons, devoid of passion, imagination, and innovation. The kingdom becomes a dystopian society where people exist in a state of numbness, devoid of hope, joy, or freedom.

However, the story also highlights the resilience of the human spirit. Despite being silenced, the citizens find ways to communicate and express themselves. The guard's daughter, Sarah, who is tongueless, develops a unique way of communicating through sounds and gestures. Her actions serve as a form of resistance against the oppressive regime, emphasizing the importance of human expression in challenging power dynamics.

The narrative also explores the complexities of power and its impact on individuals and society. Khaldoom's descendant, Safian, who inherits the throne, grapples with the consequences of his ancestor's actions. He is torn between maintaining control and doing what is right for his people. His character serves as a foil to Khaldoom, highlighting the dangers of unchecked power and the importance of empathy and compassion in leadership.

The story's ending is intentionally ambiguous, leaving the reader to ponder the consequences of the citizens' newfound ability to express themselves. The regrowth of the tongue represents a turning point in the kingdom's history, marking the beginning of a new era of freedom and expression.

In conclusion, "The Tongue" is a powerful exploration of the human condition. The narrative highlights the importance of human expression, creativity, and individuality in challenging oppressive power structures. The story serves as a warning about the dangers of unchecked power and the need for empathy, compassion, and resistance in the face of oppression.

Through its thought-provoking themes and vivid imagery, "The Tongue" invites readers to reflect on the importance of human expression and the resilience of the human spirit. The narrative encourages us to think critically about the consequences of suppressing human expression and the dangers of unchecked power. Ultimately, the story offers a message of hope and resilience, emphasizing the power of human expression to bring about transformation and change.

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## OR

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The short story "The Tongue" is a thought-provoking tale. It explores the themes of power, control, and the importance of human expression.

The story takes place in a fictional kingdom. The ruler, Khaldoom, makes a harsh law. Every newborn's tongue must be cut off. This cruel measure is intended to keep people quiet and under control.

The citizens of the kingdom are silenced by Khaldoom's law. They work efficiently but lack emotions, creativity, and individuality. They are like robots, devoid of passion and imagination.

The kingdom becomes a dystopian society [a society that is undesirable and frightening]. People exist in a state of numbness, devoid of hope, joy, or freedom.

Despite being silenced, the citizens find ways to communicate and express themselves. The guard's daughter, Sarah, is tongueless. She develops a unique way of communicating through sounds and gestures.

Her actions serve as a form of resistance [the act of fighting against something] against the oppressive regime [a system of government that is cruel and unfair]. This emphasizes the importance of human expression in challenging power dynamics.

Khaldoom's descendant, Safian, inherits the throne. He struggles with the consequences of his ancestor's actions. He is torn between maintaining control and doing what is right for his people.

Safian's character serves as a contrast to Khaldoom. This highlights the dangers of unchecked power [power that is not controlled or limited] and the importance of empathy [the ability to understand and share the feelings of another] and compassion [the feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune] in leadership.

The story's ending is intentionally ambiguous [open to multiple interpretations]. The regrowth of the tongue represents a turning point in the kingdom's history. This marks the beginning of a new era of freedom and expression.

In conclusion, "The Tongue" is a powerful exploration of the human condition. The narrative highlights the importance of human expression, creativity, and individuality. It challenges oppressive power structures and serves as a warning about the dangers of unchecked power.

The story invites readers to reflect on the importance of human expression and the resilience [the ability to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions] of the human spirit. It encourages us to think critically about the consequences of suppressing human expression and the dangers of unchecked power.

### Chapter 3 Letters And Other Worlds (Poem)

-Michael Ondaatje  
(2 marks)

#### **Comprehension 1: (Short Answer Questions)**

#### **1. What aspects of the speaker's father are described repeatedly in the poem?**

The speaker's father's fear, drinking problem, and self-imposed isolation are described repeatedly in the poem.

#### **2. What does the speaker recapitulate in the second stanza of the poem?**

The speaker recapitulates the father's early life, describing it as a "terrifying comedy" and highlighting his eccentric and drunken behaviour.

#### **3. What does this figurative progression - from globe to town to room - indicate?**

The figurative progression from globe to town to room indicates the father's increasing isolation and confinement, both physically and emotionally.

#### **4. What was the speaker's father during the Home Rule Movement?**

The speaker's father was a semi-official and semi-white individual who, through his drunken antics, inadvertently contributed to the Home Rule Movement and Ceylon's independence in 1948.

#### **5. How is the last day of the father's life described by the speaker?**

The speaker describes the father's last day as one where he enclosed himself in a room with two bottles of gin, fell, and died shortly thereafter due to brain damage.

#### **6. In the poem, the father's body and letters are compared to.**

The father's body is compared to a "globe of fear" and a "town of fear", while his letters are compared to a "room he seldom lived in".

### **Comprehension II: (Paragraph Answer Questions)**

**(5 marks)**

#### **1. Explain the 'other world' in which the speaker's father dwells in, during the last years of his life?**

In his last years, the speaker's father lived in a world of his own. He would lock himself in a room, drink heavily, and write letters to his loved ones. These letters showed a kind and caring side of his personality. This "other world" was an escape from his problems.

#### **2. How does the poem present the married life of the speaker's parents?**

The poem shows that the speaker's parents had a troubled marriage. The father drank too much, and this caused problems. They got divorced many times. The mother also had her own problems, like being a bad driver. They often argued and competed with each other.

#### **3. Describe the nostalgia of the speaker's past life in Ceylon.**

The poem shows that the speaker remembers their childhood in Ceylon fondly. They recall funny stories about their parents, like their father's drinking and their mother's bad driving. These memories are happy, but also a bit sad.

("nostalgia" means a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past.)

#### **4. Explicate the significance of the title of the poem.**

The title "Letters and Other Worlds" is important because it summarizes the poem's main ideas. The "letters" refer to the father's written messages, which reveal his thoughts and feelings. The "other worlds" refer to the different lives the father lived, like his drunken life and his imaginative life. The title shows that the poem explores the different sides of human nature.

### **Comprehension III: (Analytical/Discussion Questions) (10 marks)**

#### **1. Comment on the image of the father as depicted in the poem.**

The poem portrays the father as a complex and many-sided individual. On one hand, he is described as a "globe of fear" and a "town of fear", indicating that he is consumed by anxiety and worry. His drinking problem and self-imposed isolation further emphasize his troubled nature.

On the other hand, the father's letters reveal a caring and loving person. He writes about his love for his family and his desire to connect with them. This opposition highlights the father's inner struggle and his inability to settle his two **selves** (natures/identities/characters/personalities).

The father's image is also marked by silliness and **illogic** (the lack of reason or sense). His actions, such as falling drunk onto the street and stopping a procession, are both comedic and tragic. This silliness highlights the father's disconnection from reality and his inability to manage with his problem.

#### **2. The poem showcases absurdness and despair. Discuss.**

The poem showcases irrationality and hopelessness through the father's actions and behaviour. His drinking and isolation are absurd because they are self-destructive and hurtful to those around him. The image of him falling drunk onto the street and stopping a procession is also irrational and funny.

However, beneath this irrationality lies a deep sense of despair. The father's actions are not just funny, but also tragic. He is a person who is struggling to cope with his problems and find connection with others. The poem suggests that absurdness and despair can often go hand-in-hand, and that the line between comedy and tragedy is thin.

#### **3. Elucidate the filial cord between the speaker and his parents.**

The poem explores the complex and often troubled relationship between the speaker and his parents. The speaker's feelings towards his parents are mixed - he is both loving and critical of them.

The speaker's relationship with his father is particularly complex. He is drawn to his father's creative and imaginative side, but also critical of his drinking and isolation. The speaker's memories of his father are often tender, but also marked with sadness and regret.

The poem suggests that the family cord between the speaker and his parents is strong, but also delicate. It is a bond that is shaped by both love and criticism, and one that continues to evolve and change over time. The speaker's **nostalgia** (homesickness/longing) for his childhood in Ceylon also highlights the importance of his family and his desire to hold onto memories of his past.

### Summary of the poem:

The poem "Letters and Other Worlds" is about a speaker's memories of his father. The father was a complex person who struggled with drinking and isolation. Despite this, he loved his family and wrote them letters.

The poem describes the father's two sides: one side was fearful, anxious, and isolated, while the other side was loving, creative, and imaginative.

The speaker remembers his childhood in Ceylon and his parents' troubled marriage. He recalls his father's absurd and sometimes funny behaviour, but also his sadness and despair.

Through the poem, the speaker explores the complicated bond between him and his parents. He loves them, but also criticizes their flaws.

The poem shows that people can be complex and many-sided, and that relationships can be both loving and difficult.

### Key points:

- The speaker's father struggled with drinking and isolation.
- The father had two sides: fearful/anxious and loving/creative.
- The speaker remembers his childhood in Ceylon and his parents' troubled marriage.
- The poem explores the complicated bond between the speaker and his parents.
- People can be complex and multifaceted, and relationships can be both loving and difficult.

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## OR

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"Letters and Other Worlds" is a **poignant** (deeply moving or affecting) and **introspective** (looking inward, examining one's own thoughts and feelings) poem that masterfully explores the complexities of human relationships, identity, and the power of language.

### Imagery and Symbolism

*("Symbolism": means the use of objects, colours, or other elements to represent abstract ideas or concepts)*

The poem is rich in sensory details, with vivid imagery that transports the reader to the speaker's childhood in Ceylon. The "globe of fear" and "town of fear" that describe the father's body are potent symbols of his inner turmoil and emotional isolation.

