**Valluvar College of Science and Management, Karur.**

**Department of English**

**III B.A., English Even semester**

**Commonwealth Literature**

**Short Answers**

**Unit 1 ( The Solitary Woodsman & My Daughter’s Boyfriend)**

**1. What is the major theme in Canadian poems?**

Geography plays a vital role in the Canadian poetry. The Canadian landscape and climate become the major themes in Canadian poems. These poems primarily targeted the European audience.

**2. Name some of the notable Canadian poets.**

A.J.M.Smith, G.D.Roberts, Archibald Lampman, Duncan Camplbell Scott, E.J.Pratt, Margaret Atwood, Margaret Avison, Anne Wilkinson and P.K.Page are some of the notable Canadian poets.

**3. Write a short note on the structure and technique of the poem “ The Solitary Woodsman”.**

The poem consists of thirteen stanzas. Each stanza is a quatrain. For most part of the poem, the poet follows trochaic tetrameter.

The rhyme scheme of the poem: aaba ccdc eefe gghg…..

**4. What are the seasons expressed in the poem?**

The end of the autumn season and the arrival of the winter season are expressed in the poem “ The Solitary Woodsman”. It is expressed through various imageries found in the poem.

**5. How does the poem begin?**

The poem begins with a beautiful evening imagery. The grey lake water rushes through the alder bushes. The autumn wind flows slowly and makes the fir tree hush.

**6. What are the animals and birds found in the poem?**

The owl, the chipmunks, the bear, the bluejay and the wood-mice are found in the poem. These birds and animals used in the poem show the Canadian poets’ choice of themes and images.

**7. What is the significance of the end of the poem?**

The poem ends with a note that the woodman is waiting for his death. The man symbolizes the forest. Both are in the decaying condition. Though the poem starts with beautiful and peasant images, it ends with solitude.

**8. What are trees and bushes found specific to Canadian forest?**

Alder bushes, moose-bush, birch trees, maple trees, and the images of various bushes like blueberries, and cornel bushes specifically exemplifies Canadian forest.

**9. How does the woodsman live in the forest?**

The woodsman leads a lonely life in the midst of the forest. He lives a monotonous life. He goes for wood cutting in the early morning and returns to his house in the evening.

**10. Write a short note on Razia Khan.**

Razia Khan was a Bangladeshi novelist, poet, playwright, short story writer, journalist, theatre actor and educationalist. She started writing fully fledged novel at the age of fifteen.

**11. What is the theme of the poem “My Daughter’s Boyfriend”?**

It is an emotional poem which expresses the feelings of a mother when she losses the love of her daughter. It talks about the transfer of the daughter’s love from her parents to her lover.

**12. How does the mother feel when she hears the knocking of the door?**

Her body trembles when she hears the frequent knocks at the door. She feels that she will lose her daughter soon. She fears that she won’t be her flesh and blood any longer.

**13. How did the mother take care of her daughter when she was an infant?**

When her daughter was an infant, she became sick very often. So the mother spent sleepless nights near her cradle. She also talks about how much pain she bore when she gave birth to her daughter.

**14. Why does the poet compare her daughter with a fragile flower?**

The mother has woven a lot of dreams around her. She values the love of her daughter more than anything else. But she is easily deceived and separated from her by a thoughtless person. So she compares her daughter with a fragile flower snatched off from a branch.

**15. What does it mean by ‘eyeless face’?**

The lover of her daughter never considers her as a person. He never gets her permission to see or talk to her daughter. He behaves as if he has no eyes. So she calls him an ‘eyeless face’.

**Unit 2 ( The House and Land & The Dying Eagle)**

**1. When was House and Land published?**

House and Land was a poem written by Allen Currow and published in the year 1941. It is one of his most frequently anthologized poems which deals with the sense of alienation of the settlers.

**2. What is the theme of the poem?**

Allen Curnow’s “House and Land” investigates the sentiment of alienation experienced by the settlers even though they have spent two generations in the adopted land. Curnow emphasizes the theme of displacement.

**3. What is the problem with the settlers in New Zealand?**

Though the settlers displaced from England to New Zealand, they failed to recognize New Zealand as their homeland. Though they live in the adopted land, they have not yet adapted to the circumstances.

**4. Who is Miss Wilson?**

Miss Wilson is the daughter of one of the settlers. She finds herself filled with a void. Her house is silent. She thinks of her ancestors’ days in England.

