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A Survey Course in 20th Century Canadian Literature

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By: Aditya Nandwani



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CANADIAN LITERATURE**

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**Sample Preview
of the
Solved
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Papers**

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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2024

(Solved)

A SURVEY COURSE IN 20TH CENTURY CANADIAN LITERATURE

M.E.G.-12

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any five questions. Each questions carries equal marks.

Q. 1. “Nature became a pervasive metaphor in the early phase of Cardian Writing.” Discuss.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 42, Q. No. 2.

Q. 2. What makes Walcott’s poetry a little more complex and hybridized than the poetry of most Canadian poets?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 56, Q. No. 1.

Q. 3. “Surfacing is a novel which deals with feminism and Anti-Americanism.” Discuss.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 77, ‘Summary’ and Chapter-12, Page No. 85, Q. No.2.

Also Add: Atwood is true to her character in a way that a novelist must be. At the very least Atwood depicts her character as the story requires; more broadly, through her protagonist, she presents us all as we are and probably must be in an imperfect. World, balanced precariously between the fall and the final Day of Judgement – constrained by the limitations of psychological and social influences, yet envisioning the possibility of something better.

Paul's wooden barometer, which features a wooden man and woman inside, becomes an unfortunately accurate emblem of marriage for the narrator. The narrator's shifting assessment of the barometer traces her shifting attitudes toward marriage. Initially, the narrator views the barometer couple as representative of a simplistic and even empty marriage and she compares them to Paul and Madame. She mentions how Paul and Madame even look wooden. The narrator later compares the barometer couple to Anna and David in that the wooden couple likes Anna and David's happiness, is not real. The narrator also thinks of the barometer in relation to her parents. She compares the

image of the barometer with the image of her mother and father sawing a piece of birch. The image of the birch is evocative because the narrator associates birches with unspoiled nature. The implication is that the barometer represents an unattainable, unrealistic version of love, whereas her parents possess true love.

The hanged heron at the portage represents the American destruction of nature. The narrator obsesses over the senselessness of its slaughter, especially that it was hanged and not buried. The heron's death emphasizes that the narrator defines someone as American based on his or her actions. She condemns any act of senseless violence or waste as distinctly American. That the bird is killed with a bullet and hanged using a nylon rope emphasizes the subversion of nature to technology. Also, the narrator thinks of the hanged bird as a Christ-like sacrifice, which reflects Christian ideology. By using Christian ideas to describe nature, the narrator emphasizes her near-religious reverence for nature. The narrator also compares herself to the heron during her madness, when she worries that the search party will hang her by the feet. By associating the narrator with the hanged heron, Atwood associates the way Americans destroy nature with the way men control women.

Q. 4. Comment on the thematic side of “The Tin Flute”.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-15, Page No. 100, Q. No. 2.

Q. 5. Write an essay on the postmodernist in The English Patient.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-18, Page No. 112, Q. No. 3.

Q. 6. Can you term “Sunday Afternoon” as a short story written from a feminist point of view. Discuss.

Ans. The story “*Sunday Afternoon*” is about the process of growing up of a girl and the problems she faces in an unequal world. It is written from a female perspective. It focuses on the vulnerability and self-awakening of the maid, who is at the lower rung of the social ladder. She leads a mechanical life, without any hope of a better future. She is not a trained maid and often finds herself a misfit in the job. People would eat and drink at the *Sunday Afternoon* party, and as a result would become rockless. Alva would look at them with a feeling of unreality. When she compared this world with her own, she also felt a bit out of touch with reality. The difference between male and female attitudes is brought to the fore when Alva, to impress Mr. Gannett, asks him to take out “*King Lear*” for her. She knew that a man would be more impressed by “*King Lear*” than a woman, but nothing would make a difference to Mrs. Gannett; for her, a maid was just a maid, nothing more. Suddenly everything is changed. Mrs. Gannett’s cousin came in the kitchen and kissed her on the mouth. He

treats her as a woman—not as a maid. She feels grateful and confident. The barrier between the higher echelons of society and the lower strata has been eclipsed. After all, there was not much difference between her and them. At the basic instinct level, at the level of sex, they were equal. This small act leads to a sea change in her attitude. She felt wanted and accepted, exhilarated and excited. But Murno introduces an element of doubt at the end - has she really been accepted, or is it another example of man using a woman as a plaything.

Q. 7. “Laws grind the poor, the rich rule them.” Comment this statement with reference to ‘The Ecstasy of Rita Joe.’

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-27, Page No. 171, Q. No. 1 and Q. No. 2.