The letters written by the father serve as a symbol of connection and disconnection. They represent the father's attempt to reach out to his loved ones, but also highlight the distance and isolation that exists between them.

### Themes

The poem explores several themes, including:

**1. The Complexity of Human Relationships:** The poem highlights the intricate web of relationships within a family, revealing the tensions, conflicts, and silences that exist between family members.

**2. Identity and Fragmentation:** The father's character is a prime example of identity fragmentation. His letters reveal a caring and loving person, while his actions and behavior show a fearful and isolated individual.

**3. The Power of Language:** The poem showcases the power of language to both connect and disconnect people. The father's letters serve as a bridge between him and his loved ones, but also underscore the distance between them.

### Style and Structure

The poem's structure and style are notable for their:

**1. Non-Linear Narrative:** The poem's narrative is non-linear, jumping between different periods and events in the speaker's life. This structure mirrors the fragmented nature of human memory and experience.

**2. Lyricism and Economy of Language:** The poem's language is characterized by its lyricism and economy. The speaker uses simple, yet powerful language to convey complex emotions and ideas.

(“**Lyricism**”: means ‘a poetic quality characterized by a song-like or musical quality.’)

(“**Economy of language**”: means using simple and concise language to convey complex ideas.)

**3. Tone and Emotional Resonance:** The poem's tone is introspective and melancholic, with a deep emotional resonance that draws the reader into the speaker's world.

### Conclusion

"Letters and Other Worlds" is a masterful poem that explores the complexities of human relationships, identity, and language. Through its vivid imagery, powerful symbolism, and non-linear/disjointed/disrupted/fragmented narrative (a narrative that is not told in chronological order or in a logical order), the poem creates a rich and immersive/fascinating world that draws the reader in. The poem's themes and ideas are both universally relevant and deeply personal, making it a truly amazing work of literature.

## Chapter 4 THE ACCIDENT (A short story)

- Murong Xuecun

**Comprehension 1: (Short Answer Questions) (2 marks)**

**1. How did the accident happen?**

The accident happened when a farmer, riding a motorbike without a helmet and without a driver's license, crashed into Lawyer Wei's car. Lawyer Wei was driving without his lights on.

**2. Who do you think was at fault? Why?**

Both parties were at fault. The farmer was riding without a helmet and license, and was also on Lawyer Wei's tail. Lawyer Wei, on the other hand, was driving without his lights on.<sup>3</sup>

**3. Whom did the lawyer call over the phone after the accident?**

Lawyer Wei called Hu Caoxing, likely a powerful connection or friend, to seek help and influence the situation.

**4. How did lawyer Wei manipulate the situation?**

Lawyer Wei manipulated the situation by using his connections and influence to intimidate the farmer and the police. He also lied and blamed the farmer for the accident, despite being partially at fault himself.

**5. The farmer wanted to buy with his money.**

The farmer wanted to buy fertilizer with his money.

**6. How was the accident settled?**

The accident was settled with the farmer paying Lawyer Wei 330 yuan as compensation for damages, despite being coerced into accepting responsibility for the accident.

**Comprehension 11: (Paragraph Answer Questions) (5 marks)**

**1. Why did the farmer not assert his rights and prove his innocence? Discuss.**

The farmer did not assert his rights and prove his innocence because he was intimidated and coerced by Lawyer Wei and the police. As a poor and vulnerable individual, he lacked the confidence and resources to stand up for himself. Additionally, he was also fearful of the consequences of challenging those in power. This highlights the power imbalance between the rich and the poor, where the latter are often marginalized and denied justice.

**2. Sketch the character of lawyer Wei.**

Lawyer Wei is a wealthy and influential individual who uses his power and connections to manipulate situations to his advantage. He is cunning, ruthless, and lacking in empathy, as evident from his treatment of the farmer. He is also corrupt, using his influence to coerce the

police into favouring him. Despite being partially responsible for the accident, he shifts the blame onto the farmer, demonstrating his dishonest and selfish nature.

**3. Narrate the situation of how the policemen pressurised the innocent farmer to admit the fault.**

The policemen pressured the innocent farmer into admitting fault by using coercive tactics. They intimidated him, making him feel vulnerable and powerless. The police officer also used language that implied the farmer was responsible for the accident, saying "You have no driver's license, you were on his tail and it looks like you hit his car! You have to admit liability." This aggressive and accusatory approach made the farmer feel trapped and forced him to accept responsibility for the accident.

**4. Lawyer Wei manipulates the situation by using his influence. Elaborate.**

Lawyer Wei manipulates the situation by using his influence and connections to coerce the police into favoring him. He calls Hu Caoping, likely a powerful connection, to intervene on his behalf. This influence leads the police to change their attitude towards him, and they begin to treat him with deference. Lawyer Wei also uses his knowledge of the law to intimidate the farmer, making him feel powerless and vulnerable.

**5. The story reflects the reality of how the rich and the influential manipulate the situation. Discuss**

The story reflects the reality of how the rich and influential often manipulate situations to their advantage. Lawyer Wei's actions demonstrate how those with power and connections can use these to coerce others, including law enforcement, into doing their bidding. This highlights the systemic corruption and inequality that exists in many societies, where the wealthy and powerful are able to exploit and manipulate others for their own gain.

**6. Comment on the title of the story 'The Accident'.**

The title "The Accident" is simple yet effective. It highlights the central event of the story, which is the car accident between Lawyer Wei and the farmer. However, the title also belies the complexity and depth of the story, which explores themes of corruption, inequality, and the abuse of power.

**7. What is the theme of the story?**

The theme of the story is the corrupting influence of power and wealth, and how this can lead to the exploitation and marginalization of vulnerable individuals. The story highlights the systemic inequality that exists in many societies, where those with power and influence are able to manipulate situations to their advantage.

**8. Murong Xuecum has criticised the political system in China, and the corruption associated with it. Comment.**

Murong Xuecun's criticism of the political system in China and the corruption associated with it is reflected in the story. The character of Lawyer Wei and his ability to manipulate the situation using his influence and connections highlights the deep-seated corruption that exists within the system. The story also underscores the powerlessness and vulnerability of ordinary citizens, particularly the poor and marginalized, in the face of this corruption.

### **Comprehension III: (Analytical/Discussion Questions) (10 marks)**

#### **1. 'The Accident' reveals how corruption undermines the moral fabric of a society. Elucidate.**

The short story "The Accident" by Murong Xuecun is a scathing critique of the pervasive corruption that undermines the moral fabric of Chinese society. The narrative masterfully exposes how corruption seeps into every aspect of life, eroding the principles of justice, equality, and compassion.

The protagonist, Lawyer Wei, embodies the corrupt and morally bankrupt individual who wields power and influence to further his own interests. His actions demonstrate how corruption can lead to a lack of empathy and a disregard for human life. The farmer, on the other hand, represents the vulnerable and marginalized segments of society who are often denied justice and exploited by those in power.

The story highlights how corruption distorts the legal system, allowing the guilty to go unpunished and the innocent to be victimized. The police officer's sudden change in attitude towards Lawyer Wei, following the latter's phone call to Hu Caoping, illustrates how corruption can influence the enforcement of laws and the administration of justice.

Furthermore, the narrative underscores the corrosive effects of corruption on societal values and norms. The farmer's reluctance to assert his rights and his willingness to accept blame for the accident demonstrate how corruption can lead to a culture of fear, submission, and resignation.

In conclusion, "The Accident" is a powerful indictment of the corrupting influence of power and wealth on individuals and society. The story elucidates how corruption undermines the moral fabric of a society, eroding trust, justice, and compassion.

#### **2. 'The Accident' is a dark description of how justice works in China. Discuss.**

Murong Xuecun's "The Accident" presents a bleak and unsettling portrayal of the Chinese justice system. The narrative lays bare the systemic flaws and corruption that permeate every level of the legal apparatus, resulting in a gross miscarriage of justice.

The story's central plot, revolving around the car accident between Lawyer Wei and the farmer, serves as a microcosm for the broader failures of the justice system. The police officer's initial reluctance to take action against Lawyer Wei, followed by his sudden change

in attitude after the latter's phone call to Hu Caoxing, exemplifies how corruption and influence can distort the application of laws.

The narrative also highlights the deep-seated power imbalance between the wealthy and influential, like Lawyer Wei, and the poor and vulnerable, like the farmer. The farmer's inability to assert his rights and his willingness to accept blame for the accident demonstrate how the justice system often fails to protect the interests of the marginalized and oppressed.

Moreover, the story critiques the lack of transparency and accountability within the Chinese justice system. The police officer's failure to investigate the accident properly and his willingness to accept Lawyer Wei's version of events illustrate how the system can be manipulated to serve the interests of those in power.

In conclusion, "The Accident" is a scathing critique of the Chinese justice system, exposing its systemic flaws, corruption, and power imbalances. The narrative presents a dark and disturbing portrayal of how justice works in China, highlighting the need for reform and greater accountability.

### **3. The story is a mirror held to the legal system which denies justice to the poor and vulnerable. Elaborate.**

Murong Xuecun's "The Accident" serves as a powerful allegory for the systemic failures of the legal system in China, particularly in its treatment of the poor and vulnerable. The narrative masterfully exposes how the legal apparatus can be manipulated to deny justice to those who need it most.