**5. What was the dog doing in the house?**

The dog seems to be brooding and wasting itself as it languishes around. It just lazily strolls from privy to fowl house-to privy. It senses the innate stagnation, the state of decay.

**6. What does the historian learn from the circumstance?**

The historian learns that the lady lives a luxurious life, her expansive building being equipped with all the basic amenities of life. She has a few servants in her house. Nevertheless, their long-tern affair has not brought in it any genuine emotion, they feel detached as though they do not belong or fit into the place.

**7. What does she feel about the photographs?**

Miss Wilson swells with pride at the photograph of a baronet uncle that is a showpiece; this is emblematic of the fact how she proud of her ancestral heritage. A photograph that portrays the big hall of her ancestral house is also to be found. The hall is a place where people meet together; it is therefore a symbol of communion.

**8. How does the people in the house feel?**

Mrs.Wilson and her servants sense the hollowness of life there. They are overcome with the force of exile that dominates them spiritually. The idea that the house might fall exemplifies how fragile their spiritual condition was.

**9. What does the house lack?**

The house lacks joviality or merriment. It is haunted by utter hopelessness, as symbolized by the dog brooding in contemplation. The cowman leaves for the hill with rabbiter. Though it rains, it does not bring happiness. The dog retires to its barrel, where it remians lost and lame. The word ‘lame’ suggests the handicap of the settlers as they missed their homeland. The settlers always felt themselves to be incomplete: though settlers, they never settled down.

**10. How was the eagle described?**

The eagle was once a powerful king who defeated and outlived all the enemies of his time. He fathered many children who now made up his kingdom. It ruled all over the space till the horizon.

**11. What is lost in the eagle?**

The eagle lost its self and duty that they had once given him a strong value in the society. Now his duty is taken by his successors. It has lost its command over other birds since there is an intruder in it regime.

**12. What is the theme of the poem The Dying Eagle?**

The theme of the poem is the loss of power with age and the inevitability of younger generations overthrowing the older generations.

**13. What is the genre of the poem?**

The genre of the poem is narrative elegy which has the underlying theme with the emphasis in the death of the eagle’s reign.

**14. How does the eagle feel when a new bird intrudes?**

The eagle is disturbed by the new bird that intrudes into its regime. It has never seen such a bird in his life time. The eagle knows very well that no other bird has the courage to enter into its arena. But this bird’s entry disturbed the ego of the eagle.

**15. What is the tone of the poem The Dying Eagle?**

The tone of the poem is bold, suggesting leadership and regal behavior. It turns to defensive, curious and moved to aggression, but finally ends with surrender and defeat. The eagle finally accepts that it is old and ready to give up its crown.

**Unit 3 ( Nature as Monster- Survival)**

**1. What as Margret Atwood called nature poetry ?**

According to Margret Atwood, nature poetry is not the poetry about nature but it is usually about the poet’s attitude towards the external nature universe.

**2. How do the Canadian poets depict nature?**

Canadian poets depict nature as something that is dead and unanswery or actively hostile to man.

**3. What are the two emotions depicted by the Canadian poets about nature?**

One is faith in the Divine Mother and the other is a feeling of hopeless imprisonment.

**4. What are the two favourite methods for despatch man by nature?**

Atwood identifies drowning and freezing as the two most common deaths by nature in literature because they are the most plausible murder weapons of the Canadian environment.

**5. What are the possible four victims positions stated by Atwood?**

Position One: To deny the fact that you are a victim

Position Two: To acknowledge the fact that you are a victim

Position Three: To acknowledge the fact that you are a victim but to refuse to accept the assumption that the role is inevitable.

Position Four: To be a creative non-victim.

**6. When was *The Survival* published?**

Margaret Atwood published Survival, a widely contested but equally influential thematic guide to Canadian literature, in 1972.

**7. What does Atwood suggest to the Canadians?**

Atwood suggests that Canadians will first try to find their place in this vast country, then they will try to trace their origins, and in the end they will settle for the immediate reality they are confronted with, trying to survive.

**8. What will help the Canadians to find the place within the country?**

Atwood suggests that a literary identity will help Canadians to find their place within the country and in the world. It will work as a map, giving directions to the solution of the question posed by Frye: “We need such a map desperately, we need to know about here, because here is where we live”.

**9. What is the central symbol of Canada according to Atwood?**

Atwood continues her book with a bold declaration: “The central symbol for Canada – and this is based on numerous instances of its occurrence in both English and French Canadian literature – is undoubtedly Survival.