Q. 8. Write an essay on Northrop Frye’s contribution to Canadian Literary criticism.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-30, Page No. 195, Q. No. 2 and Q. No. 3.



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A SURVEY COURSE IN 20 TH CENTURY CANADIAN LITERATURE

CONTEXT OF CANADIAN WRITING

1

Land and People

INTRODUCTION

Canada, which occupies the top half of the North American continent, is the second-largest country in the world. With an area of 99, 70,610 square kilometers, it stretches over 5,500 kilometers from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific and over 4,600 kilometers from the northern tip of Ellesmere Island to the United States border. It spans across six time zones and consists of at least six major geographical regions including the Atlantic and Gulf Region, the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence Lowlands, the Canadian Shield, the Interior Plains, the Western Cordillera, and the North. Its population is around 35 millions. The growth rate of population is as low as less than 1% since the census of 1996.

This vast country is not, of course, fully inhabited 89 percent of the land has no permanent population. In sharp contrast are the urban areas, where nearly 80 percent of Canadians live in large centers located within 300 kilometers of the southern border. Sixty percent of the population is concentrated in a relatively small area in a relatively smaller area in the extreme southern parts of the provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

SUMMARY

Canada's shape on the map and patterns of settlement reflect the past 400 years of its history. But long before what might be called the "European discovery" of Canada in the sixteenth century, Europeans knew of its existence. About the year 1000

A.D Scandinavians were felling timber on the east coast; in the fifteenth century, English, French, Spanish and Portuguese were fishing off the coast of Newfoundland.

Whether or not these early European visitors made contact with what was probably a small and scattered native population is not known. The Inuit, called Eskimo by the Europeans, had taken perhaps some 5000 years to cross the desert of ice from west to east as far as Greenland, but confined themselves to the far north. A number of Indian groups were scattered throughout the rest of the country.

Historically, a European consciousness of Canada began to form by the end of the fifteenth century. Heading an English expedition, John Cabot claimed Newfoundland and the east coast of Canada in the name of King Henry VII of England in 1497. However, it was Jacques Cartier from St. Malo, France who in 1534 sailed up the St. Lawrence River as far as the Indian village of Hochelaga, the present site of Montreal. While he failed to find the passage to Asia he was seeking, he opened the interior of Canada to French for traders and colonizers.

The English and French became rivals in the gradual conquest of those parts of North America not claimed by the Spanish. In 1608, Samuel de Champlain established his "habitation" in what is now Quebec City, to lay the roots of French Canada. In 1610, Henry Hudson gave his name to the huge bay in northern Canada. From here the Hudson's Bay Company of

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"adventurers of England" would later begin a vigorous competition with the French for control of the fur trade with the Indians. While the English moved north and south, the French followed the St. Lawrence River westward to reach the Great Lakes and from there to inland plains and the Mississippi Valley.

Throughout the seventeenth century the French settled the banks of the St. Lawrence and to a lesser extent the "Acadia" of Canada's eastern coast, while the English established the larger and more flourishing settlements in their New England colonies and Virginia. The North American phase of the eighteenth century struggle between English and French culminated in the fall of Quebec in 1759 and the surrender of Canada to the British Crown.

The Declaration of Independence by the American colonies in 1776 led to the creation of the United States of America. Many American colonists, who remained loyal to the British Crown, made their way to settle Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and present day southern Ontario and to lay the base of English-speaking Canada.

It was nearly another 100 years before the political geography of Canada roughly approached its present form. Invasions of Canada ended with the war of 1812-14 between Britain and the United States. In 1846 the boundary between the United States and the British territories was extended westward along the 49th parallel to the Pacific. The emergence of the powerful northern states as victors in the American Civil War seemed again to pose a threat to the British colonies. Spurred by this and other internal factors, three colonies, Canada (Quebec and Ontario), New Brunswick and Nova Scotia joined in a "Confederation" or a federal union in 1867. Three years later the British government ceded to the fledgling country the huge western and northern territories of the Hudson's Bay Company. From these were created the provinces of Manitoba (1870), Saskatchewan and Alberta (1905), and the northern territories. In 1871, British Island joined in 1873. Further immigration from the United States, and other European Countries filled the fertile lands of the west. In 1949, the Newfoundland became the tenth province.

For Canadians North is much more than just a direction as for the rest of the world. For them it is the ultimate reflection of how they view themselves in relation to the land. According to famous Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood, north is at the back of

Canadian minds, always. Most of the Canadians see themselves as northerners in a northern country. The national anthem of Canada sings the praise the Canada. To perceive "Nordicity" as the ultimate source of strength and freedom as highlighted in the national anthem of Canada may be called the Canadian Imaginary. It may be expressed as an illusion, a myth or a Utopia in the Canadian Imagination.