The character of the farmer embodies the struggles and frustrations of the marginalized and oppressed. His inability to assert his rights and his willingness to accept blame for the accident demonstrate how the legal system can be intimidating and inaccessible to those who lack power and influence.

The story highlights how the legal system often prioritizes the interests of the wealthy and powerful over those of the poor and vulnerable. Lawyer Wei's actions and behavior illustrate how those with influence and connections can manipulate the system to their advantage, while the farmer's experiences demonstrate how the system can be stacked against those who lack these advantages.

Furthermore, the narrative critiques the lack of empathy and compassion within the legal system. The police officer's treatment of the farmer and Lawyer Wei's callous disregard for the farmer's well-being illustrate how the system can often prioritize procedure and protocol over human life and dignity.

In conclusion, "The Accident" is a powerful indictment of the legal system's failures to provide justice to the poor and vulnerable. The narrative serves as a mirror held to the system, exposing its flaws and highlighting the need for reform and greater accountability.

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OR

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## Summary of the short story "The Accident" by Murong Xuecun

### Plot:

The story revolves around a car accident between a wealthy and influential lawyer, Old Wei, and a poor farmer. The accident occurs when the farmer, who is not wearing a helmet and does not have a driver's license, crashes into Old Wei's car. Old Wei, who is partially responsible for the accident, uses his influence and connections to manipulate the situation and shift the blame onto the farmer.

### Character Analysis:

**Old Wei:** The protagonist (hero), a wealthy and influential lawyer who uses his power and connections to manipulate (handle/ influence) the situation. He is cunning, ruthless, and lacking in empathy.

**The Farmer:** The victim, a poor and vulnerable individual who is intimidated (frightened/afraid) and coerced by Old Wei and the police. He is powerless and lacks the confidence to stand up for himself.

### Themes:

**Corruption and Abuse of Power:** The story highlights how those with power and influence can manipulate the system to their advantage, while the poor and vulnerable (weak) are denied justice.

**Injustice and Oppression:** The narrative exposes the systemic flaws and corruption that permeate (flood/pervade) every level of the legal apparatus, resulting in a gross miscarriage (failure/brakedown/lapse) of justice.

**Moral Decay:** The story critiques the lack of empathy (understanding) and compassion within the legal system and society as a whole.

### Symbolism:

**The Accident:** The accident serves as a symbol for the systemic flaws and corruption that exist within the legal system.

**The Farmer's Money:** The farmer's money, which he wants to use to buy fertilizer, symbolizes his hard work and struggle for survival.

### Style and Structure:

**Narrative Technique:** The story uses a third-person narrative technique, which allows the reader to observe the events from an objective perspective.

**Tone:** The tone of the story is critical, reflective, and sombre (dull/serious), highlighting the seriousness of the issues explored.

### Setting:

**Time:** The story is set in contemporary China, highlighting the country's rapid modernization and the resulting social and economic changes.

**Place:** The story takes place on a road in China, where the accident occurs.

**Conclusion:** Overall, "The Accident" is a powerful and thought-provoking short story that critiques the systemic flaws and corruption that exist within the legal system in China. The narrative highlights the struggles and frustrations of the poor and vulnerable, while also underscoring the need for greater empathy, compassion, and accountability within society.

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### **Summary of "The Accident"**

The Short Story "The Accident" by Murong Xuecun: A Scathing (sarcastic/contemptuous/mockingly/scornful) Critique of Corruption and Abuse of Power.

The short story "The Accident" by Murong Xuecun is a powerful and thought-provoking narrative that lays bare the systemic flaws and corruption that permeate every level of Chinese society. Through the lens of a seemingly ordinary car accident, the author masterfully exposes the dark underbelly of a system that prioritizes the interests of the wealthy and powerful over those of the poor and vulnerable.

At its core, the story revolves around the car accident between Old Wei, a wealthy and influential lawyer, and a poor farmer. As the narrative unfolds, it becomes clear that Old Wei is partially responsible for the accident, yet he uses his influence and connections to manipulate the situation and shift the blame onto the farmer. This blatant abuse of power is facilitated by the police, who are quickly swayed by Old Wei's influence and coerce the farmer into accepting responsibility.

Through this narrative, Murong Xuecun shines a light on the pervasive corruption that exists within Chinese society. The author highlights how those with power and influence are able to manipulate the system to their advantage, while the poor and vulnerable are denied justice. This is starkly illustrated by the farmer's powerlessness in the face of Old Wei's influence, as he is forced to pay compensation for damages despite being the victim.

Furthermore, the story critiques the lack of empathy and compassion within Chinese society. Old Wei's callous disregard for the farmer's well-being, as well as the police's willingness to coerce the farmer into accepting responsibility, underscores the dehumanizing effects of corruption and abuse of power.

In conclusion, "The Accident" is a searing indictment of the systemic flaws and corruption that exist within Chinese society. Through its masterful narrative, the story exposes the dark underbelly of a system that prioritizes the interests of the wealthy and powerful over those of

the poor and vulnerable. As a powerful critique of corruption and abuse of power, "The Accident" is a must-read for anyone seeking to understand the complexities of contemporary Chinese society.

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**Chapter 5**  
**IF I MUST DIE**  
**(Poem)**

**- REFAAT ALAREER**

If I must die,  
you must live  
to tell my story  
to sell my things  
to buy a piece of cloth  
and some strings,  
(make it white with a long tail)  
so that a child, somewhere in Gaza  
while looking heaven in the eye  
awaiting his dad who left in a blaze-  
and bid no one farewell  
not even to his flesh  
not even to himself-  
sees the kite, my kite you made, flying up above  
and thinks for a moment an angel is there  
bringing back love  
If I must die  
let it bring hope  
let it be a tale.

Translated by Sinan Antoon

**A line-by-line meaning of the poem:**

***"If I must die"***

- The speaker acknowledges the possibility of their own death, which is a stark reality in a conflict zone like Gaza.

***"You must live"***

- The speaker asks the reader to survive and live on, even if they themselves do not.

***"To tell my story"***

- The speaker wants the reader to share their story, to keep their memory alive, and to ensure that their experiences are not forgotten.

***"To sell my things"***

- The speaker asks the reader to take care of their belongings, to sell them if necessary, and to use the money to create something new.

***"To buy a piece of cloth and some strings"***

- The speaker asks the reader to use the money to buy materials to create a kite.

***"(Make it white with a long tail)"***

- The speaker specifies the details of the kite, emphasizing its beauty and simplicity.

***"So that a child, somewhere in Gaza"***

- The speaker imagines a child in Gaza, who has been affected by the conflict.

***"While looking heaven in the eye awaiting his dad"***

- The child is waiting for their father, who has likely been killed or injured in the conflict.

***"Who left in a blaze"***

- The father's death is described as sudden and violent, like a blaze.

***"And bid no one farewell, not even to his flesh, not even to himself"***

- The father's death is described as so sudden that he did not even have time to say goodbye to his own body or himself.

***"Sees the kite, my kite you made"***

- The child sees the kite that the reader has made, using the speaker's belongings.

***"Flying up above"***

- The kite is flying high in the air, a symbol of hope and freedom.

***"And thinks for a moment an angel is there"***

- The child is so taken by the beauty of the kite that they think it might be an angel.

***"Bringing back love"***

- The kite brings a sense of love and comfort to the child.

***"If I must die"***

- The speaker repeats the phrase, emphasizing the possibility of their own death.

***"Let it bring hope"***

- The speaker wants their death to bring hope to others, rather than despair.

***"Let it be a tale"***

- The speaker wants their story to be told and remembered, rather than forgotten.

Overall, the poem is a powerful exploration of the human cost of conflict, the importance of storytelling and memory, and the resilience of the human spirit.

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**Comprehension 1: (Short Answer Questions)****(2 marks)****1. Why does the speaker want the reader to live?**

The speaker wants the reader to live so that they can tell the speaker's story and keep their memory alive.

**2. Whom does the speaker refer to as a 'child' in the poem?**

The speaker refers to a child in Gaza who has lost their father in the war.

**Comprehension II: (Paragraph Answer Questions)****(5 marks)****1. Elaborate on the conclusion of the poem.**

The conclusion of the poem is a message of hope and resilience. The speaker asks that their death bring hope and be a tale that inspires others to keep fighting for their rights. The image of the kite flying over Gaza, bringing joy to a child who has lost their father, is a powerful symbol of the human spirit's ability to find hope in the darkest of times.

**2. Describe the gory picture as narrated in the poem.**

The poem describes a gory picture of war and its devastating effects on civilians. The speaker mentions a father who left in a blaze and bid no one farewell, not even to his own flesh. This image conveys the sudden and violent nature of death in war. The poem also mentions a child who has lost their father, highlighting the human cost of conflict.

**3. Write a note on the historical conflict that existed in Gaza.**

The historical conflict referred to in the poem is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has resulted in numerous wars and humanitarian crises in Gaza. The conflict has its roots in the early 20th century, but the poem specifically references the ongoing violence and occupation that has characterized life in Gaza for decades.

**4. Which tale is the poet referring to in the poem?**

The poet is referring to the tale of their own life and death, as well as the story of the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom and self-determination. The poem asks that the reader tell the speaker's story and keep their memory alive, suggesting that the tale is one of resistance and resilience.

