

Block

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A TIGER FOR MALGUDI

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INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE: INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

My Dear Students,

We welcome you to this course on Indian Writing in English. In this course we have put together a range of genres like the novel, short stories and poetry. The aim is to expose you to a wide range of Indian Writing in English. The study of literature involves not only enjoyment but also an awareness of the human experience. This finds ample illustration in the texts that we have put together for you.

This course is divided into four blocks of four units each.

Block 1 deals with an interesting novel *A Tiger for Malgudi* by Mulk Raj Anand.

Block 2 deals with another novel *The Binding Vine* by Shashi Deshpande.

Block 3 is devoted to poetry and we have taken up four mainstream poets: Sarojini Naidu, Nissim Ezekiel, A.K. Ramanujan and Kamala Das.

Block 4 is devoted to the Short Story as a genre and we are teaching you three stories: “The Lost Child” by Mulk Raj Anand, “The Other Woman” by Dina Mehta and “Swimming Lessons” by Rohinton Mistry.

In the Units, we’ve built in self-check exercises for you to do, to keep checking your progress.

You must make it a point to read the two novels prescribed. Our summaries should not be a substitute for reading the text. The poem and stories however have been given in the respective Units.

We hope you’ll enjoy working through this course.

Good luck with your work!

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BLOCK INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first Block of our course on Indian Writing in English. In this Block we have taken up a novel *A Tiger for Malgudi* by R.K. Narayan for detailed study. We have 4 Units in this block devoted to this novel. These are as follows:

Unit 1: The Indian English Novel

Unit 2: *A Tiger for Malgudi*: Detailed Summary

Unit 3: *A Tiger for Malgudi*: Analysis

Unit 4: *A Tiger for Malgudi*: Style and Characterization

Please attempt the Check Your Progress exercises which are provided in each unit as you go along. This will keep reinforcing that you have successfully understood the subsections of each unit. Then you may consult the Answers to these exercises given at the end of each Unit.

We really hope that you enjoy reading this Block.



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UNIT 1 THE INDIAN ENGLISH NOVEL

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 The First Indian English Novel
- 1.3 Three Significant Novelists
- 1.4 Post Independence Novelists
- 1.5 Women Novelists
- 1.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will deal with the Indian English novel. It will introduce you to the various phases of the development of the Indian English novel. To give you an overview of the development of the Indian English novel, we will also give you a brief idea of the life and works of the major contributors to the development of this genre. By the end of the unit you will have a fair understanding of the phases in the development of the Indian English novel.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

When we think of the early Indian English novel, we think of the trinity—Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004), R.K. Narayan (1906-2001), and Raja Rao (1908-2006). All three began writing in the nineteen thirties and all three saw the turn of the century. Their influence or their importance in the world of the Indian English novel cannot be denied. With Anand's *Untouchable*, Narayan's *Swami and Friends*, and Rao's *Kanthapura*, the Indian English novel found its place in the gamut of Indian literatures.

English education was introduced in India in the early nineteenth century. It is reasonable to expect that essays, articles and sketches in English would have begun to flow from Indian pens soon after, especially with the establishment of English journals and newspapers. With the English presence in India from even earlier, it should be expected that some Indians wrote in English even earlier than that.

1.2 THE FIRST INDIAN ENGLISH NOVEL

As a matter of fact, the famous Bengali novelist, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya (1838-94), wrote his very first novel in English. This was *Rajmohan's Wife*, which was serialized as *Wife* in the Calcutta weekly, *The Indian Field*, in 1864. This was published in book form only in the 1930s, and republished in 1990. Bankim was much influenced by the English novelists that he had read, particularly Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens. *Rajmohan's Wife*, like his Bengali novels, deals with social issues of the day. In a sense, the main agenda of the Indian English novel was set in this first attempt itself. *Rajmohan's Wife* is about the

effects of a bad marriage on a woman. The sufferings of a middle class housewife, Matangini at the hands of her husband, Rajmohan, in rural East Bengal, forms the subject of the novel. This was the time of social reform and it shouldn't surprise us that the first Indian English novel isn't a historical romance as has been suggested sometimes, but a social novel. Bankim may not have written another novel in English but his Bengali novels were to influence the course of the novel in India.

1.3 THREE SIGNIFICANT NOVELISTS

The most significant event in the history of Indian English fiction in the nineteen thirties was the appearance of the trio: **Mulk Raj Anand**, **R.K. Narayan** and **Raja Rao**. **Mulk Raj Anand** has to his credit sixteen novels, twelve collections of short stories, more than twenty-five books on art and other general subjects and a large number of articles. He was a novelist with a social commitment. Contemporary writers in Indian languages influenced him greatly. Here **Premchand's** and **Tagore's** writings come to mind. His philosophical training had made him receptive to the thoughts of a number of western thinkers of his time. **Anand's** love for working people is seen in his creative works where his protagonists are sweepers, coolies and plantation workers. This was a new phenomenon in Indian Literature. His characters — homeless Munoo in *Coolie*, an untouchable like Bakha or an indentured labourer like Gangu — are all victims of cruelty and exploitation, portraying the grim working conditions of the people and a true picture of contemporary India.

Untouchable published in 1935, describes a single day in the life of Bakha living in an outcaste's colony of a north Indian Cantonment town. The single day brings him his torments and makes the reader realize the painful life of the down-trodden, suggesting in the end, alternative solutions to his problems. The novel ends with Bakha, alone and very confused in his thoughts.

In his novel *Coolie* (1936) **Anand** touches another class of the under-privileged — the poor. His *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) is essentially a dramatic novel, set in a plantation in Assam. His other important novels are, *The Village* (1939), *Across the Black Waters* (1940) *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942) and *Private Life of an Indian Prince* (1953).

R.K. Narayan, born in Madras in 1906 was a full-time writer all his life, making a living only through writing. His literary output is rich and varied with fifteen novels, five collections of short stories, two travel books, four collections of essays, and a memoir, although his popularity largely came from his novels. He is essentially an apolitical novelist who simply liked to capture life in its richness and variety. His novels offer a blend of gentle irony and fellow feeling. **Narayan's** novels are seemingly simple on the surface but they conceal a certain complexity. His writing is mostly comic but somber moments also come in from time to time. There is a philosophical side also to his novels because the Indian world-view is mostly reflected in them. Most of his novels and stories are set in the fictional town of Malgudi, his imaginary landscape inhabited by the characters of his novels. This small town of Malgudi is a reflection of an Indian society with a variety of cultures, superstitions and values with features of most of the towns of southern India. His novel *Swami and Friends* set in this small town, received recognition in India as well as publicity in England and the United States of America. His other novel, adding to his reputation, is the *Vendor of Sweets* (1967). R.K. Narayan's other novels are *The Dark Room* (1938), *The English Teacher* (1945), *Mr. Sampath-The Printer of Malgudi* (1949), *The Financial*

Expert (1952), *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* (1962), *The Painter of Signs* (1976), *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983), *Talkative Man* (1986), and *The World of Nagaraj* (1990).

Raja Rao was born in 1908 in a Brahmin family and educated in Mysore, Madras and Europe. For many years he divided his time in India, Europe and the United States. Both his novels *Kanthapura* (1938) and *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) talk about the Indian National Movement. *The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965) is a metaphysical comedy that answered philosophical questions raised in the earlier novels. His novel, *Comrade Killer* (1976), deals with a South Indian Brahmin's views on communism, the British War, the Indian Freedom Struggle etc. In his last novel, *The Chess Master and His Moves* (1988), Rao uses his metaphor of the chess game to animate philosophical ideas.

In his first novel, *Kanthapura*, **Raja Rao**, is able to successfully bring out the impact of Gandhi and his ideas on a small Mysore village. The narrator, an old woman, tells us about life in the village, narrating the story in a garrulous and digressive style, bringing in narration, description, religious discourses, poetry, folklore, history and legend together. *Kanthapura*, in a sense, is a work of realism in fiction, yet it is not purely realistic. It is combined with myths, gods and goddesses, blind superstitions and mysterious insights. This novel is an excellent piece of work that includes a few significant events of history in contemporary India like the *Salt March* of Gandhi, his hunger strikes, his arrest and the brutal massacre of the people participating in the *Satya Graha*, by the police.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Name the three significant novelists writing in English in the nineteen - thirties.

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- 2) What are the various themes that Mulk Raj Anand has dealt with, in his novels?

.....

- 3) What does Malgudi imply in R.K. Narayan's novels and stories?

.....

- 4) Can you mention some of the significant events of history included in the novel *Kanthapura*?

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1.4 POST INDEPENDENCE NOVELISTS

Bhabhani Bhattacharya (1906-1988) was the earliest novelist of this period. His first novel, *So Many Hungers* was published in 1947 and was followed by *Music for Mohini* (1952). His novel, *He Who Rides a Tiger* (1952) was his finest novel. His other novels are *A Goddess Named Gold* (1960), *Shadow From Ladakh* (1966), and *A Dream in Hawai* (1978).

If Bhattacharya believed in the novel with a social purpose, the novelist who believes in complete entertainment is **Manohar Malgonkar** (1913-2010). Among his novels, *Distant Drum* (1960), his first novel, and *Bandicoot Run* (1982) are based in an army setting, a setting with which Malgonkar, as a retired army officer, is familiar. The latter novel is a spy thriller of a high order. He had written another espionage novel earlier, *Spy in Amber* (1971). *Combat of Shadows* (1962) is another attempt at writing a fast moving tale of passion and murder. *The Princes* (1963) is a picture of the times when the princely states merged with India and is considered a critical success because Malgonkar seems more interested in the issues than in just telling a fast tale. His novel on the Partition, *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964), is again a readable novel written on a large scale. *The Devil's Wind* (1972) is an attempt to portray the first war of Independence of 1857. In *Cactus Country* (1992), Malgonkar sees the 1971 war from the point of view of a Pakistani officer. Malgonkar is an exciting writer who deserves to be better known and deserves to be always in print.

Among other novelists of this period are Khushwant Singh, G.V. Dasani, Salman Rushdie, Boman Desai, Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh. These are all novelists with substantial literary output and their novels have had a great impact on Indian English fiction.

Khushwant Singh's (1915-2014) *A Train to Pakistan* is among the most well known partition novels written by an Indian. Born in Hadali, now in Pakistan, he was educated in Lahore and London. He worked as a lawyer in Lahore for several years before joining the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. He started with a journalistic career in 1951 and worked with several reputed newspapers and magazines. He has written a few short stories, a couple of novels and is famous for the prose work, *History of the Sikhs* (which appeared in two volumes in 1963 and 1966). *Train to Pakistan* is his best-known work in fiction and brought him literary fame. He has portrayed the theme of partition excellently in this novel and the horror, suspense and the violence of the terror stricken days of 1947 are dealt with precision. Set in Punjab in the fictional village of Mano Majra situated on the border of Pakistan, Mano Majra is a microcosm of the communal temper of the country during the days of partition. The novel delves into the harmonious life of the Muslim and Sikh inhabitants disrupted by the communal massacres that occurred in 1947 in the wake of the partition. This novel sensitively and skillfully balances violence and compassion, sacrifice and revenge thus making it one of the most memorable novels about the tragic events of partition.

G.V.Desani (1909-2000), another novelist of the same generation, also known as the master of the absurd wrote *All About Hatter*, a novel greatly admired and highly praised for being a difficult novel not lending itself easily to interpretation. Novelist **Arun Joshi (1939-1993)** was brought to fame with his first novel *The Foreigner* (1968). His other fine novel was *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*.

He was influenced by the French writer Camus and wrote existentialist novels portraying the aimless existence of men who are indifferent to everybody and everything. He wrote on the problems of East and West encounter in the Post Independent Indian society. Another contemporary novelist **Chaman Nahal** (1927-2013) rose to fame with his novel on Partition, *Azadi* (1975), which won the *Sahitya Akademi Award* for the year 1977.

As Richard Cronin in his article "India" says, "Modern Indian Literature was born in 1981, when Rushdie published *Midnight's Children*". The most important writer of the second half of the twentieth century, **Salman Rushdie** (b. 1947) grew up in Mumbai, went to Rugby School Warwickshire, followed by King's College, Cambridge in England. Although a British citizen, most of his novels are set in India. His narrative style has a blending of myth and fantasy with real life. His writing career began with a science fiction, *Grimus* (1975) that was scarcely noticed because of the excessive element of fantasy in it.

In his next novel *Shame* (1983), he depicts the political turmoil in Pakistan. *The Satanic Verses* (1988), his allegorical novel, had portions that were sacrilegious and enraged the Muslims. Ayatollah Khomeini issued a *Fatwa* in 1989 sentencing **Rushdie** to death. As a result of this he went into hiding. *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995) examines India's recent history through the life of a Jewish Christian family. **Rushdie's** next novel *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999) has both myth and reality. *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) has attracted significant attention and so has his latest novel *The Golden House*.

Midnight's Children (1980) is his finest novel and is considered his best work and also one that has significantly shaped the course of other Indian writings in English. The work was awarded the **Booker Prize** in 1991 followed by the **Booker of Booker Prize** in 1993. The book portrays the history of India from 1910 to the Declaration of Emergency in 1975 through the eyes of Saleem Sinai, a telepath with a nasal defect. Rushdie uses the technique of magical realism throughout the novel. The elements of this technique can also be found in his later fiction. *Midnight's Children* is brilliantly written with a blend of comedy and tragedy. The novel presents a historical understanding and a historical vision of the Indian subcontinent with great skill and subtlety. *Midnight's Children* was a departure from conventional Indian English writing by mixing native Indian languages with English, thus paving the way for Indian English writers to follow his flexible and innovative use of the English language in the next decade. With the appearance of *Midnight's Children* in 1980, a remarkable group of young novelists emerged, highly influenced by his writing.

Boman Desai (b. 1950) uses certain elements like expostulatory technique, and contemporary dialogue to make the plots in his novels effective. His novel *The Memory of Elephants* (1988) is tautological in nature. The protagonist Homi Seervai, a Parsi Scientist from Bombay, invents a machine that can scan his brain for memories of the good time. But the machine goes wrong and he experiences ancestral and racial memories. He encounters ancestors and relatives both dead and living. His novels *The Memory of Elephants*, *Asylum, U.S.A* and *A Woman Madly in Love* are a re-enactment of his past experiences and, in some way or the other, deal with the Parsi community.

Subsequent to **Rushdie**, many writers started using similar kind of themes and language in their works. **Shashi Tharoor** (b.1956) was one such writer to use the narrative and theme of the famous Indian epic *Mahabharata* in his famous

work *The Great Indian Novel* and weaves a satirical story of Indian life drawing his ideas by going back and forth in time.

Allan Sealy's (b.1951) first novel, *The Trotter-Nama* (1988), is the story of seven generations of an Anglo Indian Family 'The Trotters'. Sealy portrays the experiences of the Anglo Indian community of being outsiders both in India and Britain. His novel *The Everest Hotel: A Calendar* (1998) brought him international acclaim and he was short listed for the Booker Prize in 1998. His second novel *Hero* was published in 1991. *The Brainfever* (2003), *Wisdom Brings Success* (2011) and *Pearls of Wisdom* (2016) are some of his recent books.

Another fiction writer **Rohinton Mistry** was born in Bombay in 1952 and migrated to Canada in 1975 where he began his writing career. In his novels he writes about middle class Parsi households struggling to come to terms with the complex phenomenon of Indian modernity. His first novel *Such a Long Journey* (1991) is set in Mumbai in 1971 during the time of the India Pakistan war, when the city was engulfed by globalization on one hand and illiteracy, unemployment, exploitation and homelessness on the other. In his other novels, *A Fine Balance* (1996) and *Family Matters* (2002) we find a poignant picture of the Parsi community struggling in pursuit of an identity for themselves.