**10. What are the two different facets Atwood identifies?**

Atwood identifies two different facets of the theme: on the one hand, the survival of the settlers in a hostile environment, and on the other hand, a person’s survival of a crisis or catastrophe.

**11. What was the difference between the early writers and the later writers?**

Earlier writers mostly dealt with physical obstacles such as the wilderness, whereas later writers concentrated more and more on psychological barriers.

**12. When and how was the opinion about nature changed in Canada?**

The overall presentation of nature in literature in the eighteenth century is mostly positive. In the middle of the nineteenth century, this changes drastically. Nature becomes harsh, violent, sharp and jagged, bitter cold in winter and burning hot in summer”. The beautiful setting and guiding mother becomes a monster.

**13. How does man approach nature in Canada?**

Atwood comments on the destruction of nature by the human being. At one point in Canadian history man became more dangerous for nature than the other way round, and this found expression in Canadian writings.

**14. What was the response from the critics and the public to her Survival?**

Survival was heavily criticized after its publication because of its one dimensional thematic approach, because of the choice of themes and the outrageous generalizations, and because of the “one-sided Ontario” view.

**15. When was Survival published?**

***Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*** is a survey of Canadian literature by Margaret Atwood, one of the best-known Canadian authors. It was first published by House of Anansi in 1972.

**Unit 4 – The Road**

**1. What is the theme of the play *The Road*?**

Death is the theme of the play *The Road.* The play is set along the road, the road from life to death.

**2. Who is the ruler of the road?**

The road is ruled by Ogun, the God of war and death and roads.

**3. What is the significance of the characters in the play *The Road*?**

All the characters in the play are associated with some religion – either Yoruban - the local one, or Christianity – the foreign one.

**4. What do Samson and Salubi converse in the beginning of the play *The Road*?**

The play opens with the Conversation between Samson and Salubi. Both are talking on various issues of the Society like parody of the police force, the church and the absurd morality of the wars.

**5. Who is the protagonist of the play and what is his profession?**

Professor is the name of the protagonist and he runs a shop in which he sells the parts of the wrecked cars.

**6. What is the name of Professor’s shop?**

Aksident Store is the name of the shop run by Professor.

**7. What happens at the end of the drama?**

There was a fight between Professor and Say Tokyo Kid during the ritual dance. Say Tokyo Kid stabs Professor with a knife and eventually Professor dies at the end of the drama.

**8. What provides the clue of the play?**

The play is prefaced by Alagemo, a poem, which provides clue to the play. Alagemo is simply, a religious cult of flesh dissolution.

**9. How does Soyinka create the characters of the play?**

Everyone in the play is the servant, or agent, or priest, or student of death. Professor helps to arrange death by removing road signs from dangerous points of the road. Drivers are the constant companions of death.

**10. How is death described in the play?**

Death is described as a harvest. “Death is the select harvest of a faithful gleaner”, says the Professor, using an agricultural metaphor.

**11. Who are the characters in the play?**

The characters include the driver of a passenger-truck No Danger No Delay; his passenger – tout and driver’s mate, Samson, a Captain of Thugs called Say Tokyo Kid; and a splendidly pliable policeman, Particulars Joe; and brooding over all with menacing benevolence, Professor, proprietor of the driver’s haven - Aksident Store.

**Unit V- Things Fall Apart**

**1. Write a short note on Chinua Achebe.**

Chinua Achebe was born on November 16, 1930, in Ogidi,a large village in Nigeria. He graduated from University College, Ibadan, in 1953, In 1959 he published Things Fall Apart as a response to novels such as Heart of Darkness.

**2. Write a short note on the protagonist of the novel Things Fall Apart.**

Okonkwo is the protagonist of the novel Things Fall Apart. He is an influential clan leader in Umuofia. Okonkwo’s hard work and prowess in war have earned him a position of high status in his clan. His tragic flaw is that he is terrified of looking weak like his father.

**3. What is the significance of the title Things Fall Apart?**

The title is taken from W.B. Yeats’ poem Second Coming. The title appears in one of the lines “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;/ mere anarchy is used upon the world”.

**4. Why didn’t Okonkwo show his affection towards Ikemefuna?**

Ikemefuna was given to Okonkwo by a neighboring village. He was treated like his own son by Okonkwo. Ikemefuna also called Okonkwo as his father. Though their relationship was intimate Okonkwo didn’t demonstrate his affection because he feared that doing so would make him look weak.