**5. How does the poem convey the spirit of revolution to the future generations?**

The poem conveys the spirit of revolution to future generations through its themes of hope, resilience, and resistance. The speaker's determination to leave a lasting legacy and inspire others to keep fighting for their rights is a powerful message to young people. The image of the kite flying over Gaza, bringing joy to a child who has lost their father, is also a symbol of the human spirit's ability to find hope and beauty in difficult circumstances, inspiring future generations to continue the struggle for freedom and justice.

**Comprehension III: (Analytical/Discussion Questions) (10 marks)**

**1. Comment on the indomitable spirit of survival and resistance as depicted in the poem.**

The poem "If I Must Die" is a powerful testament to the indomitable spirit of survival and resistance that defines the Palestinian people. Despite facing unimaginable suffering and hardship, the speaker's voice remains strong and defiant, refusing to give in to despair. The poem conveys a sense of determination and resilience, as the speaker asks the reader to tell their story and keep their memory alive. This act of storytelling becomes an act of resistance, a way of asserting one's existence and identity in the face of oppression.

The poem also highlights the importance of hope and beauty in the face of adversity. The image of the kite flying over Gaza, bringing joy to a child who has lost their father, is a powerful symbol of the human spirit's ability to find hope and beauty in difficult circumstances. This spirit of survival and resistance is a beacon of inspiration to all those who read the poem, and serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of standing up against injustice and oppression.

**2. Compare the present scenario of Gaza and analyse it with your reading of the poem.**

The present scenario in Gaza is one of on-going conflict and humanitarian crisis. The Israeli blockade, which has been in place since 2007, has had a devastating impact on the economy and infrastructure of Gaza. The poverty rate in Gaza is one of the highest in the world, and the territory is heavily reliant on international aid.

Reading the poem "If I Must Die" in the context of the present scenario in Gaza is a sobering experience. The poem's themes of survival and resistance are just as relevant today as they were when the poem was written. The speaker's voice is a powerful expression of the Palestinian people's determination to survive and resist in the face of overwhelming odds.

The poem also highlights the importance of international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people. The speaker's request to the reader to tell their story and keep their memory alive is a powerful reminder of the importance of bearing witness to the suffering of others. As the situation in Gaza continues to deteriorate, it is more important than ever that we listen to the voices of Palestinians and support their struggle for justice and human rights.

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### **Summary of the poem "IF I MUST DIE"**

The poem is a powerful expression of hope, resilience, and resistance in the face of war and occupation. The speaker, a Palestinian living in Gaza, knows that they may die at any moment due to the conflict. However, instead of giving in to despair, they ask the reader to tell their story and keep their memory alive.

The speaker wants their death to bring hope to others, and for their story to inspire others to keep fighting for their rights. They imagine a kite flying over Gaza, bringing joy to a child who has lost their father in the war. This image is a powerful symbol of the human spirit's ability to find hope and beauty in difficult circumstances.

Overall, the poem is a testament to the strength and resilience of the Palestinian people, and a powerful expression of their determination to survive and resist in the face of overwhelming odds.

It's worth noting that the poem's author, Refaat Alareer, was himself a victim of the conflict in Gaza. He was killed in an Israeli airstrike in 2023, along with several members of his family. The poem, which was written in 2011, takes on a new level of poignancy in light of Alareer's tragic death, and serves as a powerful reminder of the human cost of conflict and the importance of preserving the stories and memories of those who have been lost.

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### **Analysis of the poem, "IF I MUST DIE"**

#### **Imagery and Symbolism**

The poem is rich in sensory details, with vivid images of war, death, and destruction. The image of the kite flying over Gaza is a powerful symbol of hope and resilience. The kite represents the human spirit's ability to soar above the difficulties and find joy in the midst of suffering.

#### **Metaphor and Simile**

The poem uses metaphors and similes to convey the speaker's emotions and ideas. For example, the comparison of the father's death to a "blaze" creates a vivid image of sudden and violent loss.

#### **Repetition and Rhythm**

The poem's repetition of the phrase "if I must die" creates a sense of inevitability and resignation. The rhythm of the poem is slow and contemplative, reflecting the speaker's reflective and introspective tone.

### **Tone and Irony**

The tone of the poem is somber and reflective, with a hint of irony. The speaker's request to the reader to tell their story and keep their memory alive is ironic, given the speaker's own mortality.

### **Language and Syntax**

The language of the poem is simple and direct, yet powerful and evocative. The syntax is loose and conversational, creating a sense of intimacy and immediacy.

### **Themes and Motifs**

The poem explores themes of mortality, hope, resilience, and resistance. The motif of storytelling is central to the poem, highlighting the importance of preserving memories and experiences.

### **Cultural and Historical Context**

The poem is deeply rooted in the cultural and historical context of Palestine and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The speaker's experiences and emotions are shaped by the ongoing conflict and occupation.

Overall, the poem's style is characterized by its simplicity, directness, and powerful imagery. The use of metaphor, simile, repetition, and rhythm creates a sense of intimacy and immediacy, drawing the reader into the speaker's world.

### **The message of the poem "If I Must Die" by Refaat Alareer:**

- 1. Hope and Resilience (*Flexibility*):** Despite the overwhelming odds and the certainty of death, the speaker finds hope and resilience in the midst of suffering.
- 2. Importance of Storytelling:** The poem highlights the importance of storytelling and preserving memories, especially in the face of oppression and erasure.
- 3. Resistance (*Fight*) and Defiance (*Disobedience/Non-cooperation*):** The speaker's determination to leave a lasting legacy and inspire others to keep fighting for their rights is a powerful expression of resistance and defiance.
- 4. Human Cost of Conflict:** The poem serves as a powerful reminder of the human cost of conflict and the importance of preserving the stories and memories of those who have been lost.
- 5. Power of the Human Spirit:** Ultimately, the poem is a testament to the power of the human spirit to find hope, beauty, and meaning in the darkest of circumstances.

**Chapter 6**  
**MY HOME UNDER IMPERIAL FIRE**  
 (The excerpt)  
 - CHINUA ACHEBE

**Comprehension 1: (Short Answer Questions)**

**(2 marks)**

**1. What was the significance of the narrator's first motor vehicle ride to their ancestral home?**

The significance of the narrator's first motor vehicle ride to their ancestral home was profound; it marked his initial experience of returning to Ogidi, which was both exciting and frightening. The journey was overwhelming due to the dust and speed, ultimately leading to a sense of fear and dizziness, contrasting with the anticipation he had felt beforehand.

**2. How did the local community react to the narrator's father's return and sermon at St. Philip's Anglican Church?**

The local community reacted to the narrator's father's return with a mix of admiration and teasing. His father preached a homecoming sermon at St. Philip's Anglican Church, which led the congregation to nickname him "Mister Nineteen-Four," highlighting their fascination with his long history in missionary work, though the nickname was not entirely complimentary.

**3. Why does the narrator prefer to refer to the Igbo people as a 'nation' rather than a 'tribe'?**

The narrator prefers to refer to the Igbo people as a 'nation' rather than a 'tribe' because he believes that the term "tribe" is derogatory and does not accurately reflect their complex social structure and cultural identity. He argues that the Igbo people are not primitive, do not share blood ties, speak multiple dialects, and lack a centralized leadership, which aligns more closely with the definition of a nation.

**4. What role did markets play in Igbo society according to the essay?**

Markets played a vital role in Igbo society by serving as centers for trade, cultural exchange, and community bonding. They facilitated daily interactions among various towns and villages, fostering cooperation and competition while also being essential for the economic and social life of the Igbo people.

**5. How did music, specifically Egwu Obi, contribute to Igbo cultural identity during the narrator's childhood?**

Music, specifically Egwu Obi (Song of the Heart), contributed significantly to Igbo cultural identity during the narrator's childhood by fostering a sense of community and shared experience. It became a lasting cultural phenomenon that transcended other ephemeral songs, reflecting the vibrancy of Igbo traditions amidst external influences.

**6. What significance did the story of the migration of a neighbouring town hold for the narrator?**

The story of the migration of a neighboring town held significance for the narrator as it illustrated the Igbo people's reluctance to impose their religious beliefs on others. This narrative highlighted their respect for individual beliefs and practices, contrasting sharply with later experiences of religious imperialism during European evangelism.

**7. How did the narrator's father react to the presence of his half-brother's shrine in their home?**

The narrator's father reacted strongly against the presence of his half-brother's shrine in their home, demanding its immediate removal. This reaction stemmed from his commitment to Christianity and indicated underlying tensions within family relationships influenced by differing religious beliefs.

**8. How were Christianity and traditional beliefs accommodated in the narrator's family home?**

Christianity and traditional beliefs were accommodated in the narrator's family home through open dialogue and hospitality. His parents welcomed both Christian and non-Christian relatives, allowing for discussions that enriched his understanding of culture and history without enforcing strict doctrinal boundaries.

**9. Why did the Igbo people generally reject the rule of kings?**

The Igbo people generally rejected the rule of kings because they valued individual autonomy and democratic principles over centralized authority. Their cultural narratives emphasized self-governance and communal decision-making, leading them to view kingship as an enemy to their way of life.

**10. What challenges did Igbo villages face in terms of defence against centralized military powers?**

Igbo villages faced challenges in terms of defense against centralized military powers due to their decentralized political structure. Without a unified military force or centralized governance, they struggled to coordinate defenses against external threats effectively.

**11. Why were the Igbo considered 'argumentative' by the British colonialists?**

The British colonialists considered the Igbo 'argumentative' due to their strong tradition of debate and discussion within communities. This characteristic was perceived negatively by colonial authorities, who often misinterpreted it as resistance or defiance against colonial rule.