Immensely popular for his novel *The Shadow Lines*, **Amitav Ghosh** was born in 1956 in Calcutta and spent his childhood in countries like Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka. He won the *Sahitya Akademy Award* for his novel *The Shadow Lines* (1988). The novel skillfully weaves together personal lives and public events in three countries—India, England and Bangladesh (between 1952 and 1979). As the story proceeds, we see memories unfolding one after another. The other novels written by Ghosh are *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *Calcutta Chromosome* (1996), *The Glass Palace* (2000) and *Hungry Tide* (2004).

Upamanyu Chatterjee was born in Patna in 1959 and studied in Delhi's St. Stephen's College. He joined the civil services in 1983. *English August* (1988) is the story of a young civil servant, Agastya, known as August to his westernized friends who is sent for a year's training to Madna, a backwater town in central India. An urbanite living in the metropolitan cities of Delhi and Calcutta is completely lost in this small town of Madna. He experiences isolation and alienation. There is a sense of loss and nostalgia especially when he receives letters from friends or when he sees passing trains. This novel takes up the continuing debate over the urban bias on the pattern of the civil services examination and the approximate training rendered to the incumbents. A brilliant novel, *English August* is entertaining, funny and has a touching story to tell. His other novels *The Last Burden* and *The Memories of the Welfare State* are also characterised by a wry sense of humour portraying the life of middle class Indians.

The author of *A Suitable Boy* (1994), **Vikram Seth** was born in 1952 in Calcutta and is proficient in writing prose, poetry and travelogues. His other novels include *The Golden Gate* (1986), and *An Equal Music* (1999). His novel, *A Suitable Boy*, sold over one million copies world-wide, bringing him into the public spotlight. The novel is set in the newly independent India in the 1950s when India was struggling through a time of crisis with communal disharmony, corruption and perpetual fights between modernity and the forces of tradition. Rupa Mehra is a widow whose mission throughout the novel is to look after her family and, in particular, search for a suitable Hindu husband for Lata who is of marriageable age. However, Lata is torn between her mother's wishes and her

own love for a Muslim boy Kabir. Seth has brilliantly woven together different themes of Indian history, hindu-muslim issues and love and marriage. The novel is well written, touching, humorous and widely panoramic. It truthfully portrays social and political events of the era.

Amit Chaudhuri, another brilliant contemporary writer, was born in Calcutta in 1962 and brought up in Bombay. He has numerous publications apart from writing fiction, poetry and reviews. His novella, *A Strange and Sublime Address* (1991), won the *Betty Trask Prize* and the *Commonwealth Writer's Prize* in 1991. This was followed by the novel *Afternoon Raag* (1993) that won the *Southern Art Literature Prize* and the *Encore Award* for best second novel of the year. His novel *Freedom Song* (1998) won the *Los Angeles Times Book Prize* in the year 2000. His other novel is *A New World* (2000). Each of these novels examines Calcutta life using characters of different ages. *A Strange and Sublime Address* illuminates the life in Calcutta through the eyes of a ten-year-old Bombay bred boy Sandeep who is visiting his uncle's extended family during two summer vacations. The story is narrated in third person but Sandeep has a major role to play in the novel. The reader gets to see things from the child Sandeep's point of view. The novel is written in a simple style with a quiet and meditative tone.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Name the writers of Post Independent India who have continued the tradition of social realism in their novels.

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- 2) Which novel of Khushwant Singh deals with partition?

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- 3) Where is the novel *A Train to Pakistan* set?

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- 4) Which awards were bagged by the novel *Midnight's Children*?

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- 5) Which novels of Boman Desai deal with the Parsi Community?

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- 6) Which novelist writes on the Anglo Indian Community in his novel –*The Trotter Nama*?

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1.5 WOMEN NOVELISTS

Post 1947, India saw a spurt of fiction writing by women. These women novelists projected woman as the central figure and seemed to succeed in presenting it effectively. Some of the significant women writers were are **Shashi Deshpande, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya and Arundhati Roy.**

Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004) migrated to England at the age of twenty-five following her marriage to Bertrand Taylor. There she tried her hand at writing fiction. Being away from her homeland and its problems and issues of its people, she draws her experiences of the India known to her. Her novels reveal her preoccupation with the changing socio-economic scene in post 1947 India. Fame and success came to her with her first novel *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954). The protagonist is a woman and the novel portrays through her, the plight of women at large and the incredible strength they had, struggling with forces beyond their control in earlier times. It gives an account of the life of an Indian peasant woman Rukmani, her love for her husband Nathan and her struggle for survival. Conflicting western and eastern values are well portrayed in this novel. Kamala Markandaya deals with hunger and poverty, two major problems in India. Her other works include novels such as *Some Inner Fury* (1955), *A Silence of Desire* (1963) *Possession* (1963), *A Handful of Rice* (1966), *The Coffin Dams* (1969), *The Nowhere Man* (1972), *Two Virgins* (1973), *The Golden Honey Cows* (1977) and *The Pleasure City* (1984).

Shashi Deshpande (b.1938) has an important place among Indian women writers. Her writing career began with short stories which later developed into novel writing. The novels that go to her credit are *Roots and Shadows* (1983), *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), *Come up and be Dead* (1982) *If I Die Today* (1982), *That Long Silence* (1988), *The Binding Vine* (1993), *A Matter of Time* (1996) and *Small Remedies* (2000).

Shashi Deshpande is the recipient of the prestigious **Sahitya Akademy Award** for her novel *That Long Silence*. This novel revolves around a middle aged educated woman caught between modern trends and traditional practices. This novel is a story of Jaya, married to Mohan for seventeen years with two children. Misery strikes the day her husband is asked to leave his job while allegations of

business malpractice against him are investigated. The future of the family is in jeopardy. All of Shashi Deshpande's novels deal with themes of inner conflict of the female psyche, search for identity, man-woman relationship and parent-child relationship. In her novels she projects the real dilemma of the middle class educated women.

Another contemporary women novelist **Ruth Praver Jhabvala** was born in 1927 in Germany to Polish parents. She married Cyrus Jhabvala, an Indian architect and came to stay in New Delhi, India. The picture she portrays of Indian social life in her novels has such inwardness that she is considered an insider rather than an outsider. She wrote eight novels, a collection of four short stories and a few screen-plays. In her novels *To Whom She Will* (1955), *The Nature of Passion* (1956), *The House Holder* (1916), and *Get Ready for Battle* (1962), she explores the urban middle class Indian life, while *Esmond in India* (1958), *A Backward Place* (1965), *A New Dominion* (1973), and *Heat and Dust* (1975), study the east-west encounter. *Heat and Dust* is the most well acclaimed work of Jhabvala. It is a simple and straightforward novel exploring the east – west encounter through romance.

Set in two different eras, Colonial India of the nineteen twenties and independent India of the nineteen seventies, the novel tells the story of two women. The parallel between the two women's lives is beautifully portrayed in the novel. The novel concentrates on the emotions of women and their problems in two different eras in Indian history. It is also evocative of the rich Indian life on the one hand and poverty and superstition on the other. Jhabvala died in 2013.

Nayantara Sahgal's (b.1927), family background familiarized her with the politics of India both before and after independence. This is clearly seen in the authenticity of the political situations presented in her novels. She began her literary career with her novels *Prison and Chocolate Cake* (1954) *A Time to Be* (1958), *From Fear Set Free* (1962), *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) and *The Day in Shadow* (1971). Nayantara Sehgal has also published two autobiographies and a number of articles. *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969), a well-acclaimed novel, has a political background with the State of Punjab divided into two separate states of Punjab and Haryana. The former is dominated by the Sikhs and the latter a Hindu dominated state. The novel presents both political bickering as well as the domestic turmoil simultaneously. All of **Nayantara Sahgal's** novel's show mainly the social and cultural changes taking place in India. Her central preoccupation was the portrayal of oppressed women who had to struggle to be free from male bondage.

Another prominent woman writer is **Anita Desai**. Born in 1937 in Mussoorie, **Anita Desai** was the daughter of an Indian businessman and a German mother. She began writing in English at a very young age and published her first story at the age of nine. She has received numerous awards including the 1978 National Academy of Letters Award for the novel, *Fire on the Mountain* and the Guardian Award in 1983 for the children's fiction *The Village by the Sea*.

She tried her hand at novel writing in 1963 with the novel *Cry the Peacock* followed by *Voices in the City* (1965), *Bye Bye, Blackbird* (1971), *The Peacock Garden* (1974), *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975) *Cat on a Houseboat* (1976), *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), *Clear Light of Day* (1980), *Village by the Sea* (1982), *In Custody* (1984), *Baum Gartner's Bombay* (1988), *Journey*

to *Ithaca* (1996), *Fasting, Feasting* (1999), *Diamond Dust* (2000) and *The Zigzag Way: A Novel* (2004)

Clear Light of Day is set in Delhi around the time of India's Independence, and its division into the two countries of India and Pakistan. Tara is married to Bakul a diplomat from Washington, with whom she visits her home, Delhi, every three years, to stay with Bim and Baba, her elder sister and younger brother. Tara recollects her childhood days when she was less confident while Bim was strong and attractive. Through Bim and Tara, **Anita Desai** explores the psyche of sensitive women. The shift from present to the past and again to the present, with the help of childhood memories, makes the novel nostalgic.

A recent novelist **Manju Kapoor** (b. 1948) teaches English literature in Delhi University. *Difficult Daughters* is her first novel. Set in the time of partition, *Difficult Daughters* is the story of three generations of daughters beginning with the third generation daughter. The story is seen through the eyes of Ida who comes back to Punjab to reconstruct her mother Virmati's past. Virmati, the eldest girl, belonging to an austere family of Amritsar, is torn between family duty, her desire to study to be independent and her illicit love for her next – door neighbor, a married professor. Virmati's conflict begins when her parents decide to marry her to a boy of their choice. Virmati struggles for freedom to live a life on her own terms. She refuses to marry the person her parents get her engaged to. As a punishment she is sent to Lahore to study but here she is able to pursue her studies as well as be with the professor without any interference. Later, she defies her family and society and marries the professor who already has a wife. Kasturi, Virmati, Shakuntala and Ida belong to different generations, and have been difficult daughters for their parents. Each daughter experiences life in her own way and points to the larger issues of women's oppression that even education and economic independence cannot bring to an end.

Another recent writer in India **Arundhati Roy**, was born in 1961 in Shillong, Meghalaya, to a Keralite Syrian Christian mother and a Bengali Hindu father, by profession a tea planter. Arundhati Roy began writing her first novel, *The God of Small Things*, in 1992 and completed it in 1996. **Arundhati Roy** became the first Indian citizen to win the prestigious *Booker Prize* in 1997 for this novel. Set in Aymanam, Kerala (India) during the late 1960s, this novel is the story of an Indian boy -and-girl- twins, Estha and Rahel, whose mother has left her violent husband to live with her blind mother and brother Chacko. The story takes a turn with the death of their nine year old half – British cousin, Sophie Mol, visiting them on a holiday. The novel gives a vivid description of the life of abject poverty and sadness in a small Indian town, the thoughts and feelings of two children and the hypocrisies of the adult world. Arundhati Roy depicts nature seamlessly, weaving the pristine and the humane around each other. She very honestly presents the major cultural dilemmas of Postcolonial India.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Name some of the significant women novelists in post Independent India.

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2) What are the major themes in the novels of Shashi Deshpande?

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3) Who is the central figure in the novel *Nectar in a Sieve*?

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4) Where is the novel *The God of Small Things* set?

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1.6 LET US SUM UP

Meenakshi Mukherjee in her influential study of Indian English fiction, *The Twice Born Fiction*, states there were three kinds of fiction from the 1920s till the 1970s. They are the historical novel, the socio-political novel, and the novel of identity. The first two broadly occur before Independence and the third occurs after. As she herself points out, this is not meant to be a rigid framework and the phases may overlap, and individual exceptions may always be there. She also identifies the major themes as, ‘The Making of a Nation’, ‘East-West Encounter’ and ‘Renunciation as an Ideal.’ The major problematic she identifies is that of language and the expression of Indianness. This is tackled both in the language that the writers fashion and the narrative techniques that they use, including the use of myths.

The question of language is seen differently by the new writers. As far as they are concerned, the language they write in is theirs. English is their first language. But this is an English that has undergone many changes. But even this English cannot represent the complete daily life of any individual in India, where even the die-hard English speaker will have to use some other Indian language(s) in various social situations. If this is not taken into account, many nuances which can be exploited by the writer can be lost to her/him. Also, many Indians do not use English at all in their daily lives. How does the Indian English writer represent them? So even if English is the first language of the new writers, they should be aware of the challenges that have always been there for Indian English writers.

After Rushdie, the Indian English novel has gone transnational with many writers living in the west and writing from a perspective beyond nationality. On the other hand, though always with the chance of international exposure, there are many novelists who live and publish in India, who still work on questions of identity in this multicultural multilingual nation. This may be the era of the postmodern novel but Indian English novels still do not forsake India.

1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. The three significant novelists writing in the 1930s are Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao.
2. In his novels Mulk Raj Anand has dealt with themes of political and social injustices.
3. Malgudi is a fictional town created by R.K. Narayan in his novels. It has features of a small town of southern India reflecting its superstitions and values.
4. The novel *Kanthapura* depicts some significant events of history in contemporary India like Gandhi's salt march, Gandhi's hunger strikes, his arrest and the brutal massacre of the people participating in the Satya Graha, by the police.

Check Your Progress 2

1. The writers of Post Independent India to have continued with the tradition of social realism in their novels are Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, and Khushwant Singh.
2. *A Train to Pakistan* is a well known novel which deals with the theme of partition.
3. *A Train to Pakistan* is set in Mano Majra, a fictional village in Punjab, on the border of Pakistan. Mano Majra represented the communal temper of the country during the days of partition.
4. *Midnight's Children* won the Booker Prize in 1991 followed by the Booker of Booker Prize in 1993.
5. Boman Desai's novels *The Memory of Elephants*, *Asylum*, *U.S.A* and *A Woman Madly in Love* deal with the Parsi community.
6. Allan Sealy writes on the Anglo Indian community in his novel *The Trotter-Nama*.

Check Your Progress 3

1. The significant woman novelists in Post Independent India are Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai and Ruth Pravar Jhabvala.
2. The major themes that Shashi Deshpande deals with in her novels are the themes of inner conflict of the female psyche, search for identity, man-woman relationship and the parent-child relationship.
3. Rukmani is the central figure in the novel *Nectar in a Sieve*.
4. The novel *The God of Small Things* is set in Aymanam, Kerala.

UNIT 2 *A TIGER FOR MALGUDI:* DETAILED SUMMARY

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 R.K. Narayan: Life and Contribution
 - 2.2.1 R.K. Narayan's Malgudi
- 2.3 Detailed Summary of *A Tiger for Malgudi*
 - 2.3.1 Stage One
 - 2.3.2 Stage Two
 - 2.3.3 Stage Three
 - 2.3.4 Stage Four
- 2.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.5 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit we will provide you with a detailed summary of the novel *A Tiger for Malgudi* which will help you to read and analyse the actual text. We must remind you that this summary is in no way a substitute for reading the actual novel. So you must get the novel and read it for yourself. We will also be giving you a detailed biographical sketch of R.K. Narayan, the author of this novel.