North is also viewed as an isolated, desolated place where there is nothing but snow, ice and the Polar Bears. It is seen as a weird and terrible land or a "while hell" a howling wasteland which the God gave to the Cain. To view north as a mere flat and formless piece of land which is full of nothing but ice and snow is an "The Arctic of the mind". Such a view of the north has been completely rejected by the national anthem of Canada, which in fact celebrates the true spirit of the north.

There is a popular myth that the Northern hero is a product of colonialism, which is perhaps the strongest myth about Canada. The white Canadian hero is the one who conquers the land first and then attempts to bring together the Native in the Canadian nation only after colonizing his own mind completely. Even this view of the north like the previous one is no more popular.

To view north as a Utopia is a dream which is seen with open eyes by Canadian writers like Gabrielle Roy, Margaret Atwood, and Henry Kreisel and Yves Theriault. In their view north is only the place in this Western World where a man can pursue his dreams where he can hope to be the master of his own will. This Utopian dream is in direct opposition of the intrusion of America into Canada.

There is no single factor that can determine the character of a nation but in the case of Canada we can not say so. Winter's dominance and north is so well symbolized in the Canadian literature and art that Geography or nature is not just in the background it is much more than a character itself in the Canadian fiction. An eminent Canadian historian W. L Morion said that because of its origin in the northern frontier, Canadian life to this day is marked by a northern quality. There is an imaginary line that marks the frontier from the farmstead, the wilderness from the base land and the hinterland from the metropolis and this line runs across every Canadian psyche. This very psychology of Nordicity and Frontiers has always dominated the Canadian art and literature. Margaret Atwood has best captured this view of Canada in her novel Surfacing.

Apart from the huge geography of Canada, the climate of Canada also helps us in defining their identity. It is a place where we have six months of severe cold i.e. winters which is then followed by six months of bad shedding. It gets cold even in big cities. Cities like Regina have also recorded temperatures as low as -50 degree Celsius. Only the Mongolian capital city of Ulaanbaatar is colder as a capital than Ottawa. Though there are climatic variations in Canada, which range from permanently frozen ice caps of the north of the 70th parallel to the lush vegetation of British Columbia's west coast still we can enjoy four different seasons in Canada specifically in areas that are more populated i.e. the regions that lie along the US border. In summers the temperature during the day time may rise up to 35 degree Celsius and can go even higher but at the same it can go as low as -25 degree Celsius in winters which not seen as something uncommon. One can observe moderate climate during spring and autumn season. With the passage of time the natives have adapted themselves according to the weather of Canada. They have installed heating systems in houses cars and even in public transportation system to save themselves from the extreme cold winters of Canada.

For almost a millennia Canada was inhabited by First Nations (aboriginal). The history of Canada has evolved from a group of European colonies into an officially bilingual (English and French), multicultural federation, having peacefully obtained sovereignty from its last colonial possessor, the United Kingdom. France sent the first large group of settlers in the 17th century, but Canada came to be dominated by the British until the country attained full independence in the 20th century. Its history has been affected by its inhabitants, its geography, and its relations with the outside world.

There are several reports of contact made before Christopher Columbus between the first peoples and those from other continents. The case of Viking contact is supported by the remains of a Viking settlement in L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland. This may well have been the place Icelandic Norseman Leifur Eiriksson referred to as Vinland around 1000 AD.

The first contact with the Europeans was disastrous for the first peoples. Explorers and traders brought European diseases, such as smallpox, which killed off entire villages. Relations varied between the settlers and the Natives. The French befriended several

Algonquin nations, including the Huron peoples and nations of the Wabanaki Confederacy, and entered into a mutually beneficial trading relationship with them. The Iroquois, however, became dedicated opponents of the French, and warfare between the two was unrelenting, especially as the British armed the Iroquois in an effort to weaken the French.

The first agricultural settlements were located around the French settlement of Port Royal in what is now Nova Scotia. The population of Acadians, as this group became known, reached 5,000 by 1713.

After Champlain's founding of Quebec City in 1608, it became the capital of New France. The coastal communities were based upon the cod fishery, and the economy along the St. Lawrence River was based on farming. French voyageurs travelled deep into the hinterlands (of what is today Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba) trading guns, gunpowder, cloth, knives, and kettles for beaver furs. The fur trade only encouraged a small population, however, as minimal labour was required. Encouraging settlement was difficult, and while some immigration did occur, by 1759 New France only had a population of some 65,000.