**5. Who is the antagonist of the novel?**

Things Fall Apart does not have an obvious, single antagonist. In some sense, the whole world seems to be against Okonkwo. His family consistently fails to live up to his high expectations. His fellow villagers also let him down, preferring to cower before the Europeans rather than fight to preserve their own cultural traditions.

**6. What is the setting of the novel?**

Things Fall Apart takes place sometime in the final decade of the nineteenth century in Igboland, which occupies the southeastern portion of what is now known as Nigeria. Most of the action unfolds prior to the arrival of European missionaries. Accordingly, the geography of the novel is dictated by precolonial norms of political and social organization.

**7. How does Achebe portray the British imperialism in the novel?**

The novel dramatizes the very beginnings of British imperialism in the region, which started not with guns but with Bibles. As Achebe depicts in the book, it was missionaries who arrived first, paving the way for the civil servants who would eventually wrest political control at the point of a pen or, if need be, a gun.

**8. What are the motifs found in the short story?**

The concept of chi is discussed at various points throughout the novel and is important to the understanding of Okonkwo as a tragic hero. The chi is an individual’s personal god, whose merit is determined by the individual’s good fortune or lack thereof. The animal imagery also runs throughout the novel.

**9. Write a short note on the symbols in the novel?**

Symbols are objects, characters, figures, and colors used to represent abstract ideas or concepts. Locusts and fire are the two recurring symbols in the novel. Achebe depicts the locusts that descend upon the village in highly allegorical terms that prefigure the arrival of the white settlers, who will feast on and exploit the resources of the Igbo. Okonkwo is associated with burning, fire, and flame throughout the novel, alluding to his intense and dangerous anger—the only emotion that he allows himself to display.

**10. What kind of novel is Things Fall Apart?**

Things Fall apart may be considered as a historical fiction. Achebe’s novel fits into this broad genre since it tells a story set in the precolonial period, leading up to first contact with the British. Achebe does not make the precise timeframe of Things Fall Apart clear, which makes sense since precolonial Igbo people did not use the European system of months and years.

**11. What kind of narration does Achebe uses in the novel?**

Things Fall Apart takes a third-person omniscient perspective, which means that the narrator knows and communicates the thoughts and feelings of all the characters. The narrator refuses to judge characters or their actions.

**12. Who is Nwoye?**

Nwoye is Okonkwo’s oldest son, whom Okonkwo believes is weak and lazy. Okonkwo continually beats Nwoye, hoping to correct the faults that he perceives in him. Influenced by Ikemefuna, Nwoye begins to exhibit more masculine behavior, which pleases Okonkwo. However, he maintains doubts about some of the laws and rules of his tribe and eventually converts to Christianity, an act that Okonkwo criticizes as “effeminate.” Okonkwo believes that Nwoye is afflicted with the same weaknesses that his father, Unoka, possessed in abundance.

**13. Write a short note on the character of Ikemefuna.**

Ikemefuna is a boy given to Okonkwo by a neighboring village. Ikemefuna lives in the hut of Okonkwo’s first wife and quickly becomes popular with Okonkwo’s children. He develops an especially close relationship with Nwoye, Okonkwo’s oldest son, who looks up to him. Okonkwo too becomes very fond of Ikemefuna, who calls him “father” and is a perfect clansman, but Okonkwo does not demonstrate his affection because he fears that doing so would make him look weak.

**14. What kind of person is Reverend James Smith?**

Unlike Mr. Brown, Reverend Smith is uncompromising and strict. He demands that his converts reject all of their indigenous beliefs, and he shows no respect for indigenous customs or culture. He is the stereotypical white colonialist, and his behavior epitomizes the problems of colonialism. He intentionally provokes his congregation, inciting it to anger and even indirectly, through Enoch, encouraging some fairly serious transgressions.

**15. Sketch the character of Unoka.**

Unoka is Okonkwo’s father, of whom Okonkwo has been ashamed since childhood. By the standards of the clan, Unoka was a coward and a spendthrift. He never took a title in his life, he borrowed money from his clansmen, and he rarely repaid his debts. He never became a warrior because he feared the sight of blood. Moreover, he died of an abominable illness.

**ESSAYS**

**UNIT 1**

**The Solitary Woodsman**

**Write an essay on G.D.Roberts’ “The Solitary Woodsman”**

**Introduction**

Charles G.D.Roberts is a popular Canadian writer. He has written many interesting poems. His poems on nature remind the readers of the English nature poets, Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats. one can find the 'sensuousness' of Keats in the poem "The Solitary Woodsman". The Canadian flora and fauna is brought out in an enchanting manner by Roberts in simple language. The use of plant and animal imagery by the poet is splendid.