By the end of this Unit, you will be able to assess R.K. Narayan's contribution to the Indian novel in English as well as assess him as a novelist. You will also get a fairly good idea about the sequence of events of the novel through the detailed summary that you will read in this Unit.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 1 of this Block we have already discussed R.K. Narayan as being part of the Big Three Indian writers in English. We shall begin this Unit by giving you a biographical sketch of R.K. Narayan as it is essential to know the background and other details of a writer in order to understand his works. We have already spoken about the rise and development of the Indian novel in English, in Unit 1. The detailed summary that we are giving you in this Unit will help you to read the actual text and understand it better.

2.2 R.K. NARAYAN: LIFE AND CONTRIBUTION

R.K. Narayan – full name Rasipuram Krishnaswami Ayyar Narayanaswamy which he shortened to R.K. Narayanaswami and later, on Graham Greene's suggestion, to R.K. Narayan – was born in 1906 in Madras. He grew up in his grandmother's house in Madras (now Chennai) where he received his early education. On entering his teens, he went to live with his parents in Mysore where his father

worked as a headmaster of a prestigious school. He joined the Maharaja's College in Mysore and got his B.A. degree. He was a voracious reader and spent most of his time in reading and writing. He was also in the habit of taking long walks in the idyllic city, taking in the grandeur of its forts and palaces.

R.K. Narayan's attempts at becoming a school teacher failed as he had neither the inclination nor the aptitude for becoming one. Coming from a large and affectionate family, he did not really feel the necessity to earn a living. He did, however, earn small amounts of money as a reporter for a newspaper in Madras called "The Justice", news hunting for it around law courts, crime scenes, police stations and municipal buildings etc. in Mysore. Occasionally, he sent his writings to various publications, including one to *Punch* a British weekly magazine. Meanwhile, he finished writing his first novel *Swami and Friends* and sent it to England for publication. After being rejected by several British publishers, his friend and neighbour, Purna, who was in Oxford, on an instinct, approached Graham Greene with the manuscript of *Swami and Friends*. Sufficiently impressed by it, Greene recommended it to Hamish Hamilton for publication and it was published in 1935. This also started a life-long friendship between Greene and Narayan. Greene was also responsible for getting his next two novels *The Bachelor of Arts* and *The Dark Room* published between 1935 and 1938.

In 1933, Narayan fell in love and married a girl of his choice, Rajam, against family tradition and the dark predictions of astrologers. The couple had a baby girl born to them. However, the marriage lasted only six years as Rajam died of typhoid in 1939. R.K. was completely shattered. Somehow, regaining control of his life, he started writing *The English Teacher* which is entirely auto-biographical and which again Greene got published in 1944. The novel is a watershed in his writing career and there was no going back after that. Narayan started writing novels on a regular basis which were translated into a number of foreign languages—ranging from Hebrew to Japanese establishing beyond doubt that his novels had a universal appeal.

His first novel *Swami and Friends* (1935) and its successor *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) are both set in Malgudi—an enchanting fictional town with which R.K. Narayan's name is inextricably associated. Other 'Malgudi novels' are: *The Dark Room* (1938); *The English Teacher* (1945); *Mr. Sampath-The Printer of Malgudi* (1949); *The Financial Expert* (1952); *The Man Eater of Malgudi* (1962); *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967); *The Painter of Signs* (1976); *A Tiger For Malgudi* (1983); *Talkative Man* (1986); and *The World of Nagaraj* (1990). Other novels include *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955); and *The Guide* (1958). Undoubtedly, the best known of his books is *The Guide* which won him the Sahitya Akademi Award, the country's highest literary award, and was also made into a film—both in Hindi and in English—by the well known producer-director-actor, Dev Anand.

In addition to novels, R.K. Narayan produced five collections of stories *A Horse and Two Goats*, *An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories*, *Lawley Road*, *Malgudi Days*, *Grandmother's Tale*, published two travel books, *My Dateless Diary*, *The Emerald Route*; Four collections of Essays: *Next Sunday*, *Reluctant Guru*, *A Writer's Nightmare*, *A Storyteller's World*, also translations of Indian epics and myths *The Ramayana*, and *The Mahabharata*, *Gods, Demons and Others*, and a Memoir: *My Days*.

R.K. Narayan's works brought him international repute as a writer in English. Graham Greene said of him: "Since the death of Evelyn Waugh, Narayan is the novelist I most admire in the English language." Awards and accolades came to Narayan in plenty. The Government of India decorated him with a Padma Bhushan and nominated him as a member of the Rajya Sabha, in 1989, for a term. He was awarded the A.C. Benson Medal by the Royal Society of Literature in Britain, while in the United States, he received the English Speaking Union's award, and was made a Fellow (an Honorary Member) by the prestigious American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, becoming only one of the two Indians to be so honoured, the other being the sitar maestro—Ravi Shankar.

Narayan settled down in Mysore in a house he had built for himself and his only child, Hema. Meanwhile, his youngest brother, R.K. Laxman, had also become a famous cartoonist in the country. After marrying off his daughter, Narayan travelled extensively in Europe, the U.S.A. and Australia. When in India, he divided his time between Mysore and Chennai. He died in 2001 at the age of 95.

2.2.1 R.K. Narayan's Malgudi

As regards the fictional town of Malgudi, most of his novels and short stories are set in this quiet little backwater inhabited by gentle people with harmless eccentricities. Malgudi is definitely not based on Mysore city as this dusty and small town is a far cry from the regal city of Mysore boasting of innumerable palaces. It is more akin to the sleepy little South Indian towns of those days. Narayan has himself said that the name Malgudi came to his mind in a flash while writing a sentence in his first novel *Swami and Friends*: "the train stopped at Malgudi."

While receiving the award given to him by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, on 18th January, 1982, by the then U.S. Ambassador—Harry S. Barnes—in the American Embassy (as Narayan could not go to the U.S. to receive it personally), Narayan himself commented on the mythical town of Malgudi. Following is an excerpt from his acceptance speech:

"...I am often questioned, 'Where is Malgudi?' which is the background of my novels, and short stories. I'd like to take this occasion to answer it. I didn't consider too long when I invented this little town. It had just occurred to me when I started my first novel *Swami and Friends*.... that it would be safer to have a fictitious name for the background of the novel, which would leave one free to meddle with its geography and details as I pleased, without incurring the wrath of any city-father of any actual town or city. I wanted to be able to put in whatever I liked, and whenever I liked—a little street or school or temple or a bungalow or even a slum, a railway line, at any spot. A minor despot in a little world, I began to like my role, and I began to be fascinated by its possibilities; its river, market-place, and the far-off mountain roads and forests acquired a concrete quality, and have imprisoned me within their boundaries, with the result that I am unable to escape from Malgudi, even if I wished to...."

Though a somewhat tongue-in-cheek explanation, yet one that sufficiently convinces us that Malgudi is indeed the creation of Narayan's own imagination.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Name the first novel of R.K. Narayan and the person who helped him to publish it

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- 2) Write a 100-word note on the town of Malgudi. Is it a real town or a fictional one? Give reasons for your answer.

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2.3 DETAILED SUMMARY OF *A TIGER FOR MALGUDI*

A Tiger for Malgudi was published in 1983. The novel is an unusual one which has a tiger as the narrator. In his introduction, preceding the novel, Narayan explains how the story idea occurred to him. He once read and saw photographs in the newspaper of a hermit moving around with an unusual companion—a tiger—during the Kumbh Mela festival in Allahabad. The tiger was unleashed and followed the swami faithfully, not hurting anybody. This report and some other instances he came across, about lasting friendships between tigers and human beings, offered him a theme for his novel. However, what decided for him to begin writing the novel was a bookmark he saw with the picture of a tiger that said, “I’d love to get into a good book”. (p. 7). Taking a cue from this, Narayan started his novel, addressing the bookmark tiger, “Surely you will get into my book, but the goodness of the book itself I can’t guarantee”. (p. 7). Another possible reason Narayan gives for making a tiger the protagonist in his novel is that fiction-writers have all along written about human beings who consider themselves the centre of creation, attaching little importance to other creatures. By making a tiger the central character in his novel, Narayan wanted to examine what the result would be.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) How did R.K. Narayan get the idea of writing a novel with a tiger as its protagonist?

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Following is a detailed summary of the novel that we have divided into four parts, each dealing with a distinct phase in the tiger's life:

2.3.1 Stage One

The first stage describes the tiger's cub hood; his wild days in the jungle; his family life; his escape from the trap set up by the villagers; and his forays into human habitation after his family is killed by hunters in the village.

The novel begins with the narrator, Raja, a circus tiger, who has been brought to a zoo. He is allotted an end-cage, as a special consideration to his Master, who appears later in the novel. The people walking past his cage treat him the same as they do the other caged tigers, not realizing that this special tiger thought of himself as different from the other tigers as he possesses a soul, can think, analyse, judge and remember like humans, only lacking their power of speech. But if people could read his thoughts, the tiger would like to invite them into his cage to listen to the story of his life which he narrates in the following manner:

The tiger spent his early days in the Mempi hills where he dwelt in a cave, near a rivulet, with his mother who protected and fed him. His cubhood was carefree and like humans, he deluded himself that the idyllic days would never end. But when the mother died, he had to fend for himself. Hunger brought him out of his cave but he was bullied by bigger animals. Somehow he managed to keep himself alive and grew into an adult. Due to his stature and strength he started thinking of himself as the "king of the forest," above the lion who did not deserve the title as he was a slothful creature and moved only to hunt for food, whereas he was much stronger than the lion.

Every creature in the jungle trembled at his approach and made way for him, except the monkeys and the birds that lived on trees and didn't fear him as he could not reach them. Like human beings, who can communicate without words, their feelings of sympathy, warning, abuse, insult, love and hate, the jungle animals, too, warned each other when he was approaching. The only difference being that human beings most times communicated with too much unnecessary talk. The jungle community acknowledged his undisputed superiority and animals who thought otherwise were suitably punished by him into submission. His master told him later that this power-game and taming of the recalcitrants, to make them toe the line, was true of human beings too. One creature he took care to avoid was the porcupine, after a nasty experience. He once attacked a porcupine that, in turn, stabbed his body with his quills, making him incapable of hunting for several days. Another animal he disliked to encounter was the owl that, as the self-appointed animal adviser, encouraged those animals who secretly wished for his downfall. On land, however, he most detested the leopard who would sit on a branch at his approach to show off his superiority in climbing a tree which tigers could not do and would often make fun of their stripes which, he said, they had acquired, when an offended forest spirit had branded their smooth coats with a hot coal. The tiger very much wanted to teach the leopard a lesson for undermining his status in the jungle but the leopard was far too swift in speed for him to catch. So he decided to ignore him.

The tiger soon came across a tigress who was to become his mate. Out to hunt deer in a meadow, he saw a tigress sitting in the middle of the road blocking his passage. Despite his loud warning roar, the tigress refused to budge even an inch.

A terribly bloody fight ensued between the two of them in which both were grievously injured and lay inert on the ground. A jackal, who was a witness to the fight, advised them to call a truce. Taking the advice, the tiger went near the wounded tigress and gently ministered to her injured eye. The tigress too was a changed being from then on and followed him quietly. Thus began their friendship. Soon after came their offspring—four cubs—who were a delight to watch, suckling their mother, while the tiger rested in the shade of a bamboo cluster, occasionally catching minor game to feed the cubs. When the cubs grew up and ventured out of the cave, they were constantly guarded by the parents to save them from being harmed by the bears, bisons, eagles and pythons.

One day, the tiger saw his mate go down the river bank and climb up the other. The cubs somehow escaped his watchful eyes and followed their mother. He realized too late what had happened and followed them. When he heard strange noises around him, he roared to call back his family but in vain. Still following his family, he soon reached human habitation and, to his utter horror, saw his mate and cubs lying dead in a cart being pulled by a line of men singing and dancing around it. The tiger was shattered to the core at the loss of his dear ones. His belief that the jungle was impregnable to human beings was shattered. Anyhow, hiding behind a rock, he saw a set of men arrive in a jeep to take away his dead family. Those days he was untamed and wanted to tear and kill every man present there but somehow held back. The death of his family taught him to take revenge from the village folk by stalking and poaching their cattle for food. Every two days, he took away a sheep from the flock. The villagers did not suspect him for their loss and advanced ignorant theories regarding a tiger's hunting habits, which amused him a good deal. He now discovered that hunting in the village was far more easy and untiring than the jungle-hunting where the game was more alert and elusive. The villagers, too, discovered they were losing their cattle more regularly and set up an enclosure, with a door, in the centre of the village to trap the culprit. The tiger one day entered the enclosure but as soon as he nabbed a lamb, it's bleating woke up the villagers who ran out with flaming torches, hatchets and crowbars. In his haste to escape, the tiger lost sight of the door and ran in circles inside the stockade, confused and blinded with the fire from the torches and the frenzied shouting of the villagers. He had never imagined that human beings could be so devilish. Fortunately, just then the fence enclosing the stockade caught fire from a torch. The villagers broke open the enclosure to save their sheep and that gave him a chance to escape from the trap. After that misadventure he did not raid the villages concluding that man, who looked small and harmless, was stronger than tigers and held some strange power to control even the fiercest of animals. He decided to return to his cave at Mempi.

The villagers also had learnt a lesson from this episode. Henceforth, they not only guarded their sheep better but also decided to approach the authorities for help. Their spokesmen met the Collector and gave him exaggerated accounts of how the tiger was killing both men and their sheep. On being questioned by the Collector, they gave confused and different versions about the size of the tiger, the number of tigers seen and the identity of the hunters who had shot the tiger's family. The Collector told them to submit a written petition on a stamp – paper without which he could neither fix a date for inspection of their village nor take any action. Confused by it all, the villagers had to visit the Collector's office once a week, spending both time and money, and then too managed to meet only the Collector's clerk who always directed them to undergo more official formalities. In the meanwhile, the tiger had perfected his system of snatching cattle at night

without being caught. The villagers too adopted defensive measures against him like lighting bonfires, posting vigilant guards with weapons and scattering poisoned meat to kill him.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Who is the narrator in the novel *A Tiger for Malgudi* and to whom does he want to narrate the story of his life?

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- 2) Who killed the tiger's family and how did the tiger try to avenge the killing?

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2.3.2 Stage Two

The second phase describes the capture of the tiger by a circus owner; the life he spends in the circus where he is cruelly trained and treated by his ringmaster and is made to perform in the circus and on a film set; and his subsequent escape from there.

A certain man in Malgudi, called Captain, had once bought a yellow monkey and a parrot (that could pick up numbers and alphabets from a pack of cards) from an Irishman who earned his living by displaying them in public. Being more ambitious, Captain thought about joining a circus and approached an old man, Dadhaji, who owned "Dadhaji's Grand Circus" in Poona. Dadhaji wanted to know how much knowledge he had about animals. Captain told him that he had not encountered many animals in his life except the alley cats and mongrels in his street in Malgudi. He disclosed that he had come to Dadhaji to learn about animals and how they were trained. Dadhaji took him in but told him to get rid of the monkey and the parrot that were fit only for street corner shows and not meant for his circus which had around 150 large animals. He told Captain to take charge of cleaning the stables and attending to the horses in return for food, shelter and pocket money. Captain readily accepted the offer and started his circus career under the tutelage of Dadhaji who taught him all about training animals and the business of running a circus, often telling him that there was no wild animal that could not be tamed or trained. When the old man died, Captain inherited the circus with its property, assets and animals. He soon shifted to his native Malgudi where he set up the "Grand Malgudi Circus" by bribing the authorities in order to overcome their objections to his venture.

Malgudi soon became famous for its circus—with its animals, scores of acrobats and performers of all kinds—due to the hard work put in by Captain. Getting up daily at five in the morning he took rounds of the camps to know the welfare of his animals, often making fun of his wife by taunting "...they are tended better than your family." (p. 37). He told her that it was the animals who brought in all the money needed to look after his family. His wife, Rita, who was the lead performer of his trapeze team, often grumbled about the boring circus life and its

tent-living and Captain would think to himself: “Women are impossible. Worse than twenty untamed jungle creatures on one’s hand at a time...” (p. 38). The wife would mutter behind his back that he had no sense of humour left and “Only animals seem to be fit for his company.” (p. 38).