Britain and France repeatedly went to war in the 17th and 18th centuries and made their colonial empires into battlefields. Numerous naval battles were fought in the West Indies; the main land battles were fought in and around Canada. The first areas won by the British were the Maritime Provinces. After Queen Anne's War, Nova Scotia, other than Cape Breton, was ceded to the British by the Treaty of Utrecht. This gave Britain control over thousands of French-speaking Acadians. Not trusting these new subjects, who repeatedly proclaimed their neutrality, the British first tried to dilute their numbers by bringing in Protestant settlers from Europe. Finally the British ordered the Great Upheaval of 1755, deporting about 12,000 Acadians to destinations throughout their North American holdings. Many settled in southern Louisiana, creating the Cajun culture there. Some Acadians managed to hide and others eventually returned to Nova Scotia, but they were far outnumbered by a new migration of Yankees from New England who transformed Nova Scotia.

During King George's War, British colonial forces captured the French stronghold of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, but this gain was returned to France under the 1748 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.

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Canada was also an important battlefield in the Seven Years' War, during which Great Britain gained control of Quebec City after the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759, and Montreal in 1760.

With the end of the Seven Years' War and the signing of the Treaty of Paris on February 10, 1763, France ceded almost all of its territory in North America. The new British rulers left alone much of the religious, political and social culture of the French-speaking habitants. Violent conflict continued during the next century, leading Canada into the War of 1812 and a pair of Rebellions in 1837.

Canada's involvement in the Second World War began when Canada declared war on Germany on September 10, 1939, one week after Britain. Canadian forces were involved in the failed defence of Hong Kong, the Dieppe Raid in August 1942, the Allied invasion of Italy, and the Battle of Normandy. Of a population of approximately 11.5 million, 1.1 million Canadians served in the armed forces in the Second World War. Many thousands more served in the merchant marines. In all, more than 45,000 gave their lives, and another 55,000 were wounded. Countless others shared the suffering and hardship of war. By the end of the war, Canada had, temporarily at least, become a significant military power. However, the Big Three paid little attention to Canada.

Canada's foreign policy during the Cold War was closely tied to that of the U.S., which was demonstrated by membership in NATO, sending combat troops into the Korean War, and establishing a joint air defence system (NORAD) with the U.S.

In the 1960s, a Quiet Revolution took place in Quebec, overthrowing the old establishment which centered on the Catholic Church and modernizing the economy and society. Québécois nationalists demanded independence, and tensions rose until violence erupted during the 1970 October Crisis. During his long tenure in the office (1968-79, 1980-84), Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau made social and cultural change his political goal for Canada.

In the 2000s, significant social and political changes have occurred in Canada. Canada's border control policy and foreign policy were altered as a result of the political impact of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States in 2001 resulting in increased pressure from the U.S. and adoption by Canada of initiatives to secure Canada's side of the border to the U.S. and Canada

supported U.S.-led military action in Afghanistan. Canada did not support the U.S.-led war in Iraq in 2003 which led to increased political animosity between the Canadian and U.S. governments at the time.

Environmental issues increased in importance in Canada resulting in the signing of the Kyoto Accord on climate change by Canada's Liberal government in 2002 but recently nullified by the present government which has proposed a "made-in-Canada" solution to climate change. A merger of the Canadian Alliance and PC Party into the Conservative Party of Canada was completed in 2003, ending a ten year division of the conservative vote, and was elected as a minority government under the leadership of Stephen Harper in the 2006 federal election, ending thirteen years of Liberal party dominance in elections.

In 2006, the House of Commons passed a motion recognizing the Québécois as a nation within Canada, and, in 2008, the Prime Minister officially apologized on behalf of the sitting Cabinet for the endorsement by previous cabinets of residential schools for Canada's aboriginal peoples, which had promoted forced cultural assimilation oppression of aboriginal culture, and in which physical and emotional abuse took place. Canada's aboriginal leaders accepted the apology.

When measured in terms of gross national product, Canada's economy is one of the most advanced and one of the most diversified in the world. Canada grows, develops, mines, processes, designs, manufactures and fabricates everything from communication satellites to disease-resistant wheat, from advanced aircraft to strategic ores and metals, from nuclear power stations to newsprint.

In 1928, Canada's GNP was approximately \$6 billion. In 1981 it was more than \$ 331 billion. During the past 15 years, GNP has doubled in constant-dollar terms.

Of all sectors in the economy, manufacturing is the largest contributor to the country's annual output. As in the other highly advanced countries, however there has been a shift in Canada from a predominantly goods producing economy to a predominantly services-producing economy.

Services industries such as finance, real estate, insurance and personal and business services, now account for some 60 percent of the domestic output. They thus complement the important role played by