**The lovely autumn season**

The autumn season in its full richness is described by the poet in the most enchanting manner. Nothing in the wood escapes his attention. The graceful narration appeals to our senses. The readers could visualize the beautiful scenery of nature. The autumn season with its characteristic wind blows and makes a distinguishing sound that "weeps and hushes bushes”. The moist air makes the atmosphere chill. In the forest, the moose-bush glow in bright red colour. During the season, the grey lake-water rushes out in streams and flows over alder season, the birch trees in the forest have turned shimming, yellow and the bunch of flowers on the trees are soft and beautiful In the forest, during twilight, the owl flies over and makes a trumpeting sound, perhaps a call to its mate.

**The flora and fauna**

The poet casts his eyes on all that is beautiful and lively. He finds the nut eating chipmunks (forest squirrels) having their fun and frolic on the crimson colour maple trees, the evergreen shrubs that glow even in twilight gets reflected on the marsh land. On the other side on the blue berry trees, the fruits are ripe and some have fallen on the ground. Under the red rowan tree, a bear makes its bed in the bushes and starts sleeping peacefully.

**The arrival of solitary woodsman**

There comes a woodsman to his lonely house inside the forest after some time. It is latched and there is only one door. He is a solitary woodsman without any companion. With some fir branches and leaves, he makes a simple bed and goes to sleep. He wakes up early in the morning at sun rise and wanders in the forest. He had been here sometime before and therefore knows the forest well. The woodsman carries his only weapon an axe and strikes it to make noise to save himself from dangerous animals. He returns to his woodhouse at dusk. He finds the forest squirrels unafraid, playing nearby without minding his approach.

**The impoverished house of woodsman**

On the roof of his house, there are the red leaves fallen from the trees. At his door, there is a bird, blue jay calling and the wood mice hurrying up-and-down inside the house. The laughter of another bird (loon) thrills the forest atmosphere. The calling of the moose echoes to the early moon.

**The otherwise peaceful environment**

The woodsman hears a partridge drumming and the bees humming in the faint evening light. All the sounds of the forest birds and insects (hornet) foretell the fast approach of the next season, winter. The soft breeze of the autumn and the cold night grieves the woodsman. The "earth's dumb patience" or : otherwise the silence of the forest fills his heart a sort of satisfaction and peace.

**Conclusion**

The poet, Charles Roberts describes through the lyric, the beautiful nature and the serene atmosphere that always bring solace and happiness to man.

**My Daughter's Boy-Friend**

**How does the mother feel when her daughter is on the point of eloping with her lover?**

**Introduction**

In eastern countries sọns and daughters choosing their life-partners themselves is unheard of. Elopement of lovers causes acute anguish to parents. This is the theme of Raiza Khan's poem, “My Daughter's Boy-Friend”.

**Mother's pain**

Razia Khan pictures a mother who is woken up by her daughter's lover knocking at her daughter's door. Mother is shattered as her daughter regards her as an alien. Daughter does not any longer discuss her personal matters frankly with her mother. Mother recalls the several sleepless nights she had spent in the past, nursing her sick baby. She had always looked upon her daughter as a fragile flower needing her care and protection. A young man has suddenly snatched this delicate flower. Mother is aghast but helpless. She sadly says that she did not think of this possibility when she was pregnant. Mother's pain is due to her inability to change with the changing times.

**UNIT 2**

**House and Land**

**Write an essay on Allen Curnow's portrayal of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized in the poem 'House and Land'.**

**Introduction**

Allen Curnow is a New Zealander. He is concerned with the abrasive and aggressive relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Old Miss Wilson in this poem represents the colonizer and the cowman working under her represents the dumb hordes of the colonized.

**The colonizer Miss Wilson**

Miss Wilson is an old spinster. She cannot tear herself from her aristocratic past. This is seen in her gazing wistfully and nostalgically at the pictures of her maternal uncle who was a baronet and who had a grand house. She also recalls how her forefathers were in possession of vast stretches of land 'from Waiau to the mountains'. But all that is a thing of the past. She does not face her present decay.