One day, while at the Collector’s office, Captain hears some villagers complaining to the clerk about the delay in catching the tiger which was fast devouring their cattle. The clerk loses his temper and threatens to call in the police. The villagers walk out of the office followed by Captain who recalls Dadhaji’s injunction that one must ferret out all information if one hears a tiger being mentioned. On being asked by him, the villagers are only too glad to talk to him about the tiger. He promises to help them catch the tiger and, on the appointed day, reaches the village where his arrival generates great excitement among the villagers who offer lavish hospitality to the one who has come to kill the tiger. Captain tells them he is there not to kill but to rid them of the tiger by taking it away, and asks them for their help. The villagers are unable to pinpoint the tiger’s hideout but direct him to two men in the next village who had recently been mauled by the tiger. The men are reluctant to help Captain directly, so he contacts and bribes the forest guards to help him. Camouflaging himself with foliage, he waits all night for the tiger to appear, sitting on a tree along with the forest guards. A cage with a goat inside as bait is placed to attract the unsuspecting animal.

The tiger had so far cautiously avoided all traps laid for him. But on that particular day, his greed for a fresh kill overpowers him. He emerges from his lair tempted by the goat, pounces on it and is instantly trapped in the iron cage. Captain, tells his companions that the trapped tiger is a magnificent beast whom he would soon train for his circus. The tiger feels cramped in the small cage which is wheeled by bullocks through many villages and towns where the chattering of humans prove most distressing for him after the grand silence of the jungle. It is only later, after his Master’s (his Guru’s) lessons, that he realizes that he too was like human beings and like them could not enjoy a moment’s silence or stillness of mind, either talking in his inaudible way or listening like them and thus was fully qualified to enter their society.

When the cage reaches the circus grounds, the tiger is amazed to see so many bipeds—human creatures. Captain pokes him with a staff that makes him roar and jump in protest, and then orders him to be transferred to another cage that is to be his new home. A noise is created on his cage bars with a staff, that drives him in circles with irritation, then his sides are jabbed with the staff which leaves him with no option but to jump into another cage. This is his first act of obedience to the ring-master.

Initially, the tiger has no idea why he has been brought to that new place with a huge circus top surrounded by smaller tents and filled with voices of jungle fellows and men. The tiger finds the cramped space of the cage unbearable after the vastness and freedom of jungle life. He can do nothing more than lie down or get up or pace up and down in despair. He feels helpless and hopeless, subdued by the iron cage designed by men to serve their evil ends. This suffering, as his Master would tell him later, is a result of his past birth. He must have put his fellow beings behind bars and was now paying for it in this birth. It is a natural law, he said, that one must find one’s reward or retribution, sooner or later, for one’s actions of a previous life.

For many days, Captain makes him suffer loneliness, immobility, and hunger, perhaps to break his spirit. When he loses all his strength, his cage is moved into a large enclosure and he is set free from the cage. He sees Captain standing there with a long whip in one hand and a chair in the other. He uses the whip to lash the tiger's face repeatedly, not letting him lie down to rest, and uses the chair as a shield between them. He pokes the tiger with the chair and commands him to "Run, run, come on!" (p. 50). The tiger feels dismayed and ashamed as this event is being watched by other animals, most of whom he has seen for the first time. There is a camel, a hippo, a horse, a donkey, but no deer who perhaps escaped being in this cursed place because of its past good karmas. He can recognize only a chimp. An animal advises him to perform as demanded by the ringmaster, and in return he would get something to eat and drink. The tiger asks them why they tolerate their ring-master when any one of them could stamp him out easily, and is told that once they did try it but Captain proved too strong for them. Fortunately, this conversation is carried on in animal language in the form of grunts, hissings or sighing which the "foolish" humans interpreted only as being signs of the animals' illness. The chimp, who is the happiest animal in the circus and goes around chattering, grinning and behaving like human beings, also advises him to obey Captain and run round and round for the time being and wait for the day when they all would wield the whip and the ring-master would do the running. But for now, Captain should be obeyed so that he would continue to feed and protect them and spare them the trouble of seeking their food and fending off their enemies in the forests. According to the chimp, Captain is a fool but thinks of himself as the Lord of the Universe. The tiger remembers that he too had once thought the same about himself.

As the days pass, the tiger begins to understand what Captain wants of him. His continuous lashings teach him to run round and round, without there being a reason for running, after which he is put back in the cage and given pieces of meat and a trough of water. Thereafter, he is made to learn all sorts of new tricks—he is made to jump over obstacles of all kinds put in his way; he is forced to jump through a ring of fire although he dreads the fire after his past experience when he was nearly roasted by the flaming torches of the villagers; he is made to sit on a stool and sip milk from a saucer placed on a table before him, although the taste of milk nauseates him as he is basically a meat-eater and not a milk-drinker and would gladly have devoured the cow than drink its milk, as he confides to the chimp. Every time the tiger fails to perform a new trick, he is mercilessly lashed with the whip by Captain. As a punishment, he is isolated from other animals and starved for days together till he grows weak and is ready to obey his ring-master. Sometimes he thinks of attacking Captain but the Chair always shields the man. At that time the chair appears like a powerful engine of destruction to the tiger but later when he sees chairs lying still in the schoolroom at Malgudi he realizes that a chair is nothing but a harmless piece of furniture that he could smash in a second, with his paw.

The tiger gradually becomes an established member of the circus and is not isolated any more. From the animal gossip, especially from the chimp, he gathers a good deal about their ring-master who successfully manages a vast army of people working for him—trainers of different animals, workers managing stage properties, trapeze artistes, clowns and many more. Looking after all of them, feeding them, creating new acts and tricks for the circus artists and animals, appearing on stage and looking after the finances requires a tremendous amount

of energy, power and creativeness, all of which Captain possesses in abundance and which the tiger appreciates much later in retrospect.

The most complex and extraordinary act of the tiger's training is when he is made to sit opposite a goat with a saucer of milk placed between them. In the beginning, thinking that goat is there for him to eat, he lunges forward but is whipped back into his seat and the goat is withdrawn. This is repeated for many days till he understands that this jugglery is meant to make him ignore the goat while it drinks the milk. In the climax of the act, he too has to bring his mouth close to the saucer and pretend to enjoy the milk in the goat's company, although it is a trying moment for him as the goat's proximity and its flavor makes his mouth water. This is a special act that Captain has reserved for his Jubilee Show.

Captain has his own ways to publicize his circus. A team of men and women, in fancy costumes, riding in a wagon painted in tiger stripes, used to go around villages beating the drums and advertising the circus through megaphones. He presents his shows six months in a year in Malgudi. On holidays and festivals, circus patrons flock to the town in all modes of transport for this exciting event. At every show, the galleries and the wooden benches and chairs, the squatting spaces on the ground near the stage and the V.I.P seats in the front row are filled to capacity. During every show, he used to make a flamboyant speech that was sometimes autobiographical, in English, Hindi and Tamil and used to end it by paying homage to Dadhaji, his dead mentor and master. The tiger finally gathered that Captain had his distinct way of running the circus. He had prepared a timetable for all his animals, assigned them individual names (just as he christened him Raja), gave them periods of rest in between shows and allowed them to graze in the Mempi range on their off days. The tiger's act was always introduced in a special way that made his wife grumble that the trapeze artistes were never introduced to the public. During their bickering, Captain always remarked that perhaps their horoscopes didn't match, to which Rita would retort, "your horoscope and the tiger's seem to be better matched." (p. 68). The tiger often wondered why the couple always wrangled over him. Much later he was to learn from his Master that human relationships could not be easily defined as being either full of love, or full of hatred. Sometimes couples loved each other deeply but did not show it, like Captain and his wife whose deep love for each other was proved when Captain, in the last flicker of consciousness after the tiger had inadvertently hit him, is only worried about how Rita would cope without him. While she, after he dies, climbs onto a trapeze, swings it to the ceiling and lets go her hand, falling to her death below.

The Jubilee show of the circus was publicised in a big way. Huge posters, displaying Rita's death-defying trapeze acts, the chimp riding a motorcycle, the elephant with the chimp on his back etc., were pasted on all walls in Malgudi, especially on walls that prohibited sticking of bills and posters. People everywhere read about the Jubilee show and, consequently, on the opening day, and for all three shows each day, every inch of the circus top was packed to capacity. Raja's act was reserved for the night shows when he was let out in the circus-ring and an enclosure was erected around it. At every show, the ring-master introduced his act as a four-in-one act which ended with the tiger and the goat sipping milk together, demonstrating India's dedication to nonviolence, as he put it. The Jubilee show went on for a long time.

One evening, when the goat was fearlessly drinking the milk, Raja is overwhelmed by his forest memories and his raging hunger, and he shoots forward and rips off the goat's head. He is whipped back into the cage by an enraged Captain and the dead goat is hastily removed from the spot, depriving him of his fresh kill. Not many noticed what had happened, excepting a few dignitaries in the front row (among whom a film producer who is secretly filming the act), as the stage is hurriedly cleared and the next items of clowns and their juggling is put up without delay. The tiger is now out of favour with Captain and his act is completely dropped from the show as a new goat can not be trained so soon for the act. He is put in isolation, only the chimp sneaks near his cage one day and admonishes him for killing a friend whom he was on milk-drinking terms with and then informs him that Captain is thinking of closing the Jubilee show to take a break.

One day, as the tiger lays half-dead with starvation, Captain brings a visitor to his cage who is all praise for the tiger's surgical attack on the goat which he had filmed. He proposes to make a film with Raja, the tiger. The visitor is a film producer and director named Madhusudan (he likes to be called Madan). As he wants Captain's approval for his proposal, he often visits the camp. He tells Captain that he had written the outline of his film's story on the same night that he had seen Raja slicing the goat's head at the Jubilee Show. To Captain's comment that the scene would not go down well with women, Madan remarks that women were by nature squeamish and that was the reason why he preferred male panelists on the Censor Board, who passed films carrying sex and violence without fuss, rather than women panelists. He also informs Captain that he has already lined up a gigantic wrestler, Jaggu, for a role in his tiger-movie in which Jaggu would be shown fighting off the tiger with his bare hands to save his pet goat, after which he would capture the tiger and train him to live in peace with the goat. The director narrates to Captain how he had found Jaggu. While on his way to Madras, he had come across Jaggu wrestling in a market place, taking on four adversaries at a time and defeating them all, after which he performed many feats of strength. He offered him Rs. 500 per month to play a role in his film which Jaggu readily accepted. Captain agrees to spare Raja for two weeks in the beginning for a hefty sum and tells him that any re-takes of shots would be charged extra. Madan immediately presents a cheque to him but, like a seasoned businessman, Captain settles for cash instead. Madan prepares an agreement of terms and conditions required for the making of his film but Captain finds fault with one clause or another and tells him to re-draft it. Another objection Captain raises is that he would not lend his tiger unless a location for shooting the film is finalized. Ultimately, he approves one of the three locations suggested by Madan which lay in the woods near a highway. Madan immediately gets the location called "Ginger Field" levelled and prepared into a film studio, with a canteen for refreshments for his unit hands, a makeup and costume section, a village street with two-dimensional homes, and platforms for mounting lights, reflectors and cameras.

On the day of the shoot, Jaggu is given a Tarzan like look—his body is covered with a leopard-skin cloth held up by a strap across his shoulder and his hair is tousled up to stand up like an aura around his face. He is given a moustache which is immediately ordered off by Madan as that would make him look like a pirate and lose him the sympathy of the audience. Even though Madan himself acts out each detail for Jaggu, of how he was to enact the role—climb up the steps to a house, turn around, when half-way up, at the cry of 'Tiger! Tiger!', then

spring forward with a war-cry to grapple with the tiger—Jaggu misses the cue every time and during the final shot, when someone shouts that the “Tiger” from the circus has arrived, Jaggu mistakes it as his cue and messes up the shot.

“Ginger Field” reminds the tiger of his old home in the woods and he becomes restless in his cage. The film crew, too, are getting restive specially to hear Captain and Madan arguing endlessly over whether the tiger should retreat after Jaggu’s knock-off blow, with his tail between his legs. Captain is deadly against it as that is a dog’s habit and not a lion’s. Another argument crops up, replacing the tail controversy, when Madan explains the scene where Raja is to stand on his hind legs and place his forelegs on Jaggu’s shoulders who would then knock him off. Captain points out that the tiger’s paws would tear the flesh off Jaggu’s shoulders. Madan then suggests a few safety measures, to prevent any injury to the wrestler like pulling out the tiger’s nails and even teeth or stitching up his lips as was done in Hollywood movies. Captain would have none of it as he wants his tiger back unscathed and in one piece. However, he offers a way out. Madan is to fake both the scenes—Raja standing with his paws on Jaggu who would not be there and Jaggu wrestling with an imaginary tiger—and join the two scenes through an optical printer. Madan agrees to the suggestions. Since Captain wants Jaggu to acquaint himself with his adversary, Raja, he takes him near his cage. As the tiger roars and lunges towards him, the gigantic wrestler, although safe outside the protective fence, runs away with a howl: *Amma! Save me!*” (p. 104), and is not to be found anywhere. Finally Madan brings him back from a shrine where he had hidden himself. Jaggu refuses to act with the ferocious beast and after much coercion and many rehearsals, he is made to go through the motions of wrestling with an unseen tiger.

In the meantime, Madan shows an electronic gadget to Captain which, when pressed, shoots out a metal tongue that can deliver an electric shock. He asks Captain to use it on Raja who is being difficult while learning the new act specially designed for the film. Though Captain refuses to use the gadget as he says his whip is enough to tame his animals, his wife advises him to use the device. As a temptation, Madan asks Captain to extend the shooting by several weeks and promises to pay him a big amount for the extensions. Normally not a money-minded man, Captain is now becoming greedy after his contact with the film people. The thought of making more money over-powers him especially when his wife says that the extra money could help them start a new venture, different from the boring and dusty circus business.

Day after day, with his whip and the chair, Captain makes the tiger learn the new act, surrounded by men who are always shouting to each other, specially the cameraman who even orders Captain around. Soon, Captain becomes submissive and loses his self-respect. Even after countless rehearsals, the tiger finds it difficult and very painful to lift his forelegs and at the same time tilt back on his hind legs. Each time he falls either backward or forward. Not one to give up easily, Captain devises a new method to make him stand on his hind legs. He dangles a lamb as bait before him and when he reaches out, Captain pulls the lamb, higher. The act is repeated from morning till night, sometimes in the blinding lights at night, which makes the tiger feel sick and desperate.

One day, when the tiger refuses to notice the lamb dangling before him, despite the repeated whippings and yelling by Captain, he sees Captain take out a new object from his pocket with which he touches him. The tiger is blinded with pain

and helplessness. Taking advantage, Captain hits him again and again on his eyes and nose and once again brings out the gadget from his pocket to give another shock to the tiger. But this time the tiger growls and raises his paw to fend off the gadget. Captain takes the gesture as an affront to his authority and rushes at him with the vicious device. Just as he stops to touch him, the tiger raises a forepaw and, taking care to retract his claws so as not to hurt the master, knocks the gadget out of his hand. The blow is strong enough to tear off Captain's head. It greatly surprises the tiger that such a flimsy creature as Captain had held him in fear for so long.