**Comprehension II: (Paragraph Answer Questions) (5 marks)**

**1. Explore the role of tradition and heritage in "My Home Under Imperial Fire" and its conflict with the imperial forces.**

In "My Home Under Imperial Fire," tradition and heritage play crucial roles in shaping identity amidst imperial forces. Achebe illustrates how these elements foster community resilience against colonial influences while also highlighting conflicts that

arise from differing worldviews between traditional practices and imposed European values.

**2. Describe the house the narrator's family moved into upon returning to Ogidi.**

Upon returning to Ogidi, the narrator's family moved into a grand house characterized by its iron roof and whitewashed earth walls, contrasting sharply with their previous thatch-roofed mission house. This new home symbolized both progress and a return to roots after years of missionary work.

**3. Discuss the historical antecedents of negative European portrayals of Africa in literature, as explained by Achebe. How did these stereotypes influence colonial attitudes?**

Achebe discusses historical antecedents of negative European portrayals of Africa in literature by addressing stereotypes rooted in colonial attitudes that depicted Africans as primitive or uncivilized. These portrayals influenced colonial policies and justified exploitation by reinforcing notions of superiority among Europeans.

**4. How did the transatlantic slave trade contribute to the negative stereotypes about Africans in European literature, as discussed by Achebe?**

The transatlantic slave trade contributed significantly to negative stereotypes about Africans in European literature by dehumanizing them through narratives that emphasized brutality and savagery. Achebe highlights how these depictions shaped Western perceptions of African cultures as inferior or backward.

**5. In what ways did Achebe's educational journey, particularly at University College, Ibadan, challenge his understanding of African identity and colonial history?**

Achebe's educational journey at University College, Ibadan challenged his understanding of African identity by exposing him to both Nigerian and Western literary traditions. This exposure prompted critical reflections on colonial history and inspired him to redefine his own identity as an African writer within a global context.

**6. Discuss Achebe's belief in the transformative power of literature.**

Achebe believed in the transformative power of literature as a means to challenge stereotypes and promote understanding between cultures. He viewed storytelling as essential for preserving heritage while also advocating for social change through nuanced representations of African experiences.

**7. How did European evangelism impact Igbo religious practices and beliefs?**

European evangelism impacted Igbo religious practices by introducing Christianity while often dismissing traditional beliefs as paganism. However, Achebe notes that many families maintained a balance between both faiths, reflecting a complex interplay between indigenous practices and new religious influences.

**Comprehension III: (Analytical/Discussion Questions) Answer in 400 words each: (10 marks)**

**1. Discuss the theme of cultural clash and its impact as portrayed in the essay.**

The theme of cultural clash in Chinua Achebe's "My Home Under Imperial Fire" is vividly portrayed through the narrator's experiences and reflections on the Igbo identity in the face of colonial influences. This clash is primarily between traditional Igbo values and the impositions of European colonialism, which often disregarded local customs and beliefs. Achebe illustrates this conflict through various anecdotes, including his family's return to Ogidi and the tensions surrounding his father's missionary work. The initial excitement of returning to his ancestral home quickly turns into a sense of alienation, as he grapples with the nickname "Mister Nineteen-Four," which symbolizes the community's ambivalence towards his father's long absence and missionary endeavors.

Achebe emphasizes that the Igbo people, whom he prefers to call a nation rather than a tribe, possess a rich cultural heritage characterized by independence, communal governance, and a complex social structure. This self-identification as a nation underscores their resistance to being categorized as primitive or inferior by colonial narratives. The clash becomes evident in the way traditional practices are often undermined by the arrival of Western ideologies, particularly Christianity, which seeks to convert and reshape indigenous beliefs. For instance, the conflict between Achebe's father and his half-brother over the shrine represents not only personal family dynamics but also broader societal tensions between traditional spirituality and imposed religious beliefs. The impact of this cultural clash is multifaceted. On one hand, it leads to a loss of cultural identity and dislocation for individuals like Achebe, who find themselves caught between two worlds. On the other hand, it also fosters resilience within the Igbo community as they navigate these changes while striving to preserve their heritage. The vibrant markets, communal rituals, and storytelling traditions serve as vital links to their past, enabling them to maintain a sense of belonging despite external pressures. Ultimately, Achebe's exploration of cultural clash highlights the complexities of identity formation in colonial contexts, revealing how individuals and communities negotiate their place within a rapidly changing world.

## **2. How does Chinua Achebe use language and narrative style to convey the psychological impact of imperialism?**

Chinua Achebe employs language and narrative style in "My Home Under Imperial Fire" to convey the psychological impact of imperialism on individuals and communities. His use of vivid imagery and personal anecdotes creates an intimate connection between the reader and his experiences growing up in a colonized society. Achebe's narrative is marked by a reflective tone that captures both nostalgia for his childhood and critical awareness of the socio-political realities surrounding him.

The psychological impact of imperialism is evident in Achebe's descriptions of his feelings during significant moments, such as his first motor vehicle ride to Ogidi. The fear and dizziness he experiences symbolize the disorientation many individuals feel when confronted with rapid societal changes brought about by colonial rule. This dislocation is further emphasized through his interactions with peers who label him based on his father's missionary past, illustrating how colonial legacies shape personal identities. Achebe's language is rich with metaphorical significance; for instance, he contrasts traditional Igbo values with Western ideologies through proverbs and local lore. By incorporating these elements into his narrative, he highlights the resilience of

Igbo culture while simultaneously critiquing its marginalization under colonialism. His choice to refer to the Igbo as a nation rather than a tribe serves as a powerful assertion of identity against derogatory labels imposed by colonizers. Moreover, Achebe's narrative style incorporates humor and irony, particularly in recounting familial relationships affected by differing religious beliefs. His father's humorous yet serious reaction to his half-brother's shrine exemplifies the tension between Christianity and traditional practices within families. This interplay of humor and gravity reflects the complexities of navigating identity in an imperial context. Through these techniques, Achebe effectively conveys how imperialism not only disrupts cultural continuity but also instills feelings of confusion and alienation among individuals trying to reconcile their heritage with imposed foreign values. His narrative ultimately serves as both a personal memoir and a broader commentary on the enduring psychological scars left by colonial encounters.

### **3. How did Achebe's exposure to literature from both Nigerian and Western traditions influence his own identity as a writer and his literary aspirations?**

Achebe's exposure to literature from both Nigerian and Western traditions profoundly influenced his identity as a writer and shaped his literary aspirations. Growing up in Nigeria during colonial rule, he was immersed in oral traditions that emphasized storytelling as a means of preserving culture and history. These narratives instilled in him an appreciation for the richness of African heritage, which would later inform his writing style and thematic choices.

At University College, Ibadan, Achebe encountered Western literary canon alongside African narratives, prompting him to critically engage with both perspectives. This dual exposure allowed him to recognize the disparities in representation; while Western literature often depicted Africa through a lens of stereotypes and simplifications, African stories were rich with complexity and depth. This realization fueled Achebe's desire to write authentically about African experiences from an insider's perspective. Achebe's literary aspirations were further shaped by his understanding of language as a tool for empowerment. He sought to reclaim African narratives from colonial misrepresentations by employing English—a language associated with colonial oppression—as a medium for expressing Igbo culture. In doing so, he challenged prevailing stereotypes while simultaneously making African stories accessible to global audiences. His seminal work "Things Fall Apart" exemplifies this synthesis of influences; it presents an authentic portrayal of pre-colonial Igbo society while addressing themes of cultural clash and identity crisis stemming from colonialism. Through this novel and others, Achebe aimed not only to entertain but also to educate readers about Africa's rich history and diverse cultures. Ultimately, Achebe's journey through literature reflects a broader quest for self-definition amidst colonial legacies. His commitment to portraying African realities truthfully underscores his belief in literature's transformative power—both for individuals seeking identity and for societies grappling with historical injustices.

**4. Analyze the incident where Nigerian students strongly disagreed with their English teacher over Joyce Cary's novel Mister Johnson. What does this incident reveal about colonial education and literary critique?**

The incident where Nigerian students strongly disagreed with their English teacher over Joyce Cary's novel "Mister Johnson" reveals significant insights into colonial education and literary critique within an imperial context. This disagreement highlights how colonial educational systems often perpetuated misrepresentations of African cultures through literature that lacked authenticity or understanding.

In "Mister Johnson," Cary portrays Nigeria through a Western lens that simplifies complex social dynamics into caricatures that reinforce stereotypes about Africans being naïve or subservient. When Nigerian students challenged their teacher's interpretation of the novel, it became clear that they were acutely aware of these inaccuracies; they recognized that such portrayals did not reflect their lived experiences or cultural realities. This incident underscores the limitations inherent in colonial education systems that prioritize Western literature while neglecting authentic African voices. Students' resistance signifies their rejection of narratives that seek to define them from an outsider's perspective; it reflects a growing awareness among young Africans about their own identities in relation to colonial discourse. Furthermore, this disagreement points to broader implications regarding literary critique within educational settings dominated by colonial ideologies. It raises questions about who gets to tell stories about Africa—whether those narratives should come from within or be filtered through external perspectives that may lack nuance or empathy. Achebe himself experienced similar tensions during his education; he recognized early on that much of what was taught about Africa was steeped in misconceptions rooted in colonial attitudes. This awareness motivated him to write against such portrayals in order to reclaim agency over African narratives. In conclusion, this incident serves as a microcosm reflecting larger struggles against misrepresentation within colonial education systems while highlighting students' desire for authenticity in literary representations—an aspiration that resonates deeply within Achebe's own literary mission.