**The cowman, a representative of the colonized masses**

The cowman or cowherd working under Miss Wilson represents the voiceless colonised people. Though he toils and moils day and night, he has no job satisfaction. He is associated with the tethered dog whose freedom is extremely limited. He is plagued by the feeling that he is neither loved nor taken care of by his mistress Miss Wilson. She does have a soft spot in her heart for him. She regards him as the son of her dearest friend Harriet, Will. But she does not show her love and solicitude for him openly. She suppresses her feeling and remains a rigid employer only. Working in such a loveless atmosphere, the cowman becomes distraught. He takes to drinking. Boozing heavily on a rainy day he collapses. He decides to resign in winter. But his future is gloomy. He does not know where to go and whom to work under. Such is the bleakness of future of all passive colonised people, says the historian who is the poet's mouthpiece.

**The Dying Eagle**

**Discuss the theme of the poem "The Dying Eagle" by E.J. Pratt.**

**Introduction**

E.J. Pratt is a master of lyric and narrative verse. He was one of Canada's most prominent literary figures. "The Dying Eagle" is a narrative poem about the inevitability of the new overthrowing the old. The eagle in the poem, once a powerful bird, now finds itself conquered on the arrival of a large, strong and fast 'intruder'. Broken in spirit, the eagle returns to its roost knowing well that its time is over.

**The Dismal Appearance of the Eagle**

The time is before sunset. The light of the eagle's defeated eyes has gone out and his head is drooped in its shoulders. His feathers are dull, wet and untidy. His large wings spread down to the edge of his tail. He looked old but that is not his age. He is seen resting on a high place in rocks. Now his posture is similar to a rain-drenched raven on the branch of an oak tree in November.

**The Eagle's Pride Vanished**

The eagle is now sitting hurt in heart and the pride of the soul gone. It looked as if he has lost his kingdom. But the plight of the eagle was not so before noon; upto that time was the king sitting on his throne, the crag. Before noon the eagle considered himself supreme and the entire space as his empire. He thought the forest and the sky upto the horizon was his own. In the course of his life he had fought and won over other birds. While many of his enemies were dead of old age he is the one still alive. The eagle always mapped the coastal outlines of clouds. He has fathered many children who now made up his kingdom. He dared to push the new born (offsprings) from its nest in order to teach them fly. Such were the manoeuvres of the eagle. But they are past, the old eagle's pride The eagle is now sitting hurt in heart and the pride of the has vanished.

**The Eagle's Astonishment**

That morning, the eagle, who thought himself, a monarch is astonished to find something shining between two peaks of the ranges. The sight produced a shock in the mighty bird. Its anger disturbed the feathers on his neck and the sharp claws scratched the rock that produced dust, as if ready to fight with the intruder. The eagle could not recognize the intruder. Is it a and prey or his enemy, he couldn't decide, so it flew fast from the crag and made a circle upon the intruder with smooth down movements and reached a near position where he could survey the new arrival. To his astonishment the eagle finds the invader a far superior one. The invader could fly between the heavens and the earth. It looked like an ancient bird, the flying reptile. It is a large bird like a vulture that could kill its prey and carry the chunk of the flesh of the dead animal to the peaks of Andes mountain range.

**The fearful and powerful outlook of the intruder**

The eagle stared at the invader that looked like a large bat, known for its long wings and stillness as it soars through the air, with its flock that could cast a dark shadow over the ice clad mountains and glaciers. The eagle mistakes the bird for a flying dragon. It has similar features of an eagle. The eyes of the invader whirled like a wheel but it did not blink anyway. It was the middle of the day, the hot sun over the head. The eagle so far had not fought with such a mighty bird. The very fearful appearance of the invader made the eagle pause for a moment. In all his powers the intruder excelled the eagle, but what disturbed it most and disgraced him was the unconcern of the superior bird.

**The eagle's spirit broken**

The invader shears through the eagle's domain with more ease than he could ever complete. Now, in the evening, the eagle is found broken spirited at the sight of the creature larger than he was, faster than he was and stronger than he was. It thought that it had lost the empire he fought so far. The eagle with a heavy heart returned to its roost, broken in spirit, knowing that its time was over.

**Conclusion**

The theme of loss of power with age and the inevitability of younger generations overthrowing the old is well brougt out in the poem by E.J. Pratt.