There is total chaos after the mishap. The film crew at first tries to save their equipment but then abandons it and flee to save their lives. Jaggu makes a dash for the empty tiger-cage, and entering it pulls down the door, refusing to let in the others. Madan shouts to someone to fetch a gun. While escaping the pandemonium, the tiger brushes past the camera which topples down with a bang, eliciting loud cries from Madan that he is totally and completely ruined!

Check Your Progress 4

1) What did Captain call his circus?

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2) How did Captain catch the tiger?

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3) What two things did Captain use to train the tiger?

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4) Match the characters given in List A with their respective occupations in list B:

- | A | B |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| i) Jaggu | i) Film producer and director |
| ii) Reeta | ii) wrestler |
| iii) Madhusudan | iii) Ring-master/Circus Manager |
| iv) Captain | iv) Circus tiger |
| v) Raja | v) Trapeze artiste |

5) What two things reveal that the tiger did not mean to kill Captain?

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2.3.3 Stage Three

The third phase of the tiger's life describes his creating a sensation in Malgudi where he takes refuge in a school, resulting in great confusion and commotion; his meeting with an ascetic who saves him from being shot by the terror-stricken public, and who leads him out of the town towards the hills.

The tiger's arrival in Malgudi from the film set, creates a commotion in the town. The people run to save their lives, hiding behind trees and pillars, and shutting and bolting all windows and doors of their homes. A tailor even shuts himself in a cupboard, while a murder convict escapes, along with his handcuffs, when the constables escorting him flee to save themselves. People, who had appeared dignified, sitting placidly outside the circus-ring, now flee from the tiger, displaying a very different aspect of human behaviour though the tiger means them no harm. He stops at the entrance restaurant, terrorizing the patrons. He wants to assure them that he is not there to kill them, as he has already had his fill on the way here and that tigers attack only when they are hungry, unlike human beings who slaughter one another without purpose or hunger. However, the behavior of the children delights him. They run up and down the streets, shouting and screaming, happy to have been let off easily from school due to his presence in the town. Seeing him bounding out of the restaurant, they run back to the school, shutting themselves up in the school hall. He follows them to the school and takes refuge in the headmaster's room. At his sight, the dignified gentleman jumps up on his table and heaves himself up into the loft with the greatest of speed. The tiger flings himself onto the cool stone floor with his head under a large desk and dozes off, only half-hearing the door of the room being bolted and locked from the outside.

While he sleeps, there is a long consultation among the crowd that has gathered outside the school, of which he comes to know later from his new Master—the Holyman—who has been one of the crowd. When someone in the crowd refers to the tiger as 'brute', the Master rebukes him for using the ugly word that has been coined by man out of arrogance. Annoyed at his unsolicited advice, the people ask him who he is. The Master says that all his life he has been trying to find the answer to that profound question but has not succeeded and asks them if they know who they are. The officiating headmaster asks him to go away and the Master withdraws to a far corner to watch them tackle the situation. The Mathematics teacher suggests calling in the police, while another says that the situation does not warrant it as no law has been broken. Blaming the ring-master for the messy situation is useless as he is dead; holding the film producer responsible for it is also of no use as he has disappeared along with his film crew without a trace, or perhaps they have all been eaten up by the tiger. The Master shouts from his corner that the tiger is no man-eater. The acting headmaster, losing his cool, turns him out of the school premises. The Master withdraws to sit on a culvert outside the gate from where he can watch and hear them. Someone amongst them suggests calling the S.P. who possesses a gun but another counters the suggestion as the Superintendent of Police can not use it without the magistrate's order. Someone is all for calling the hunter, Alphonse, who possesses a double-barrelled gun and is a good shot but someone else points out that his gun has been confiscated and he has been declared a poacher. As they fail to reach a practical solution, the Master walks up to them and offers to dash up to the room and let the tiger out so that it can escape from there. Horrified at the idea, they shout him down. Just then some parents come looking for their children and berate the

school authorities for endangering the lives of the children in their tiger-infested school. Luckily, a group overhears the shouts of the children in the hall and forces open the door to let them out.

A man with a gun arrives on the scene just then. He is the famed *shikari*—Alphonse. He orders people to get out of his way, otherwise, he says, he would not be responsible if anyone is hurt. The Master advises him not to use the uncharitable word ‘beast’ for the tiger. But Alphonse promptly shuts up this half-naked and bearded *sadhu*. As the tiger can be shot only if the door to the room is opened, which would be a dangerous move, Alphonse asks for a ladder to climb to the roof where he would remove a few tiles and take aim at the tiger. The ladder does not come for a long time and the irritated Alphonse asks for the school incharge to step forward. The acting headmaster tries to slink away but the people seize him and tell Alphonse that he is incharge when the headmaster is away. The acting headmaster tries to get out of the situation by reasoning that the headmaster is not away but very much in the room with the tiger. Alphonse tells him not to act smart. He then orders him to get a ladder but the acting headmaster informs him that the school has no ladder although one had been requisitioned the previous year but the money to buy it has not yet been sanctioned. Alphonse finds this procedure rather silly and some other teachers agree with him as they too have been unable to procure a single cane since long. Alphonse promises to thrash them if they dare to use the canes to beat the school children and the teachers hastily assure him that the canes are used only to chase away stray cattle from the school. Just then two boys appear with a ladder which they have stolen from a house, unseen by the owners. Alphonse praises them for their resourcefulness and promises to gift them an air gun. Happy at the offer, the boys place the ladder against the wall and climb up, with Alphonse in the lead. Removing a few tiles gives Alphonse a clear sight of the full grown tiger which according to him, measures upto eleven and a half feet, from tip to tail. Getting the Headmaster out from the narrow attic requires sawing off the rafters. The Master, who has followed them to the roof, says that the old teak beams would not yield to a saw. Seeing the swami behind him, the angry Alphonse orders him off the ladder and turns to speak to the headmaster telling him to lie low when he shoots at the tiger from the gap in the roof.

At that very moment a jeep arrives carrying the “Save Tiger Committee” whom the Master has sent for to prevent Alphonse from killing the tiger. They inform Alphonse that the Committee has been formed to prohibit the shooting of tigers, in any part of India, to conserve their dwindling population and that they are empowered to prosecute and penalize anyone violating the ban. Alphonse reminds them that a tiger could be killed if it is established that he is a man-eater. The Committee asks him to apply for a permit and submit photographs of the tiger to establish that he is indeed a man-eater before they allow Alphonse to shoot it. Alphonse retorts that by the time this is done, the headmaster would be inside the tiger’s belly!

Meanwhile, the tiger wakes up from his refreshing slumber, stretches himself and growls with satisfaction. He sees the headmaster cowering in the attic and feels sorry for him. Wanting to assure the headmaster that he means him no harm, he puts his forelegs on the wall scratching it and growling softly. This further frightens the headmaster so much that he loses control over his bowels and bladder. Outside in the school compound, the Master sees Alphonse and the Chairman of the “Save Tiger Committee” talking in whispers, after which the Chairman consults

with his Committee members who sign some papers and hands them over to Alphonse. The papers declare that the tiger is indeed a man-eater and Alphonse is permitted to kill him. The Master suspects that Alphonse has offered a good bribe to the Committee to get the permit as he is carrying on a flourishing trade exporting tiger skins!

Armed with the permit to shoot the man-eater, Alphonse announces to the crowd to clear the place and move a hundred yards to the school gate which would give them a head-start if the tiger chased them. He allows the Committee members to bolt themselves up in an adjacent classroom. In order to steady his shaking hands, Alphonse takes out a flask from his hip pocket and takes a long swig out of it. Repeating the action every other minute, he soon empties the flask. As he is still feeling shaky, he puts the blame on the diluted rum he has taken. The Master approaches the now drunk and abusive Alphonse, who has forgotten all about his mission to kill the tiger and to save the headmaster. With his power of suggestion, the Master makes Alphonse fall asleep and proceeds to unlock the door to let the tiger out. The Chairman from the adjacent room stops him from entering the headmaster's room unarmed, as it amounts to committing suicide, and taking one's life is unlawful. The Master persists in his design and quoting the Gita that says that life and death are in no one's hand; he unlocks the door but not before the Committee has made him write and sign an affidavit holding none of them responsible for his death. Unfortunately for them, the Master had written the undertaking in Sanskrit which none of them know.

The tiger feels annoyed when he hears a key turn in the lock of his door, as he wants no one to disturb his newly-found freedom after his long suffering at the hands of the cruel ring-master. And suspecting that the visitor is someone who wants to send him back to the circus life, he dashes forward to kill him but falls back against the door. He loses all his energy to harm the now invisible visitor who speaks to him asking him to forget his outward appearance. The voice is that of the Master who further tells him that every creature from birth possesses aggressiveness but as old age overtakes it, it loses its faculties; and so would he lose his ferocity with time. In some mysterious way, he begins to understand what the voice is saying. He longs to go back to his jungle life and forget all about human beings and their ways. Reading his thoughts, the voice tells him that there is no going back to his old life now, as he is to start a new one. He is then ordered to sit aside without stirring so that he, the Master, could bring down the headmaster from the attic. The tiger can not make out the features of the Master, which seem to exist in a haze which persists all through their future association. Nevertheless, he obeys the Master and sits in a corner while the Master, by placing a chair and a stool atop a table, manages to reach the loft and brings down the badly shaken headmaster, after great persuasion, but not before the chair and the stool give way and the headmaster lands on the floor with a mighty thud. The Master pushes the headmaster out of the room.

Alone in the room, the Master tells the tiger that he is going to lead him out of the room but he should make no eye-contact with the people who are by nature timid and panicky and might feel terrorized at his sight. The Master also wants him to keep his head bowed and notice nothing, lest he be distracted by the crowds on the streets. Then he cautions the people outside to move out of the way as he is bringing the tiger out. When they both come out, the crowd has vanished and only their voices are heard from where they are hiding themselves. As they leave the school gate, people on the streets stand petrified when they see

a holyman moving calmly out of the town towards the mountains and a tiger following him tamely.

Soon after, the restaurant, which was the tiger's first stop in the town, is doing brisk business, filled with patrons who are excitedly discussing the antecedents of the tiger-tamer, who had walked out of the school with a tiger in tow. Some think he is a yogi from the Himalayas. However, Jayaraj, a photo-framer, happens to know the identity of the tiger-man. He tells his company that when the man had passed near him and asked him not to fear the tiger, he had immediately recognized him from his voice and from the shape of his eyes and features, even though his body had shrunk and his face was covered with hair. He couldn't recall his name but remembered him as a young boy who had once been arrested for being associated with the Independence Movement. Later, he had seen him driving a car, with his family and he appeared quite well-off. He had once come to him to get his passport photo taken which he never collected. But one day Jayaraj heard that the man had abandoned his family and vanished. Jayaraj wanted to forget all about the man and his tiger just like Alphonse who, after coming out of his stupor, had forgotten all about the tiger that had come to Malgudi.

Check Your Progress 5

1) Name the town that the tiger reached after his escape from the film set.

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2) What did the headmaster do to save himself from the tiger?

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3) Who is the Master in the story and how does he save the tiger from being killed by Alphonse?

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2.3.4 Stage Four

The last phase describes the tiger's life in the ashram of the holy man who becomes his Master or Guru; the philosophical discourses of his Master about life and death, about God and self-realization; his spiritual transformation under his Guru's influence and guidance; his reaching old age and his subsequent transfer to a zoo to spend his remaining life in peace.

The Master and the tiger pass through many villages and everywhere people stare at them dumbstruck. So quiet are they at the sight of this strange duo that the Master remarks that every town and village must have a tiger to maintain discipline. The tiger looks at no one, as ordered by his Master, who tells him that all mischief starts with the eyes. The eyes pick out objects indiscriminately which the mind follows, and the body, in its turn, is conditioned by the mind and performs the actions. This chain of activity leads man into many troubles. So one should not look indiscriminately at objects. Consequently, the tiger starts feeling guilty to look at cattle or other creatures as his rightful food.

As they descend a hill, they see a flower – decked chariot being pulled by men playing pipes and drums and scattering flowers on the chariot which carries the image of God. The place is swarming with children and vendors selling their wares. At the sight of the tiger, the men abandon the holy chariot in the middle of the road and run for safety. The Master runs after them and coaxes them back telling them that his tiger is godly and loves to hear music. Perforce the men resume playing their pipes and drums. In another village, they come across two groups of men engaged in a bloody fight. As soon as they see the tiger, they quickly disperse and the Master sadly remarks that people should not need a tiger to maintain peace!

On reaching the Mempi range, the Master finds a ledge, with a rock jutting above it, and chooses the place as his shelter. There is a spring that bubbles up from a cavity in the rocks a little farther. The Master tells the tiger that he can drink at the spring but that he must find his own food as he cannot force him to eat roots and greens, adding that he feels responsible only for his friend's mind and soul but has no power over his body. The tiger accepts the advice and makes his own arrangements to catch his food. The whole day he sits at the entrance to the shelter while the Master sits in meditation. In the evenings, he talks to the tiger to help him understand the concepts of life and death and the existence of God whom he calls the Creator of everything and the ultimate source of power and strength. When he asks the tiger later to define God, the tiger answers that God must be an enormous tiger with great strength. The master laughs but gives him credit for thinking of God as one made in his —the tiger's image. He further explains that "He may be everything we imagine and more. In Bhagawad Gita, He reveals himself in a mighty terrifying form... He is within every one of us and we derive our strength from Him." (p 158). The Master does not treat the tiger as an animal, but in some secret way he tries to transform him.

The daily routine of the Master was simple. Getting up at dawn, he used to bathe in the spring, wash his loin cloth, pray and meditate and collect roots and herbs from the forest for his food. He spoke little and often meditated deeply. In his benign company the tiger too senses a change coming over him. The keenness of his hunger was gone. When hungry he still went to the jungle to hunt game but would feel remorseful afterwards. He now killed only to satisfy his hunger and not his gluttony. He even went without food on consecutive days, as he thought this penance would make him worthy of his Master's grace. At night he slept behind a screen of creepers and bushes, quite close to his Master and chose another stream to drink water from so as not to sully the spring his Master used. He found this phase of life most elevating and longed to shed his ferocious appearance, and live on air and dry grass. Sensing his feelings, the Master told him to stop brooding on what was impossible. It was enough that he had started realizing himself and could feel and express his thoughts, although understood only by his Master. One thing the Guru did not teach him, however, was the art of reckoning numbers and figures and a sense of time. It was necessary only for human beings,

he said, and then too it made them miserable as they lived more in the past and the future, losing the power to appreciate the present living moment.

One day, the Master inadvertently mentions his past and senses that the tiger wants to know, more. He tells the tiger that the knowledge of his past was unnecessary to him. "Knowledge, like food, must be taken within limits" (p 161) otherwise the mind is overburdened with facts and information that, like fetters, pull down the rising soul. Therefore, he would recount only the bare facts of his life that his companion, the tiger, needed to know. He narrates how he once lived a worldly life, busy and active, living by the clock, wanting people to respect him. But a day came when all this seemed senseless and like Siddhartha, the Buddha, he fled his home, leaving his wife, children and wealth behind. They searched for him in vain and concluded that he must have been washed off in the flooded Sarayu river that flowed behind his house.

The news of them living in the Mempi hills somehow reaches the villages and brings a group of peasants, bearing baskets of flowers and fruits, to their ashram. They address the Master as *Swamiji*, prostrate before him and say that they have come for his *darshan* despite being afraid of his tiger. The Master tells them to prostrate only before God and have only His *darshan* and not to call him *Swamiji* as he is one of them. He accepts only a token from their offerings, returning the rest. The group confesses that they are the ones the *Swamiji* had seen fighting among themselves once and promise never to fight again. They beg him to forgive them but he tells them to ask God to forgive them. They want to tell him about the cause of their quarrel but he cuts them short and says if there is hatred in the heart of man, the smallest reason is enough to spark off a fight. He advises them to shed all hatred and live peacefully with each other.