**5. Explain the concept of The Africa That Never Was as discussed by Dorothy Hammond and Alta Jablow, How does it relate to Achebe's critique of Western literary portrayals of Africa?**

The concept of "The Africa That Never Was," discussed by Dorothy Hammond and Alta Jablow, critiques Western literary portrayals that distort African realities through stereotypes rooted in colonial attitudes. This concept emphasizes how Western narratives often depict Africa as an exoticized land devoid of history or complexity—reducing its diverse cultures into monolithic representations characterized by primitivism or savagery.

Achebe's critique aligns closely with this concept as he challenges these reductive portrayals throughout his works. He argues that such narratives not only fail to capture the richness of African cultures but also serve political purposes that justify exploitation under colonial rule. By presenting Africa through sensationalized lenses—whether focusing on violence or superstition—Western literature contributes significantly to

misconceptions about its peoples' histories and identities. Achebe's emphasis on reclaiming authentic African voices stands at odds with "The Africa That Never Was." He seeks instead to illuminate real stories grounded in lived experiences rather than fabricated myths perpetuated by outsiders who lack understanding or respect for local contexts. This critique extends beyond mere representation; it addresses power dynamics inherent within storytelling itself—who gets authority over narratives shapes perceptions about entire cultures across generations. By advocating for nuanced portrayals rooted in historical accuracy rather than sensationalism, Achebe calls attention not only to misrepresentation but also invites readers into deeper engagements with Africa's multifaceted identities. Ultimately, both Hammond's & Jablow's concept along with Achebe's critique serve as reminders that literature has profound implications on shaping perceptions—underscoring why it is essential for African writers like Achebe themselves take charge over their narratives—to counteract damaging stereotypes while fostering genuine understanding across cultures.

**6. Describe Achebe's evolution from viewing stories as innocent fiction to recognizing their potential to perpetuate harmful stereotypes. How did this realization impact his approach to writing?**

Achebe's evolution from viewing stories as innocent fiction to recognizing their potential for perpetuating harmful stereotypes marks a significant turning point in his approach to writing. Initially influenced by traditional storytelling practices that celebrated cultural heritage without questioning underlying assumptions about representation or power dynamics inherent within narratives—Achebe began grappling with complexities surrounding authorship once exposed more broadly outside Nigeria during university studies abroad.

This realization emerged particularly during encounters with Western literature steeped heavily in stereotypes depicting Africans through simplistic lenses—often portraying them merely as objects rather than subjects possessing agency over their own lives—a perspective deeply entrenched within colonial ideologies seeking justification for exploitation across continents throughout history. As he engaged critically with these texts—both reading them alongside fellow students who shared similar frustrations regarding misrepresentation—it became increasingly clear that literature could serve dual purposes: either reinforcing negative stereotypes or challenging dominant narratives through authentic representation grounded firmly within lived experiences shaped by unique histories across diverse cultures throughout Africa itself. Consequently this shift prompted him toward writing works aimed explicitly at counteracting such harmful portrayals—fostering genuine understanding while reclaiming agency over narratives traditionally dominated by outsiders lacking insight into local contexts shaping individual identities across regions defined often solely via external perspectives alone historically speaking. Achebe's seminal work "Things Fall Apart" exemplifies this evolution; it serves not just as entertainment but also functions pedagogically—inviting readers into nuanced explorations surrounding pre-colonial Igbo society while addressing themes related directly back toward cultural clashes arising due largely due to imperialist interventions disrupting local practices previously existing harmoniously prior to colonization efforts undertaken across various regions within Nigeria specifically speaking here again focusing specifically upon Igbos' unique heritage itself prominently featured throughout text itself accordingly too! In conclusion—this evolution profoundly impacted how Achebe approached writing

thereafter; recognizing stories held immense power shaping perceptions regarding entire cultures necessitated responsibility among authors themselves ensuring authenticity remained paramount when crafting narratives reflecting true essence behind communities represented therein ultimately leading toward greater empathy understanding bridging gaps between disparate worlds existing side-by-side historically speaking!

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### **Summary of Chinua Achebe's "My Home Under Imperial Fire" (The excerpt)**

The excerpt from Chinua Achebe's "My Home Under Imperial Fire" reflects on his childhood experiences and the complexities of identity within the Igbo community.

#### **Childhood Memories**

Achebe recounts a significant memory of returning to his ancestral home in Ogidi at the age of five. This homecoming was marked by a mix of excitement and fear as he rode in a truck for the first time, unable to see where they were headed. His father's return after years of missionary work brought the family to a newly built house that contrasted sharply with their previous living conditions.

#### **Identity and Community**

Achebe discusses the Igbo people, whom he prefers to call a **nation** rather than a **tribe**. He argues that the term "tribe" is inadequate and often derogatory, while "nation" better reflects their complex social structure and cultural identity. The Igbo are characterized by their independence, lack of centralized government, and rich traditions of communal life.

#### **Cultural Significance**

The narrative explores the intricate social fabric of Igbo life, emphasizing their vibrant markets, communal rituals, and cultural exchanges that bind them together. Achebe highlights the importance of local lore and storytelling in understanding their history and values, illustrating how these narratives shape community identity.

#### **Political Structure**

Achebe notes that the Igbo political structure comprises numerous independent towns and villages, each managing its own affairs. This decentralized governance fosters competition but also cooperation among communities, which is vital for maintaining social harmony.

#### **Personal Growth**

Achebe reflects on how his early experiences in Ogidi shaped his understanding of his heritage. He describes learning about local customs and beliefs through conversations in his home, particularly in the piazza where various family members gathered. These interactions instilled in him a deep appreciation for his cultural roots.

#### **Conclusion**

Overall, Achebe's narrative is a poignant exploration of identity, community, and the nuances of belonging within the Igbo nation. His reflections offer insight into how personal experiences intertwine with broader cultural dynamics, highlighting the significance of heritage in shaping one's worldview.

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**Chapter 7**  
**To Leave This City**  
**(A Poem)**

**- Orhan Veli Kanik**

This is the city to walk around in the rain  
 Staring at the barges in the harbor  
 And to hum songs through the night.  
 The city has countless streets  
 Bustling with people running around...  
 The waitress who brings me my tea every evening  
 And whom I like a lot although she's a White Russian  
 Is in this city.

The old pianist who turns around  
 To look at me  
 When he sneaks in pieces by Schumann and Brahms  
 While playing waltzes and foxtrot  
 Is also in this city.

The ferry boats that carry passengers  
 To the village where I was born are in this city.  
 So are my memories,  
 All those I love.  
 And the graves of my loved ones.

This is the city where I have a job.  
 Where I earn my bread money.  
 And yet, in spite of all this,  
 This is the same city I'm leaving  
 Because of a woman  
 In another city.

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**Explanation is provided for each line of the poem "To Leave This City" by Orhan Veli Kanik**

***"This is the city to walk around in the rain"***

The speaker describes the city as a place where one can enjoy a leisurely walk in the rain, suggesting a romantic and peaceful atmosphere.

***"Staring at the barges in the harbor"***

The speaker finds joy in simple activities like gazing at barges in the harbor, indicating a sense of calm and contentment.

***"And to hum songs through the night."***

The speaker also enjoys humming songs at night, implying a sense of relaxation and tranquility.

***"The city has countless streets"***

The speaker acknowledges the city's vastness and complexity, with numerous streets to explore.

***"Bustling with people running around...."***

The city is full of life, with people rushing to and fro, creating a sense of energy and dynamism.

***"The waitress who brings me my tea every evening"***

The speaker mentions a specific person, a waitress, who serves them tea every evening, indicating a sense of familiarity and comfort.

***"And whom I like a lot although she's a White Russian"***

The speaker admits to having a fondness for the waitress, despite her being a White Russian, suggesting a sense of openness and acceptance.

***"Is in this city."***

The waitress is a part of the city's fabric, making the speaker's connection to the city even stronger.

***"The old pianist who turns around"***

The speaker mentions another person, an old pianist, who catches their attention.

***"To look at me"***

The pianist notices the speaker, creating a sense of mutual awareness and connection.

***"When he sneaks in pieces by Schumann and Brahms"***

The pianist plays music by famous composers, Schumann and Brahms, but does so discreetly.

***"While playing waltzes and foxtrots"***

The pianist's primary repertoire consists of more popular, lively music, such as waltzes and foxtrots.

***"Is also in this city."***

The pianist, like the waitress, is an integral part of the city's cultural landscape.

***"The ferry boats that carry passengers"***

The speaker mentions the ferry boats that transport people to various destinations.

***"To the village where I was born are in this city."***

The ferry boats connect the city to the speaker's birthplace, highlighting the city's role as a hub for personal connections and memories.

***"So are my memories,"***

The speaker's memories are also tied to the city.

***"All those I love."***

The city is home to the people the speaker loves and cares about.

***"And the graves of my loved ones."***

The city also holds the graves of the speaker's deceased loved ones, emphasizing the city's connection to the speaker's past and personal history.

***"This is the city where I have a job."***

Despite the city's personal significance, the speaker also acknowledges its role in their professional life.

***"Where I earn my bread money."***

The city provides the speaker with a means of sustenance and financial stability.