**UNIT 3- NATURE – THE MONSTER**

**How does Margaret Atwood define the environmental interpretations of Canadian Literature in chapter II of her work Survival?**

**Introduction**

In 1972 Atwood published the controversial Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature which emphasized the environmental interpretation of Canadian literature and focused on Canadian literary characters as victims. The work is a survey of Canadian literature - a work of literary criticism. Survival had an extraordinary impact on readers as well as students that conveyed a lot of knowledge on Canadian literature especially poetry. This study of Canadian literature by Atwood aims to expose the question of Canadian identity.

**A Psychological theory**

The mythology of 'Survival' is primarily a psychological theory of poetic interaction with nature. Atwood declares that "I'm talking about Canada as a state of mind" and again literature is "a geography of the mind." Some of the themes Atwood identifies in her work *Survival* include death by nature, nature as the monster and the obsession with unexpected death.

**Poets' view of nature**

At the outset, Atwood quotes critics / poets who are either supportive or against Nature. E.J.Pratt in his poem writes, "Whether alive or dead the bush resisted;" Alice Munro on nature remarks, "..Nature is just a lot of waste and cruelty… " He calls ‘cruelty is the law of nature.’ But poet Douglas laments the destruction of nature. Similarly D.G.Jones calls the world as a 'leafless wood'.

**Atwood on Canadian Literature**

The aim of chapter Two of Survival, says Atwood is to look at "the types of landscape that prevail in Canadian literature and the kinds of attitude they mirror." She remarks that images from Nature (trees, lakes, rocks, people) are almost everywhere in Canada. Canadian literature depicts a Nature that is often dead and unswerving or actively hostile to man. Nature in Canadian poetry is seen in its gentler spring and summer aspects as unreal. The Canadian poets believe that the true and only season in Canada is winter, which is a myth, says Atwood. The author accuses Canadian writers for not trusting Nature, they always suspect some dirty trick.

**Origin of Canadian poetry**

According to Canadian poets says Atwood that Nature has betrayed their expectations. She calls this distrust the sense of betrayal. She traces this attitude to the immigrants from UK and USA. While Edmund Burke was awe struck at the grandeur of Nature, later Wordsworthian Romanticism felt that Nature was a kind mother who would guide man. The two attitudes towards Nature combined to say "Nature was "good" and cities were "evil". Soon Nature the kind mother on Earth replaced God in Heaven by the thoughts of Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman says Atwood.

**Canadian poets' attitude towards Nature**

When the poet Susanna Moodie wrote that she was astonished by the grandeur of a winter day, Atwood calls it a gyp. It points to Mrs. Moodie's double-minded attitude towards Canada. Atwood points out to two of her own emotions-faith in the Divine Mother and a feeling of hopeless imprisonment. Nature the Sublime can be approached but never reached. Nature like God may be believed but not experienced directly, says Atwood. Apart from beautiful Nature, the swamps, bogs, tree roots and other immigrants in Canada also from the texture of daily life, writes Atwood. There is always tension between expectation and actuality says Atwood. She satirizes the Canadian poets for their lack of appreciation of Nature. There is an nexplained inconsistency of image in Canadian poetry that marks poetry as bad, remarks the author. She further comments that Nature seen as dead, or alive but indifferent, or alive and actively hostile towards man is a common image in Canadian literature.

**Death by Nature**

In "Death by Nature" something in the natural environment murders the individual. The Canadian author's two favourite "Natural" methods for dispatching his victims are drowning and treezing, says Atwood. In this regard she remarks that there is lots of water and snow in Canada, and both are good murder weapons. Hence Nature is a monster. 'Bushing' where an isolated character in Nature goes crazy, is yet another implement in death by Nature. Atwood cites a good example of Death by Bushing found in Earle Birney's poem "Bushed". The attitude towards Death by Nature vary says Atwood. In Canadian literature where there is a David, there is usually a Goliath. But the irony is in Canadian stories it is Goliath who wins! Atwood cites E.J. Pratt's poem 'The Titanic' in which the ship is personified. Recalling Nature the monster, she says it is this monster's claw that riped open the Titanic drowning thousands of passengers.

**Conclusion**

In the war against Nature man could fight and lose, or he could fight and win comments Atwood. She accuses man becoming more destructive towards Nature. In many of the Canadian poems man is portrayed as the aggressor who rapes the land by an impious machine technology that finally provokes retaliation by Nature in the form of hurricane and other natural disasters, points Atwood. Nature is a monster, perhaps, only if we come to it with unusual expectations, concludes Atwood.

**UNIT 4 - THE ROAD**

**Write an essay on the play “The Road” by Soyinka.**

**Introduction**

The protagonist of the play *The Road*, Professor is a neurotic who is continuously searching for the ultimate particularism of being: "the word". This obsession with the search for the knowledge of Death ultimately leads to the Professor's destruction.