One day, as the tiger sits by his meditating Master, he too feels his mind rise to a sublime level. He forgets about his physical self, his vision became clearer and he is filled with pure joy at the sight of the beautiful nature around him. The Master, sensing the change in him, tells him that it is difficult to imagine that a tiger could have so much poetic joy and that he must have been a poet in his previous life because "whatever one had thought or felt is never lost, but is buried in one's personality and carried from birth to birth." (p. 166). Cutting short his discourse, the Master cautions him to go behind the shrubs as he has seen a woman coming towards the ashram. Through the foliage, the tiger sees the woman whom he can not make out till the Master describes her to him— as a middle aged woman, over fifty years old, dark, with grey hair and of medium height. The lady approaches the master and prostrates before him. She tells him that she has heard about him from a neighbour who had recounted to her how a bare-bodied sadhu had helped her find her lost son the day the tiger had come to Malgudi. She has also heard from people about a sadhu living in the Mempi hills and had come to meet him, even at the risk of her life as she had been robbed by three men in the jungle. But they had only robbed her and gone away and had not been guilty of deserting their families and home. The Master is briefly disconcerted at this and recognises her to be his wife but refuses to admit that he is the same sadhu her neighbor had seen. As he rubs a finger over his brow, the woman insists that he is the same sadhu, as the neighbour had also told her of this peculiar gesture of his and she also had always noticed her husband do the same when he was thinking or solving family problems. She is now sure that he is her husband with whom she had spent so many years of her life. She begs him to either return to his family or else allow her to live with him at the ashram, but he turns down both suggestions. He tells her that to attain this state he has gone through great hardship and it is unthinkable to slide back now. The wife berates him for his callousness, without affecting the

Master's equanimity, and at last she leaves the ashram wiping her tears. The tiger who had watched and heard everything, is much moved. He goes without food that night and stays away from his Master who sits in deep meditation for many days.

The tiger has no reckoning of time but, as the days pass, he becomes less inclined to get up and move, lying behind the shrubs for long hours. He finds it a strain to go hunting. His teeth have fallen and he takes a long time in eating. Consequently, he is underfed and his skin now hangs loose over his emaciated body. His hearing too is impaired and he can not hear when his Master calls. It is old age that had overtaken him. In this age, the Master explains, "faculties are dimmed one by one so that we may be restful...before one goes to sleep." (p. 174). The tiger may live for another five years but he does not want him to starve or be attacked by other creatures without his friend, the Master, to protect him. He elaborates that he too is going to attain *samadhi* and wants to free himself of all bondage. His bond with the tiger therefore soon will be over. The Master concludes: "No relationship, human or other, or any association of any kind can last for ever. Separation is the law of life right from the mother's womb. One has to accept it if one has to live in God's plan". Therefore, he had asked the head of a zoo in the town to take his friend in so that he would spend the rest of his years in the company of other animals and be safe in a cage where he would be fed often and move freely in an enclosure. The tiger accepts the plan of his Master without questioning, like he has always done.

The zoo manager arrives in a few days to take away Raja. He looks a kind man and holds no whip in his hand like the ring-master. He tells the Master that his tiger is the most magnificent animal he has ever seen. The tiger likes the man who seems to be fond of animals, as he pats his head without fear. The Master tells him that Raja only looks like a tiger but is a sensitive soul who can think and feel like a human. He requests the zoo head to treat him kindly and not to put him with rough animals. He then leads Raja to the cage and asks him to enter it, telling him that he was beginning a new life in the zoo where he would make all who see him very happy. His parting whisper to the tiger is, "Both of us will shed our forms soon and perhaps we could meet again, who knows? So goodbye for the present." (p. 176).

This is how Raja, a circus tiger possessing the soul of an enlightened human being, now grown old and lying in his cage in a zoo, ruminates on his past and narrates the story of his life to us.

Check Your Progress 6

- 1) Which two incidents make the Master comment that every town and village needed a tiger to maintain peace and discipline?

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.....
.....

- 2) Why did the Master hand over Raja the tiger, to the head of a zoo?

.....
.....
.....

2.4 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit you learnt that R.K. Narayan takes a tiger as the protagonist of his novel who narrates the story of his life in the first person. The story develops through four distinct stages of the tiger's life — the tiger's cub hood; his life in a circus; his sojourn to Malgudi town; his life with a holy man in an ashram in the hills from where he is sent to a zoo.

2.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. *Swami and Friends*: Graham Greene.
2. Refer to the last few paragraphs of 2.2.1:R.K. Narayan's Malgudi.

Check Your Progress 2

1. He once saw a hermit moving around with a tiger during the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad. He also came across a picture of a tiger on a bookmark with the caption "I'd love to get into a good book. These incidents triggered the idea in his mind.

Check Your Progress 3

1. The narrator in the novel is Raja, a circus tiger, who wants to narrate his life story to the people who visit the zoo where he has come to live out his old age.
2. Some hunters killed the tiger's family with the help of the villagers. The tiger tried to avenge the killings by stalking and poaching the villagers' cattle.

Check Your Progress 4

1. "Grand Malgudi Circus"
2. Captain, with the help of forest guards, placed an iron cage with a live goat inside it as a bait to catch the tiger. He camouflaged himself and sat on a tree-branch, waiting for the tiger to come. Tempted by the bleating goat, the tiger soon appeared but just as he pounced on the goat, he was trapped in the cage.
3. A long whip and a chair.
4.

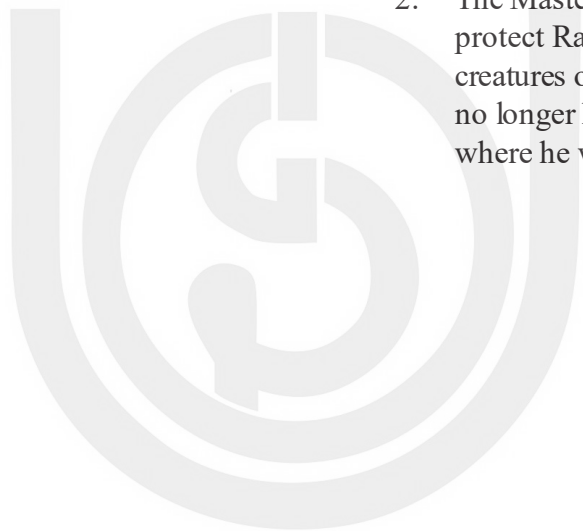
A	B
i) Jaggu	ii) Wrestler
ii) Reeta	v) Trapeze artiste
iii) Madhusudan	i) Film producer and director
iv) Captain	iii) Ring-master/Circus Manager
v) Raja	iv) Circus tiger
5. He first growled to warn Captain; when he raised his paw to fend off the electric gadget in Captain's hand, he took care to retract his claws so as not to hurt Captain.

Check Your Progress 5

1. Malgudi
2. He jumped on his table and speedily lifted himself into the loft.
3. He is the sadhu, the yogi, who befriends the tiger. The Master calls in the “Save Tiger Committee” to prevent the tiger from being shot by Alphonse, the hunter. But when Alphonse gives a substantial bribe to the Committee members to get from them the permit to kill the tiger, the Master with his power of suggestion makes the drunk Alphonse go to sleep. He, then unlocks the door to let the tiger out of the headmaster’s room and leads him out of Malgudi towards the distant hills.

Check Your Progress 6

1. As the Master and the tiger passed through villages and towns, the people were dumbstruck to see them and were subdued into silence. At one place, two groups of men, engaged in a bloody fight, dispersed as soon as they saw the tiger. These two incidents made the Master comment that a tiger’s presence was a must in every town and village to maintain peace and discipline.
2. The Master intended to attain *Samadhi* and as he would not be around to protect Raja, now grown old and weak, from being attacked by the other creatures of the jungle, nor prevent him from starving to death, as he could no longer hunt for his food, the Master thought it best to put him in a zoo where he would be fed and taken care of for the rest of his remaining life.



THE PEOPLE'S
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UNIT 3 *A TIGER FOR MALGUDI*: ANALYSIS

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Plot
- 3.3 The Significance of the Title
- 3.4 The Novel as an Allegory
- 3.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit we aim to analyse the novel *A Tiger for Malgudi* in terms of its salient features. We will be talking about the plot of this novel and then we will discuss the appropriateness of the title. We will also analyze the novel as being an allegory.

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the plot of the novel;
- comment upon the significance of the title; and
- describe the novel as an allegory.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 2, of this Block, you read the summary of the novel *A Tiger for Malgudi*, though we would like to believe that by now you must have read the novel in its complete form.

A successful novelist gives an appropriate title to his novel around which the plot of the novel revolves. Also, he may make his story allegorical to convey, in a light and casual manner, the real purpose of his writing. So, it is interesting to find out if the title given by R.K. Narayan to his novel (*A Tiger for Malgudi*) is appropriate and if it signifies a deeper meaning that he wishes to put across to the readers.

We know that a novel is a story about some event or person set in a particular place and time, advanced by the narrative mode. That means the novel must be having some important elements to hold the interest of the readers, to make the story appealing and real. What are they? How can we find them? What is their significance?

If we have to enjoy a work as a whole, then why should we separate its various components? This we do for the purpose of analysis. If we like a novel, we appreciate it either for its theme or characters or may be its' narrative technique. That is why, it is necessary for us to familiarize ourselves with various aspects of the novel like the plot, the significance of the title or the work being an allegory and so on and so forth. Therefore, we shall be taking up these elements in details here.

3.2 PLOT

Plot is the framework of the story. It has a beginning, a middle and an end. It advances with the help of characters, events and actions. A novel may have a plot and sub-plot. But these two do not run separately. At some point, they are inter-linked with the main theme.

Let us remember, plot is not the summary of a work. When we summarize a work, we give the story in a sequence but in a plot, the story is arranged and re-arranged according to the mode of the narrative.

Presuming you have read the prescribed novel, *A Tiger for Malgudi*. Let us now analyse the plot of this novel.

In his introduction to this novel, Narayan explains how the idea of writing a novel with a tiger as the chief character struck him. He says:

“During the Kumbh Mela festival, which recurs every twelve years at the confluence of the three rivers, Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati in Allahabad a vast crowd gathers for a holy bath in the rivers. Amidst the ocean of humanity also arrives a hermit with his companion, a tiger. He does not hold the animal on a leash, since he claims they were brothers in previous lives. The tiger freely moves about without hurting or scaring anyone. Such a combination seemed incredible when I read reports of it and saw the photographs. But as I got used to the idea, I began to speculate on its possibilities for a novel. Also I came across a few other instances of enduring friendship between tigers and human beings.” (p. 7-8)

After reading Narayan’s explanation carefully, you must have noticed that the idea of an “enduring” friendship between tigers and human beings first appeared “incredible” to Narayan, but after getting used to the idea (and after coming across a few more such instances) he “began to speculate on its possibilities for a novel.” Like Narayan, you would also first find the main theme of this novel — the spiritual transformation of a tiger — to be unbelievable. You are likely to ask: “Is not Narayan expecting too much from his readers to believe in the tiger, or too much from his tiger to perform for his readers?”

Anticipating such questions from readers, Narayan says:

“...deep within, the core of personality is the same in spite of differing appearances, and categories, and with the right approach you could expect the same response from a tiger as from any normal human being.” (p. 10)

Moreover, great Indian classics such as the *Panchatantra* and *Jataka* tales abound with characters who are animals but are endowed with superior intelligence and sensitivity. In the *Panchatantra* the dramatis personae are animals such as a bull, a lion, a jackal, and a monkey. *The Jataka Tales* are based on the reincarnations of Bodhisattva as deer, elephant, or monkey before he finally becomes the Buddha, the Enlightened One. So, in the context of Indian culture, where successive births are considered to be stages in the evolutionary process of the soul, the spiritual transformation of a tiger should not seem unbelievable.

Now suspending our disbelief, let us have a look at the autobiographical tale of Raja, the tiger.

The novel begins with the aged Raja—who is lying in his cage in a zoo—narrating his life-story. The narrator, Raja, adopts a persuasive stance throughout the course of the narration and directly establishes a rapport with the readers. The following words of the narrator, almost at the beginning of the novel amply demonstrate this quality:

“You are likely to understand that I am different from the tiger next door and I possess a soul within the forbidding exterior. I can think, analyse, judge, remember, and do everything you do, perhaps with greater subtlety and sense. I lack only the facility of speech. But if you could read my thoughts, you would be welcome to come in and listen to the story of my life.” (p 11-12)

After persuading the reader in the above manner, the narrator switches back to the past.

First, Raja talks about his days in the Mempi forest where he is the acknowledged master and king of animals. Raja cohabits with a tigress and begets a litter of four cubs. An unfortunate day dawns in his life when he loses his tigress and the cubs due to the cruelty of human beings.

When Raja strays into human habitation, Captain (Owner of the Grand Malgudi Circus) captures him. Holding a long whip in his hand, the Captain tames and trains Raja for his circus. Raja learns his lessons well and becomes the star attraction of the Malgudi Circus. Captain, gets overcome by greed, and allows a film to be made on Raja—who is not used to the gimmicks of the cinema world. In order to satisfy the whims and caprices of Madan, the film-maker, Captain uses a dreadful weapon—an electric metal gadget—and tries to subdue him into performing a special act, that is, to stand on his hind legs, for a film shoot. While trying to knock the dreadful weapon out of Captain’s hand, Raja, inadvertently, tears off Captain’s head, walks away from the place and enters a school. There Raja comes under the spell of a Yogi and follows him like a disciple.

Raja and his Master leave Malgudi and go to the serene Mempi Hills. There they pass their days in philosophical discussions till the tiger becomes old. Before attaining *Samadhi*, the Master sends the old and infirm Raja to a zoo and hopes to meet him again in the next life.

We are sure that you are now used to the idea of the transformation of a tiger as you have carefully read how Narayan carries his protagonist from the sub-human level to the supramundane level. Narayan indeed succeeds in transforming a fantasy into a spiritual experience.

As you must have noticed, various episodes—first the episode of jungle life, followed by that of circus life, then the episode of film shooting, followed by that of a serene and peaceful life with the Master—are woven meticulously into the plot. So the plot of the novel is episodic.

Check Your Progress 1

- A. i) How did the idea of writing a novel with a tiger as the chief character strike Narayan?

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.....
.....

ii) What impressions did you get when you read the novel first? (50 words)

.....
.....

iii) Who are the characters in the Panchatantra? (50 words)

.....
.....

iv) What are the *Jataka Tales* about? (2/3 sentences)

.....
.....
.....

v) Who is the narrator in *A Tiger for Malgudi*?

.....
.....

vi) Write a brief outline of *A Tiger for Malgudi*. (about 100 words)

.....
.....
.....

B. Match the items in column A with their meanings in Column B

A	B
i) leash	one's attitude about a particular matter
ii) incredible	leather strap for controlling
iii) enduring	able to persuade
iv) transformation	difficult to believe
v) endowed	a place where people live
vi) abound	difficult to describe because fine or delicate
vii) persuasive	threatening
viii) stance	continue in existence
ix) forbidding	possess naturally
x) subtlety	change of approach or function
xi) habitation	have in great number or quantity

3.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE

A title is part of the overall impression for the literary work. It sets the tone and creates an expectation. Many times authors choose titles for their works that are highly personal to the protagonist. Also, these titles often gain deeper meaning or change meaning as the narrative progresses and as the relationship between the characters and their environment becomes clearer. A good title is often intriguing and is a hook to draw the readers' attention. Thus the apt choice of title is critical

for all novels. The cyclic, co-evolutionary nature of the relationship between the title and body of the work is fascinating material for study, as the author's intentions become clear after examining this relationship.