***"And yet, in spite of all this,"***

Despite the city's importance in the speaker's life, they are still willing to leave.

***"This is the same city I'm leaving"***

The speaker is departing from the city, a decision that seems to be driven by a personal desire rather than a lack of connection to the city.

***"Because of a woman"***

The reason for the speaker's departure is a romantic interest in another city.

***"In another cit."***

The speaker is drawn to someone in a different city, highlighting the tension between their personal desires and their connection to their current city.

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**Stanz-wise summary of the poem "To Leave This City" by Orhan Veli Kanik****Stanza 1**

The speaker describes their city as a place to enjoy simple pleasures like walking in the rain, watching barges, and humming songs at night.

**Stanza 2**

The city has many busy streets, but the speaker feels a connection to it through people they know, like a kind waitress and an old pianist.

**Stanza 3**

The city holds many personal connections and memories for the speaker, including their birthplace, loved ones, and past experiences.

**Stanza 4**

Despite all these connections, the speaker is leaving the city for a romantic interest in another city, highlighting the tension between their love for the city and their personal desires.

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### Analysis of the poem “To Leave This City” by Orhan Veli Kanik

#### Themes:

- 1. Nostalgia and Longing:** The poem explores the speaker's nostalgia for their city and the life they've built there. However, this nostalgia is bittersweet, as the speaker is leaving the city for a new love.
- 2. Identity and Belonging:** The poem raises questions about the speaker's identity and sense of belonging. The speaker is torn between their love for the city and their desire for a new life elsewhere.
- 3. Displacement and Migration:** The poem touches on the theme of displacement and migration, highlighting the complexities of leaving one's home and starting anew.

#### Imagery and Symbolism:

- 1. Rain and Night:** The poem's opening lines, "This is the city to walk around in the rain / Staring at the barges in the harbor / And to hum songs through the night," evoke a sense of melancholy and contemplation. The rain and night symbolize the speaker's emotional state.
- 2. Barges and Harbor:** The barges and harbor represent the city's connection to the outside world, highlighting the speaker's desire for escape and exploration.
- 3. Waitress and Pianist:** The waitress and pianist serve as symbols of the speaker's connections to the city. They represent the human relationships that make the city feel like home.

#### Poetic Devices:

- 1. Enjambment:** The poem's use of enjambment creates a sense of flow and continuity, mirroring the speaker's stream-of-consciousness thoughts.
- 2. Simple Language:** The poem's simple language belies its complex themes and emotions. The speaker's straightforward tone creates a sense of intimacy and vulnerability.
- 3. Repetition:** The repetition of the phrase "This is the city" serves as a refrain, emphasizing the speaker's conflicted emotions and sense of longing.

#### Tone and Mood:

- 1. Melancholic:** The poem's tone is predominantly melancholic, reflecting the speaker's sadness and nostalgia.
- 2. Contemplative:** The poem's mood is contemplative, inviting the reader to reflect on the speaker's emotions and experiences.

#### Conclusion:

The poem "To Leave This City" is a nuanced exploration of nostalgia, identity, and displacement. Through its use of imagery, symbolism, and poetic devices, the poem creates a sense of intimacy and vulnerability, drawing the reader into the speaker's emotional world.

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**Comprehension I: (Answer Questions in ONE or TWO sentences each) (2 marks)**

**1. Why is the speaker leaving his city?**

The speaker is leaving his city because of a woman in another city. This new romantic interest is drawing him away from his hometown.

**2. Whom does the speaker express likeness towards?**

The speaker expresses likeness towards the waitress who brings him tea every evening, despite her being a White Russian.

**3. What is the old Pianist playing?**

The speaker expresses likeness towards the waitress who brings him tea every evening, despite her being a White Russian.

**4. What connects village to the city in the poem?**

The ferry boats connect the village to the city in the poem, specifically carrying passengers to the village where the speaker was born.

**5. Which place are the speaker's memories associated with?**

The speaker's memories are associated with the city, which holds memories of his past, loved ones, and personal experiences.

**6. What is the tone of the poem?**

The tone of the poem is melancholic and contemplative, reflecting the speaker's nostalgia and conflicted emotions.

**Comprehension II: (Paragraph Answer Questions) (5 marks)**

**1. Write a note on the central idea of the poem.**

The central idea of the poem revolves around the speaker's bittersweet decision to leave their hometown for a new love. The poem explores the tension between the speaker's nostalgia for their city and their desire for a new life.

**2. Describe the features of the city as expressed by the poet.**

The poet describes the city as a vibrant and culturally rich place, with countless streets bustling with people, and cultural experiences like the old pianist's music. The city is also a place of personal connections, with familiar faces like the waitress.

**3. Explain the kind of attachment the speaker has developed for the city.**

The speaker has developed a deep emotional attachment to the city, which is evident in their nostalgia and fond memories. The city holds a special place in their heart, and leaving it is a difficult decision.

The speaker's sentimentality for the past is expressed through their fond memories of the city, its people, and cultural experiences. The poem highlights the speaker's emotional connection to their hometown and the pain of leaving it behind.<sup>4</sup> How is 'sentimentality for the past' expressed by the speaker?

### **5. Discuss the relevance of the poem to the present times.**

The poem remains relevant to present times as it explores universal themes like nostalgia, displacement, and the human desire for connection and belonging. The poem's themes and emotions continue to resonate with readers who have experienced similar struggles and emotions.

### **Comprehension III: (Analytical/Discussion Questions): (10 marks)**

#### **1. The poem expresses a longing for the past and a desire for escape. Elaborate.**

The poem "To Leave This City" is a poignant expression of the speaker's longing for the past and their desire for escape. The speaker's nostalgia for their hometown is evident in their fond memories of walking in the rain, watching barges, and humming songs at night. The speaker's emotional attachment to the city is further emphasized by their personal connections with people like the waitress and the old pianist.

However, this nostalgia is tempered by the speaker's desire for escape and a new life. The speaker is drawn to a woman in another city, symbolizing their yearning for something more. This desire for escape is not just about physical relocation but also about emotional liberation. The speaker seems to be seeking a new sense of purpose and belonging, one that is not tied to their past experiences.

#### **2. Discuss the speaker's internal conflict between the allure of a city and the yearning for a different life.**

The poem masterfully captures the speaker's internal conflict between their love for the city and their desire for a different life. The speaker is torn between their emotional attachment to the city and their desire for something new. This internal conflict is characterized by a sense of ambivalence and uncertainty, as the speaker struggles to reconcile their past and present selves.

The speaker's love for the city is rooted in their memories, relationships, and experiences. However, their desire for a different life is driven by a desire for personal growth, new

experiences, and a sense of belonging. The speaker's internal conflict serves as a catalyst for self-reflection, forcing them to confront their desires, fears, and aspirations.

**3. "To Leave this City" captures the complexities of human emotions and experiences. Comment.**

The poem "To Leave This City" captures the complexities of human emotions and experiences with remarkable nuance. The speaker's emotions are multifaceted, shifting between nostalgia, longing, and desire. The poem conveys the complexity of human experience, highlighting the tensions between past and present, memory and desire.

The poem also captures the human experience of displacement and migration. The speaker's decision to leave the city is not taken lightly, and they are aware of the emotional costs of their departure. The poem raises important questions about identity, belonging, and the human condition.

**4. Place identity comes from beliefs, meanings, emotions, ideas and attitudes assigned to it. Substantiate.**

The poem illustrates how place identity is constructed through beliefs, meanings, emotions, ideas, and attitudes assigned to it. The speaker's emotional attachment to the city is rooted in their personal experiences, memories, and relationships. The city is not just a physical place but also an emotional and psychological landscape that has shaped the speaker's identity.

The poem highlights how place identity is complex and multifaceted, influenced by individual experiences, cultural background, and personal relationships. The speaker's place identity is closely tied to their sense of self, and their decision to leave the city forces them to re-evaluate their identity and sense of belonging.

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## **Chapter 8 Being A Daughter**

**- Kunzang Choden**

The text "Being a Daughter" by Kunzang Choden tells the story of a young girl named Tsomo, who is the eldest daughter in a large family in Bhutan. The narrative focuses on her life, relationships, and the cultural context in which she grows up.

### **Background of the Author**

Kunzang Choden is a notable Bhutanese writer, recognized as the first woman from Bhutan to write an English-language novel. She was born in Bumthang District and has an educational background in psychology and sociology. Choden has worked with the United Nations Development Programme in Bhutan and currently lives in Thimphu.

### **Summary of the Text**

### **Tsomo's Life**

Tsomo is the third child and first daughter among twelve siblings. The story opens with a rare moment where she is alone with her mother in their large house, preparing for the evening meal. Their conversations reveal Tsomo's attachment to her mother and her curiosity about her own identity and future.

### **Cultural Context and Rituals**

The narrative delves into Bhutanese culture, highlighting various rituals and beliefs. Tsomo learns about her horoscope from her mother, which predicts both challenges and potential for travel. This aspect reflects her innocent questioning of traditions and their significance.

### **Family Dynamics**

The text also explores family dynamics, particularly Tsomo's feelings of loss as several of her siblings died young. By age fifteen, only seven siblings remain, which brings a sense of grief that Tsomo begins to understand. The family's large house symbolizes both their past wealth and current struggles, as much of their fortune has diminished over time.

### **Social Hierarchy**

Choden addresses social class distinctions within the village. Tsomo's family is proud of their status as tax-payers, contrasting them with serfs who are seen as lower class. This social commentary is woven into Tsomo's experiences as she navigates friendships and community relationships.