On the surface, R.K. Narayan's novel *A Tiger for Malgudi* has a simple and straightforward title—that a tiger is needed for the town of Malgudi. But for what purpose is what makes the title intriguing and captures the attention of the readers. As the novel progresses, the deeper meaning of the title starts unfolding itself. We know Malgudi to be a fictional town—a creation of the author, that can represent any town from anywhere. But R.K. Narayan himself answers this question in the Introduction to this novel. He says that he chose a tiger as the lead character of his novel to show that creatures other than human beings can be a choice of a subject for fiction-writers. His protagonist is no ordinary creature but a spiritually evolved tiger with human sensibilities who can think and feel like human beings.

Titles can serve a variety of functions depending on the purpose of the work. They range from direct to ambiguous. Direct titles often give precise and accurate descriptions on the work they lead up to. You see this with biographies a lot (generally the title in some way relates to the subject the biography discusses) and more formal works such as research papers. This is also sometimes used with works such as poems with very brief titles that only point to the subject of the poem. On the other end of the spectrum, there are lots of novels which bear titles that are one-worded and hard to comprehend. This may be a single word that relates to the plot of the book, in which case the title functions as a hook drawing readers in, out of curiosity.

Whether the title is serious, comical, or just plain random, all titles serve one basic function – to draw in the reader. This can be out of an intellectual need or curious pursuit.

A title expresses the theme of a book in a poetic way. It is part of the overall impression for the literary work. In Narayan's earlier novel, *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, Vasu is metaphorically termed man-eater because, like a man-eater, he endangers the lives of the people of Malgudi. In Narayan's later novel, *A Tiger for Malgudi*, Raja, the tiger, after coming under the influence of the Master, behaves more humanly than human beings. He listens to the Master's discourses on *The Bhagvad Gita* and tries to elevate himself from a mundane level to a higher plane of existence. Here Raja symbolizes a soul striving for perfection.

Many times authors choose titles for their works that are highly personal to the protagonist. Also these titles gain deeper meaning or even change meaning as the narrative progresses and as the relationship between characters and their environment becomes clearer.

By giving the present title to the novel, Narayan seems to suggest that the people of Malgudi need an exemplary personality like Raja, the tiger, to emulate and then improve themselves. Further, while the Master and the tiger leave Malgudi, they come across a rioting mob engaged in a bloody strife. When the people notice the tiger, they disperse quickly, forgetting their quarrels with one another. Then the Master cries to them:

“If I find you fighting again, I'll be back to stop it. Take care; you should not *need a tiger to keep the peace.*” (p. 156)

In a similar situation elsewhere, the Master remarks:

“What our country needs most is a tiger for every village and town to keep people disciplined” (p.155).

Thus the apt choice of title is critical for all novels. The cyclic, co-evolutionary nature of the relationship between the title and body of the work is fascinating material for study. The author's intentions become clear after examining this relationship. By giving the present title, *Narayan*, perhaps, suggests that the people of Malgudi need a tiger like Raja to stop their mindless quarrels and to become disciplined. Don't you think that the title is justified?

3.4 THE NOVEL AS AN ALLEGORY

Allegory is a device which may be used in any literary form or genre. We may define an allegory as a narration in which the actors (characters) and action, and sometimes the setting as well, are described not only to make sense in themselves, but also to signify a correlated order of concepts, events, persons, or things. For example, Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a moral and religious allegory in a prose narrative. Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* is a religious, historical and political allegory in verse. Fable and parable are special types of allegory. We may define a fable as a short allegorical tale conveying a moral thesis or a principle of human behavior. The characters are animals who talk and sometimes, act like human beings.

Keeping before us these definitions of an allegory and a fable let us analyse the novel as a piece of allegorical writing. As soon as you start reading the novel, you come to know that the protagonist (Raja) is an animal and that he narrates the story. The story, at the surface level, reads as follows:

There is a tiger who reigns over a forest; he cohabits with a tigress and begets four cubs; he gets caught and then gets tamed and trained in a circus; he kills the circus manager inadvertently while trying to knock the dreadful metal weapon out of his hand and becomes free; he comes under the influence of a Yogi who helps him in raising himself to higher levels of existence.

But, if you deeply analyse the story, the spiritual transformation of the tiger, from a sub-human level (1st and 2nd stages of his life), through the transitional stage (3rd), culminating in a higher level of existence (4th stage), simultaneously juxtaposes the foibles of human nature and behavior. Let us, therefore, analyse the four stages in the life of Raja, the tiger, from a different angle.

In the forest (as described in Stages 1 and 2) Raja leads a carefree and yet dignified life. He never employs devious methods in attacking other animals. If it comes to a fight as it happens with the lions—Raja fights boldly.

In contrast, a number of human beings wielding spears brutally attack the helpless tiger (Raja) and this gesture makes the tiger exclaim, "I never know that human beings could be so devilish." (p. 27)

Later, Raja shows a lot of patience in understanding the ways and requirements of Captain, adjusts himself to the rigorous discipline of the circus life and succeeds in becoming the main attraction of the Grand Malgudi Circus. On the film set, while experiencing severe pain caused by Captain's whip and the electric shock, the disciplined and humane tiger, before raising his forepaw to knock the electric metal gadget, wants to scream loudly:

"Oh Captain, don't be foolhardy. Your life is in danger, go away, and leave me before any calamity befalls you." (p114)

In contrast, the behavior of the human beings, during the film shooting and after the death of Captain, smacks of indiscipline. When the tiger moves off from the

set and gets into town, much confusion and pandemonium follow. Finding human beings fleeing like a herd of deer, the tiger wants to assure them: “Don’t fear, I am not out to trouble you. I’m not out to kill....”

In the school scene, when even the teachers become panicky and indecisive about their course of action, Raja says:

Tigers attack only when they feel hungry, unlike human beings who kill one another without purpose or hunger.” (p.117)

As the Master and the tiger pass through many villages (as described in Stage 3), they come across different scenes. In some places, crowds that are normally noisy look intimidated and subdued at the sight of the tiger. This makes the Master remark:

“What our country needs most is a tiger for every village and town to keep people disciplined.” (p. 155)

At another place, they see people abandoning God’s chariot and running for safety. In some other place, a rioting mob, after seeing the tiger, disperses swiftly. This again makes the Master remark:

“If I find you fighting again, I’ll be back here to stop it...*you should not need a tiger to keep the peace.*”

Like in stage 1, the tiger’s behavior is in sharp contrast to that of human beings during stages 3 and 4. The tiger takes the guidance of the Master and disciplines himself by listening to the Master’s discourses and by voluntarily controlling his desires. As a result, the tiger raises himself to higher spiritual levels.

To recapitulate: the tiger stands for discipline and dignity where as human beings lack these qualities. That’s why the author suggests through the title that the people of Malgudi in particular and the people (of India) in general, need a tiger like Raja to teach them discipline and dignity.

Don’t you agree with me now that the prescribed novel is an allegory and particularly a fable?

There is another way also in which this novel can be seen as an allegory. In terms of new developments in postcolonial studies *A Tiger for Malgudi* is indeed an excellent example of contemporary postcolonial literature, particularly in the realistic way that it portrays India as both victim and oppressor, with a postcolonial bureaucracy that both resisted and was complicit with British imperialism.

The tiger’s life begins with freedom and sovereignty over its own dominion. It is at the top of the food chain, having no natural predators. The killing of its mate and cubs by humans can be compared to the similar atrocities inflicted by colonizers on India, which lead the tiger to become a rebel, engaging in guerrilla warfare, just as India did in resistance to the British. The tiger is deprived of its land and autonomy. Its circus training represents the imposition of British education on India, in which the tiger learns to abandon its own traditions and become subordinate to human society. The final liberation of the tiger is achieved not by violence, but by the *sanyasi*, a figure who represents Gandhi and the tradition of nonviolent resistance. The *sanyasi* also, crucially, understands the tiger’s language and traditions and respects them, and the eventual peace the tiger finds in the zoo, living his own life but in circumscribed harmony with humans, suggests the current

role of India in the world, as one power among many, with its own traditions and ways of being, that has the opportunity to benefit from some aspects of western culture while retaining its own independence and cultural traditions.

Check Your Progress 2

A. i) What is the significance of the title *A Tiger for Malgudi*? (about 100 words)

.....
.....
.....

ii) How is *a Tiger for Malgudi* an allegory (70-80 words)

.....
.....

B. Match the items in column A with their meanings in Column B:

A	B
i) deference	pains
ii) recalcitrants	sharp feelings of pain
iii) travails	the highest and the greatest
iv) litter	respect
v) inadvertently	group of animals born to the same mother at the same time
vi) spell	resisting authority or discipline
vii) pangs	actions done thoughtlessly
viii) sublime	words supposed to have magic power.

3.5 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit we discussed various elements that make up a novel . We spoke about the plot of the novel as well the title and its significance. We also discussed the novel as being an allegory. Raja’s character develops through four stages. The title of the novel is justifiable: the undisciplined people of Malgudi need a disciplined personality to emulate. And apart from the surface meaning, the novel can also be read as an allegory.

You must have gathered from this Unit that Narayan has purposely picked up a tiger as the main character of the novel in order to banish the fallacy that human beings are superior to animals. According to him, with the right approach, we could expect the same response from a tiger as from any normal human being despite their differing appearances.

It takes a ring-master (Captain) to tame and train the tiger(Raja), and a guru (The Master) to uplift him spiritually. Similarly, a tiger like Raja is needed for Malgudi to discipline its indisciplined and rowdy people and to help them to improve

themselves by shedding their hatred to live peacefully. The title of the novel thus appears to be apt and justifiable.

Through his protagonist, Raja—a tiger who thinks and feels like a human being—Narayan brings out a contrast between the spiritually evolving tiger and the undignified and greedy human beings. The allegorical narration is thus a comment on human behavior from first to last.

3.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- A. i) He got the idea when he saw a hermit moving around with a tiger during the Kumbh Mela.
- ii) When I first read this novel I thought the main theme of the novel—the spiritual transformation of Raja—was unbelievable. I asked myself “Is not the novelist asking me to believe too much?” (You can provide your own first impression here)
- iii) The dramatis personae in the *Panchatantra* are animals like a lion, a bull, a monkey, etc.
- iv) *The Jataka Tales* are about the successive births of Bodhisattva.
- v) Raja, the tiger, is the narrator.
- vi) You’ll have to write this in your own words.

- | A | B |
|--------------------|--|
| i) leash | - leather strap for controlling |
| ii) incredible | - difficult to believe |
| iii) enduring | - continue in existence |
| iv) transformation | - change of approach or function |
| v) endowed | - possess naturally |
| vi) abound | - have in great number or quality |
| vii) persuasive | - able to persuade |
| viii) stance | - one’s attitude about a particular matter |
| ix) forbidding | - threatening |
| x) subtlety | - difficult to describe because fine or delicate |
| xi) habitation | - a place where people live. |

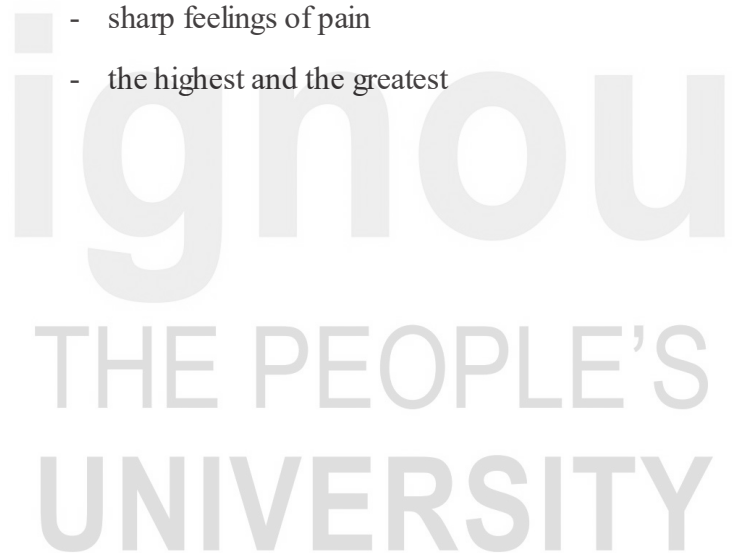
Check Your Progress 2

- A. i) The title suggests that the people of Malgudi need an exemplary personality like the tiger Raja to emulate, so that they can improve themselves. Also their fear of the tiger makes them forget their quarrels. Therefore, Narayan seems to suggest through his title that human beings **need** someone in authority to keep them disciplined.

A Tiger for Malgudi

ii) It is an allegory because the novel functions on two levels – a surface meaning and a deeper meaning. On the surface it is the story of Raja, a tiger and his journey from birth to death. But at the same time the spiritually evolving tiger's journey can be seen as a contrast to the undignified and greedy human beings. Therefore it is an allegorical narration. It can also be read as an allegory in the light of postcolonial discourse.

- B.
- i) deference - respect
 - ii) recalcitrant - resisting authority or discipline
 - iii) travails - pains
 - iv) litter - a group of animals born to the same mother at the same time
 - v) inadvertently - actions done thoughtlessly
 - vi) spell - words supposed to have magic power
 - vii) pangs - sharp feelings of pain
 - viii) sublime - the highest and the greatest



UNIT 4 *A TIGER FOR MALGUDI*: STYLE AND CHARACTERIZATION

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Narayan's Prose Style
 - 4.2.1 His Indianness
 - 4.2.2 Narrative Techniques
 - 4.2.3 Language
 - 4.2.4 Satire, Irony, and Humour
- 4.3 Characterization: Major Characters
 - 4.3.1 Raja the Tiger
 - 4.3.2 Captain
 - 4.3.3 The Master
- 4.4 Minor Characters
 - 4.4.1 Rita
 - 4.4.2 Madan
- 4.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit we will take up R.K.Narayan's style and his art of characterization. After reading this Unit you will be able to understand Narayan's narrative technique, his language and the elements of satire, irony and humour present in the novel. You will also be able to analyse the major characters in the novel as well as explain the role of the minor characters.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Creative writers make use of a variety of literary devices and techniques. These are intended to embellish the language; to further the meaning of a passage or the argument of the author; or to produce certain artistic effects. In this unit we shall discuss some of the devices and techniques used by Narayan in writing the novel, *A Tiger for Malgudi*.

Further, in a novel, characters are persons endowed with qualities that are expressed in what they say and what they do. While delineating the characters, the author may present his/her characters talking and acting and leave the reader to infer the motives and dispositions that lie behind the talk and action of the characters. This technique is called 'showing'. Or the author himself or herself may intervene in order to describe and evaluate the motive and dispositions of the characters. This technique is called 'telling'. In this novel, Narayan uses the technique of 'showing'. In this unit, we shall also analyse three major characters and two minor characters. As you know, the three major characters are Raja the tiger, Captain and the Master. Among the minor characters are Rita and Madan.

4.2 NARAYAN'S PROSE STYLE

In this section, we shall analyse the various aspects of Narayan's prose style as reflected in *A Tiger for Malgudi*. William Walsh, a distinguished critic, says of Narayan:

“His writing is a distinctive blend of western technique and Eastern material, and he has succeeded in a remarkable way in making an Indian sensibility at home in English art.”

Let us first look at Narayan's 'Indianness.'

4.2.1 His Indianness

While reading the novel, you must have noticed the Indianness of Narayan with regard to the themes, motifs, etc. Narayan's work is deeply rooted in the Indian mode of living. So let's first study the Indianness in Narayan's style:

The main theme of the novel—the transformation of a tiger—is typically Indian. (As you know, Indians in general believe in the existence of the soul and its evolution.) The motif of a Guru or Yogi leading his disciple to higher levels is also Indian. In the present novel, Raja, the tiger, raises himself to the higher levels with the help of a Yogi. There are many references to Indian concepts and scriptures like Karma, the Bhagvad Gita, etc. Fantasy is always present in traditional Indian epics and stories like *The Ramayan*, *The Mahabharata*, *The Panchatantra* and *The Jataka Tales*. (Fantasy may be defined as something which is hardly possible in life.) Despite the realistic descriptions of the forest life, the circus life, and the cinema shooting scenes, fantastic elements like a tiger possessing a soul and who follows the discourses of a Yogi and elevates himself, are woven into the fabric of the novel. Narayan, sometimes, uses Indian English expressions such as “all your blessing and cooperation”.

4.2.2 Narrative Techniques

In the novel, Raja, the protagonist, tells his story to the visitors at the zoo. So the mode of narration is autobiographical. The narrator (Raja) directly appeals to the visitors that he possesses a soul within the forbidding exterior, and welcomes them to come in and listen to the story of his life. Then he switches back to the past and narrates the story in the first person singular ('I'). The narration moves forward chronologically, each succeeding episode or event being linked with the previous one. There is no looking backward or forward and no probing of the subconscious or the unconscious. In the narration, most of the scenes are 'shown'.

4.2.3 Language

Narayan's language is simple and readable. As V.Y.Kantak says, “it can always subtly convey the flavour of Indian speech in an Indian setting without any of the awkwardness of translation. He does not attempt to find words equivalent to that delicious Indian vocabulary of abuse, of bawdry, of endearment”. This statement is amply testified by the description of the Collector's office scene, the school scene, and the domestic squabbles between Captain and his wife. Indeed, as William Walsh says, “Narayan's language is beautifully adapted to communicate...an Indian sensibility.”

4.2.4 Satire, Irony, and Humour

Let us now discuss another three elements of Narayan's style: Satire, Irony, and Humour, (Remember: these three elements are interrelated). Talking about Narayan's work, Walter Allen says: "What distinguishes his work is a seemingly all-embracing, compassionate acceptance of the absurdities, pathos, frustrations...of everyday life". With the help of satire, irony and humour, Narayan translates human qualities into his writing. Let us examine the way he does it:

Satire: It is the art of diminishing a subject by making it appear ridiculous. In Narayan's work, satire occurs in a certain character, situation, or passage of commentary on some aspect of human nature. Human beings think that they are superior and that animals are inferior. But Raja, the tiger, passes the following satirical comments on human nature:

"Human beings have their own theories, and it is always amusing to hear them think about us. Such ignorance and self-assurance!"

"For one used to the grand silence of the jungle, the noisy nature of humanity was distressing."

"Tigers attack only when they feel hungry unlike human beings who slaughter one another without purpose or hunger."

The following are some satirical comments made by the Master:

"Never use the words beast or brute. They are ugly words coined by man in his arrogance. Human beings think all other creatures are 'brutes', awful word."

"He is no brute...no more than any of you here."

If we look at the situation in the scene at the Collector's office, we notice that Narayan satirises the behavior of the officials who do not take prompt action but insist on official formalities. This scene is replete with satirical remarks. The following piece is a sample:

"The Collector observed them for a moment and said, 'Have you brought your petition in writing?' They looked terrified, having no notion of the world of letters. The Collector felt compassionate and said, '*I can't take action unless there is a written petition. Go to a petition writer...Get the petition on a stamp paper of one rupee and fifty paise and leave it with my clerk at the office. Then I'll fix a date for inspection and take action.*'"

In the school scene also, there are satirical remarks on the overemphasis on official formalities. While discussing the ways to get rid of the tiger, some teachers remark: "We can't buy even a cane except through the D.P.I's sanction." (p.127)

On the rampant corruption in government offices and on corrupt officials, Narayan makes his characters offer satirical comments as follows: "Every time we come, we bring him some offering: cucumbers or sugarcane, pumpkin, melon, or anything else. Never see him bare-handed, and yet he is unhelpful."

In the school scene, the Chairman of the local chapter of the Save Tiger Project—who first does not allow Mr. Alphonse to shoot the tiger—declares the tiger a man-eater and gives written permission to Mr. Alphonse after accepting a substantial bribe from the latter.

From the above instances you can see that Narayan’s satire is mild, and not bitter.

Irony: It is a statement in which the literal meaning of a word or statement is the opposite of that intended. Dramatic irony involves a situation in which the audience shares with the author the knowledge of which the character concerned is ignorant. When Captain proposes a trapeze act through a ring of fire, his wife Rita opposes it and says:

“I’m not prepared to spare any of my girls or set fire to myself just to please your fancy. I’m not an orthodox wife preparing for *sati*.” (p. 58) Ironically, Rita commits suicide (*Sati*) after her husband’s death.

There is another ironic situation on the film set. Captain first refuses to use the whip or electric metal gadget on the tiger whom he loves but the same Captain, having been overcome by greed for money, uses the electric gadget on the tiger.

Humour: It is defined as the amused perception of the incongruities of life and the artistic expressions of such perception. The following conversations between Captain and his wife are humorous:

“All our animals...are in excellent condition”, he boasted at breakfast. “Yes” said his wife, “they are tended better than your family”.

“You must say something unpleasant—otherwise you are never happy.”

“Your beloved animals may also have something to say if they could speak.”

“While your wit and eloquence are reserved only for the tiger and the rest, I suppose.”

“Yes, they need introduction not you: why are you always talking like this? Something wrong with our horoscopes...” “Your horoscope and the tiger’s seem to be better matched,” She would say. (p. 68)

You must have noticed that satire, irony, and humour are inter-related: Sometimes irony is present in satire and humour is present in satirical comments and ironical situations.

Check Your Progress 1

A. i) Write briefly about the Indianness of Narayan’s style (about 50 words).

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ii) What is the mode of narration used by the author in this novel?

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iii) 'Narayan's satire is mild, and not bitter.' Justify this statement by citing examples from *A Tiger for Malgudi*.

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iv) What is irony? Cite two ironical situations from *A Tiger for Malgudi*?

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v) Describe one humorous incident from the present novel (which is not referred to by us) in 100 words.

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.....

B. Match the items in column A with their meanings in column B.

A	B
i) devious	fast, prompt
ii) wield	strict
iii) rigorous	not straightforward
iv) intimidate	have and use
v) swift	repeat
vi) recapitulate	frighten

4.3 CHARACTERISATION: MAJOR CHARACTERS

A novel's success lies in part in the extent to which the writer has been able to make his/her characters come alive. Let us now discuss some of the major characters in *A Tiger for Malgudi*.

4.3.1 Raja, The Tiger

The title of the novel, as you know, refers to a tiger. The narrator of the story is the tiger; and the novel is based on the story of the tiger's life. So we can say that Raja, the tiger, is the protagonist of the novel.

If you have read the novel carefully, you must have noticed that there are four distinct stages in the life of Raja. Let us analyse the growth of Raja's character through a discussion of these four stages:

Stage 1

During this period, Raja has fear of none, strikes terror in others, and considers himself “the Lord of the Jungle”. He always expects the other animals to show deference to him and to withdraw from his path. He uses the earliest opportunity to punish the recalcitrants. Thus, the youthful vigour, pride, and carefree behavior of Raja are described in the first stage of his life.

Stage 2

Youthful Raja comes across a tigress one day; he fiercely fights with her first, loves her later and begets a litter of four cubs. Raja lives happily with his family making a cave his home till the day the tigress and the cubs are shot dead by human beings. After losing his family, Raja strays into human habitation and carries out regular raids for cattle till the day he is captured by Captain, the proprietor of the “Grand Malgudi Circus”. The intelligent tiger learns the tricks of the circus and becomes its main attraction. The tiger, thus wins the admiration of Captain.

Later, Madan, a film producer, plans to make a film on Raja and Captain agrees to lend the tiger for the shooting of the film. On the film set when the pain inflicted by the electric metal gadget becomes unbearable, the loyal tiger warns Captain to keep himself away from him. But, as the greedy Captain persists in subduing the tiger with the dreadful weapon to perform the act of standing on his hind legs, the tiger kills him in an act of self defense, while trying to knock the metal out of his hand.

Thus the major events in the life of the tiger during Stage 2 are: the happiness of family life, the pangs of separation from his family, the trials and travails of day-to-day existence for making a living, etc. This phase also highlights the intelligence, the dignity, and the loyalty of Raja.

Stage 3

It is during this period that the spiritual transformation of Raja takes place: Unaware of the spiritual powers of the Yogi, the ferocious tiger tries to resist his influence but later surrenders himself completely and follows him like a disciple. The Yogi, in his turn, does not allow the people to call the tiger “a brute”, treats him as an equal and takes him out of Malgudi. The Yogi (or the Master, as Raja calls him) and the disciple (Raja) make the forest at the foot of Mempi range their home.

Having recognized a kindred soul in Raja, the Master discusses difficult concepts like God, Karma, etc. with him and gives discourses on *the Bhagavad Gita*. The presence of the Master and the discourses on philosophical matters transform the tiger slowly. The transformation is described by Narayan convincingly:

“Nowadays the keenness of my hunger was all gone, and I slipped away into the jungle, not too often, only when I felt I could not stand hunger anymore”. (p.158)

Thus the main events in the life of the tiger during stage 3 are: to be in the company of a noble person; to listen to philosophical discourses; and to meditate on supramundane matters. This phase also highlights the discipline, the receptiveness, and the concentration of Raja:

Stage 4

During this period, the tiger’s spiritual evolution is described in the following words:

“*This phase of life I found elevating: the change churning internally was still felt by me.*”

Further,

“One morning I was lying at the feet of my Master; he was sitting in meditation...at such moments a profound silence prevailed; and the *sublime state* to which he had raised his mind carried mine also along.” (p.165)

After Raja becomes old, the Master entrusts him to the authorities of a zoo and parts company with him for attaining *Samadhi*. The Master, before taking leave, predicts that Raja will make hundreds of visitors to the zoo happy. During stage 4, Raja reaches a sublime state with the help of the Master.

To recapitulate: In stage 1, Raja is ferocious and proud; in stage 2, his intelligence, discipline and loyalty are high-lighted; in stage 3, he is receptive to higher ideals and consciously makes efforts to elevate himself; in stage 4; he attains humane qualities.

4.3.2 Captain

Captain hails from Abu Lane in Malgudi town. By dint of hard work he rises to the ownership of the “Grand Malgudi Circus”. He is diligent, persevering and innovative. He is meticulous in attending to the needs of every animal and is efficient in managing the circus troupe consisting of hundreds of men, women, and animals. Though he is strict during the training period, he has deep concern for his animals and regulates the hours of work and rest for them.

Captain has special consideration for Raja as the latter is the main attraction of the “Grand Malgudi Circus”. His consideration for the tiger’s dignity is so great that he first refuses to pull out Raja’s claws or to use electric shocks to subdue Raja while the film shooting is on. But, overpowered by greed for money, Captain finally uses the electric weapon and gets killed by the tiger. It is not that the Captain is entirely devoid of feelings but his feelings are subordinated to his business interests.

To recapitulate: Captain is diligent and innovative. He is meticulous in handling his circus troupe. He has special consideration for the dignity of Raja. His greed for money finally brings him death.

4.3.3 The Master

The Master is another fascinating character in this novel. In his early life, the Master, like any ordinary man, studies in a college, gets a job, marries, begets children, prospers, and becomes respectable. But, one day, like the Buddha, he leaves everything behind, and renounces the world because of ‘an inner compulsion’. He attains the spiritual level of a *Sanyasi*. He attains serenity and wisdom through Yoga and meditation. The Master recognizes a kindred soul in Raja, the tiger, and helps the latter to transform himself—from the subhuman level to the supramundane level.

Further, the Master, despite his attainments, does not allow people to take “dust from his feet.” He declares: “You must prostrate only before God. You should seek only God’s darshan....the same god resides within all of us.”

The Master's words are always full of wisdom. Before handing over Raja to the zoo authorities, he tells him: "No relationship, human or other, or any association of any kind could last forever. Separation is the law of life right from the mother's womb. One has to accept it if one has to live in God's plans." (p 174)

4.4 MINOR CHARACTERS

Let us now turn our attention to the minor characters in the novel. Even though their role may be limited within the scheme of things, yet Narayan has made them come alive.

4.4.1 Rita

Rita, a minor character in the novel, is the head of the trapeze team in her husband's "Grand Malgudi Circus". She is very skilful in doing the trapeze act. But at home, she is a nagging wife. She often indulges in altercations with her husband and teases him for treating the animals better than his family. The following piece serves as a sample:

"She muttered, 'He has lost all sense of humour...*only animals seem to be fit for his company.*'

He told himself, 'Women are impossible, worse than twenty untamed jungle creatures on one's hand at a time.'

If we judge merely by these conversations, we are likely to conclude that Rita and her husband do not love each other. But actually, Rita is a devoted wife who feels uneasy about her husband's safety whenever he is out with the tiger. Finally when her husband dies, she commits suicide. Thus her death reveals her intense love for her husband.

4.4.2 Madan

Madan is a typical representative of his tribe of greedy, unscrupulous pragmatic film producers. Having been impressed by the tiger's performance in the circus, Madan, entertains the idea of making a film on the tiger and a giant wrestler. He behaves obsequiously till he gets the permission from Captain to use the tiger in his film. Having bought over Captain with his money, he dictates terms to him. He does not bother about the dignity of the tiger and does not hesitate to ask Captain to use an electric shock on the tiger, to make him perform the act of standing on his hind legs. His unscrupulousness is responsible for the untoward situation in which Captain gets killed.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Attempt a character sketch of Rita. (about 50 words)

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- 2) Who is Madan? How does he contribute to the development of the plot of the novel? (about 50 words)

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4.5 LET US SUM UP

From this Unit, you must have gathered how R.K. Narayan builds up the story of his novel with a skilful use of the narrative technique of “showing”, with which he makes all his major and minor characters reveal themselves through their talk and actions. At the same time, he makes the story very interesting by injecting a lot of humour, satire and irony into the various situations and episodes. The felicity with which he uses the language makes his style racy, yet simple and immensely readable. Narayan’s language is simple and readable. His Indianness is clearly reflected in his work. The narrator uses the first person singular (I) and the narration moves forward once the narrator switches back to the story of his past. The narration is replete with satire, irony, and humour. The various major and minor characters have been discussed and their role in the novel has been delineated.

4.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- A. i) Hints: The Indian belief in the existence of the soul— a guru leading his disciple to attain higher levels – mention of Indian concepts and scriptures—fantasy, like a tiger possessing a soul etc.
- ii) Narayan makes his protagonist, the tiger, tell his story to the zoo visitors, in first person singular ‘I’, and the narration moves forward chronologically. Thus the mode of narration is autobiographical.
- iii) By making his characters do the talking and by not offering any value judgements—Narayan succeeds in writing in a satirical style that is mild and not bitter.
- iv) Refer to the section on irony under Section 4.2.4
- v) Hints: Headmaster’s plight on seeing the tiger enter his room, Jaggu’s behavior on the day of the film shoot; Alphonse’s actions as he prepares to kill the tiger.
- B. i) devious - not straightforward
- ii) wield - have and use
- iii) rigorous - strict
- iv) intimidate - frighten
- v) swift - fast, prompt
- vi) recapitulate - repeat

Check Your Progress 2

- i) Hints: Reeta’s abilities as a trapeze artist, her relationship with her husband.
- ii) Hints: Film producer and director—plans to make a film with Raja— his behavior on the film set that eventually drives Raja from there to Malgudi.

NOTES