### **Mother's Role**

Tsomo's mother plays a significant role in her life, embodying strength and resilience without complaint despite the burdens she carries. Their relationship is characterized by warmth and affection, with moments that highlight their bond through stories and shared experiences.

### **Themes of Identity and Growth**

As Tsomo grows, she grapples with her identity as the eldest daughter amidst expectations from family and society. Her reflections on personal aspirations versus societal roles reveal her inner conflict and desire for understanding.

### **Conclusion**

"Being a Daughter" captures the essence of growing up as a young girl in Bhutan, filled with familial love, cultural richness, and the challenges of navigating societal expectations. Through Tsomo's eyes, readers gain insight into the complexities of identity, loss, and tradition within a vibrant cultural landscape.

### **Comprehension 1: (Answer questions in 1 or 2 sentences each) (2 marks)**

**1. How many children has Tsomo's mother borne?**

Tsomo's mother has borne **seven children** in total

**2. What did the astrologer have to say about Tsomo's personality based on her horoscope?**

The astrologer indicated that Tsomo had a **jolly personality** and was likely to be **independent and adventurous**, traits associated with her zodiac sign

**3. Why was Tsomo's horoscope name changed?**

Tsomo's horoscope name was changed to reflect her **new identity** after her family faced significant losses, which the family believed required a change to ward off misfortune

**4. How many of Tsomo's siblings died in infancy?**

**Three of Tsomo's siblings died in infancy**, highlighting the fragility of life in her early family experiences

**5. What signs indicated that there were spirits lurking around?**

Signs indicating spirits lurking around included **unexplained noises, sudden temperature changes**, and disturbances in the household

**6. Why was Aunt Dechen recognised and respected in the village?**

Aunt Dechen was recognized and respected in the village for her **spiritual knowledge** and ability to communicate with spirits, which made her a figure of authority in spiritual matters

**7. What did the father do when Tsomo's baby brothers and sisters fell ill?**

When Tsomo's baby brothers and sisters fell ill, her father would perform **rituals and prayers** to seek protection and healing from the spirits

**8. Who was Goempola?**

Goempola was a **spiritual healer** or practitioner in the community, known for his ability to mediate between the physical and spiritual realms

**9. What does crying for the loss of a loved one, in front of their body, signify in Bhutanese culture?**

In Bhutanese culture, crying for the loss of a loved one in front of their body signifies **deep respect and mourning**, reflecting the communal nature of grief and remembrance

**Comprehension II: (Answer each question in a paragraph):**

**(5 marks)**

1. "If you descended from the heavens of the gods above, show me the ladder you came down on and if you ascended from the underworld of subterranean beings, describe to me the stairs you climbed up." Comment.

The phrase "If you descended from the heavens of the gods above, show me the ladder you came down on and if you ascended from the underworld of subterranean beings, describe to me the stairs you climbed up" reflects a **philosophical inquiry into origins** and existence. It challenges individuals to consider their roots—whether divine or earthly—and emphasizes the complexity of identity shaped by both celestial and terrestrial influences.

## 2. Elaborate on the context of how Tsomo's parents got married.

Tsomo's parents' marriage occurred under circumstances that were deeply influenced by cultural traditions and familial expectations. Their union was marked by a blend of love and duty, where societal norms dictated their roles while personal affection played a crucial part in their relationship dynamics.

## 3. What were the precious gems that hung around the mother's chain and what was their significance?

The precious gems that hung around Tsomo's mother's chain included **pearls, turquoise, and coral**, symbolizing protection, prosperity, and connection to ancestral spirits. These gems were not only decorative but also held significant cultural meaning, believed to bring good fortune and ward off negative energies.

## 4. Describe what Tsomo recollected about her father's interaction at home.

Tsomo recollected her father's interactions at home as being filled with **gentleness and authority**. He was a guiding figure who balanced discipline with affection, instilling values while also nurturing a sense of security within the family environment.

## 5. How did the villagers treat the mother for her husband being a gomchen?

The villagers treated Tsomo's mother with a mix of **respect and suspicion** due to her husband's status as a gomchen (a lay monk). While some admired her for her connection to spirituality, others viewed her through the lens of traditional beliefs that sometimes stigmatized such unions.

## 6. How would Aunt Dechen appease the spirits?

Aunt Dechen would appease the spirits through various rituals, including **offerings of food**, chanting mantras, and performing specific ceremonies aimed at restoring harmony between the spiritual realm and the living world.

## **Comprehension III: (Analytical/Discussion Questions) (Essay-type answer or answer in two pages or answer in THREE HUNDRED words): (10 marks)**

### 1. Elaborate on how Tsomo's reminiscences of her childhood intensify her being a girl and a curious child.

Tenzin Tsomo's reminiscences of her childhood serve as a profound lens through which we can explore her identity as a girl and a curious child. Her memories illuminate the complexities of her upbringing in a Tibetan village, marked by both joy and adversity, and highlight how these experiences shaped her understanding of gender roles, family dynamics, and cultural identity.

### **Childhood Context and Gender Identity**

Tsomo's recollections begin with a nostalgic portrayal of her village life, where she enjoyed the privileges of being part of one of the wealthiest families. This affluence afforded her a sense of security and freedom to explore her surroundings, fostering her curiosity. She describes her home environment positively, particularly emphasizing her mother's fairness in managing a polygamous household, which allowed for a unique familial structure where love and responsibility were shared among her mother's husbands. This dynamic likely instilled in Tsomo an early understanding of the complexities of female agency within traditional frameworks, as she witnessed her mother navigate societal expectations while maintaining harmony.

### **Curiosity Amidst Oppression**

As Tsomo reflects on the arrival of the Chinese in her village, the stark contrast between her innocent childhood and the harsh realities of political oppression becomes evident. The initial interactions with Chinese soldiers were marked by curiosity; they were strangers occupying her home, which sparked questions about their intentions and the changes they heralded. However, as the situation escalated into oppression—where her family faced humiliation and loss—her childhood innocence was abruptly challenged. This transition from a carefree girl to one grappling with the implications of political turmoil exemplifies how external circumstances can intensify one's identity formation during formative years.

### **Resilience and Reflection**

Despite these challenges, Tsomo's memories reflect resilience. Her ability to recall happy moments amidst adversity speaks to a strong sense of self that was cultivated through familial bonds and community support. The warmth of shared experiences within her family provided a foundation for her curiosity about life beyond immediate hardships. This resilience is further highlighted by her reflections on communal activities and the importance of cultural practices that sustained their identity even in times of crisis.

In conclusion, Tenzin Tsomo's reminiscences are not merely nostalgic reflections; they are intricate narratives that reveal how being a girl in a complex socio-political landscape shaped her identity. Her experiences illustrate the interplay between personal curiosity and broader societal forces, ultimately contributing to a rich understanding of what it means to grow up as a Tibetan girl during tumultuous times. Through these memories, Tsomo embodies the spirit of resilience and curiosity that defines many young girls navigating their identities against the backdrop of historical challenges.

## **2. How do you think Tsomo, as a young girl, comprehended various rituals and stories that came with them?**

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Tsomo, the protagonist in Kunzang Choden's *The Circle of Karma*, navigates a complex web of rituals and stories that shape her understanding of her identity and the world around her. As a young girl in rural Bhutan, her comprehension of these elements is influenced by cultural norms, familial expectations, and personal experiences.

### Understanding Rituals and Cultural Context

**Cultural Significance:** Tsomo's upbringing is steeped in the rituals of her community, which are deeply intertwined with Buddhist beliefs and practices. From a young age, she learns about the significance of karma and the consequences of one's actions. For instance, the notion that her birth as a girl is a result of past life karma reflects a prevalent belief in her society that shapes her self-perception and aspirations. This understanding is compounded by her father's gender bias, which limits her educational opportunities and reinforces traditional gender roles.

**Rituals as Identity Markers:** The rituals Tsomo participates in, such as lighting butter lamps for her deceased mother, serve as pivotal moments in her life. These acts are not merely ceremonial; they are imbued with emotional weight and signify her connection to family and heritage. Through these rituals, Tsomo grapples with loss and seeks solace, illustrating how such practices help individuals process grief and maintain cultural continuity.

### Stories of Resilience and Growth

**Personal Narratives:** Tsomo's journey is marked by various encounters that challenge her understanding of womanhood and societal expectations. Her relationships with other women, particularly Dechen Choki, provide a counter-narrative to the oppressive structures she faces. These friendships are built on shared experiences of adversity and resilience, allowing Tsomo to expand her comprehension of female solidarity amidst suffering.

**Self-Discovery through Adversity:** As Tsomo navigates betrayal and hardship—such as the deception by Wangchen—she begins to reflect on the stories surrounding her life. Each experience contributes to her evolving identity, leading her from conformity to protest against societal norms. This journey towards self-discovery is crucial; it reveals how Tsomo learns to assert her agency despite the limitations imposed on her by gendered expectations.

### Conclusion

In summary, Tsomo's comprehension of rituals and the stories associated with them evolves throughout *The Circle of Karma*. Initially shaped by cultural constraints and familial duties, her understanding deepens as she encounters personal challenges and forms meaningful connections with other women. Ultimately, these experiences catalyze her journey toward self-realization and spiritual growth, highlighting the transformative power of both rituals and narratives in shaping identity.

# ALL THE BEST