**Professor, the proprietor of 'AKSIDENT STORE'**

The play is set on a roadside shack, which is the single road for the whole play. Professor, one of the Main characters of the play, is the proprietor of the 'AKSIDENT STORE – ALI PARTS AVAILEBUL' where he sells the spare parts of the vehicles, which he causes to crash by removing the road-signs. Thus he makes money out of death on the road. His accomplice includes touts and drivers. Professor's criminal mind is also exposed when he forges drivers' licenses. Professor was once a Sunday-school teacher and lay preacher in a church close to his shop. But he was removed from the position because a naive, naturalistic explanation that he gave to his class was deemed blasphemy. He lost his position in the Church after charges of corruption of funds and drunken misbehaviour were foisted on him. This causes Professor to lose his faith in the validity of Christian teaching but he continues to retain his interest in spiritual matters.

**Professors quest for the 'word'**

Professor is obsessed to find the mysterious truth called “the word". He believes that one cannot understand the meaning of life, unless one understands the meaning of death. This motion prompts him to settle close to the road as a number of accidents frequently occur there. He spends much of his time looking for the 'word' in places as diverse as the betting sheet of the local newspaper and traffic signs, all of which he collects and saves. Even at the very beginning of the play we see Professor so much eagerly seeks for the 'Word' as if it is the ultimate aim of his life. He tells his companions, the touts and drivers, that there is mystery in everything. He says that he is pursuing the word'. He further tells them that he has vision only for the 'word' and misses his way among humans. His quest is for the 'word' which he says, is the companion of Death and saying so he describes a terrific accident.

**Satire on Professor's search for 'Word'**

Wole Soyinka's satire extends from Professor's attempt to discover the 'Word' by means of destruction to all manner of institutionalized corruption. This is evident in the case of the would-be-millionaire policeman parodied by Samson and Salubi in the first play-within-a-play. Although Professor was expelled from the church because of drunkenness, his role as a seeker of the word gives him a certain profundity Professor's most innate medium in his quest for the enigmatic word is Murano, Who is accidentally run over by the truck driver Kotonu.

**Conclusion**

Pursuing the 'word' can involve the fear of death, which for the Yorubas is not considered to be the cessation of life. Professor tries to cheat the illusion of death and embrace the word, but he ends up only cheating himself.

**UNIT 5 - THINGS FALL APART**

**1.Write an essay on the circumstances leading to the death of Ikemefuna.**

**Ikemefuna brought to Umuofia**

Ikemefuna was separated from his parents and sent from Mbaino to Umuofia to spend three years with the household of Okonkwo. He has to endure this punishment for no fault of his. A girl belonging to Umuofia had earlier been murdered by Ikemefuna's father. The son is punished for the father's crime.

**Ikemefuna living with Okonkwo**

Ikemefuna is ignorant of his father's sin. In the beginning, he keeps pining for his mother and sister. It is by degrees that he adjusts himself with the new surroundings. He endears himself to Okonkwo by doing such manly work as splitting wood, pounding food, etc. Also, he draws Okonkwo's eldest son Nwoye towards himself by telling him pleasant stories. Ikemefuna becomes so fond of Okonkwo as to call him his father.

**Villagers deciding to kill Ikemefuna**

The stipulated period of three years passes by. But Ikemefuna is not returned to his parents. Instead, the Oracle of the Hills and the Caves decrees that Ikemefuna is to be taken outside Umuofia and killed there. Ogbuefi, a friend of Okonkwo's, advises him not to associate .himself with the proposed murder as the boy regards him as his surrogate father. But Okonkwo does not want to keep out of this cruel venture. He views it cowardly to withdraw. So he joins the small band of dare-devils and takes Ikemefuna out of home, telling him a lie that he is going to be returned to his parents. Nwoye has a misgiving that a tragedy is going to befall his companion Ikemefuna. But he cannot do anything to save Ikemefuna except to weep helplessly.

**Murder of Ikemefuna**

Ikemefuna panics walking through the forest with the men holding sheathed matches. However, the presence of his 'father' Okonkwo walking silently behind him encourages him to some extent. Suddenly, one of the men turns and slashes the boy with his matchet. The boy turns to Okonkwo, appealing to him for rescue, only to be dealt the death blow by him mercilessly.

**Okonkwo's reaction to the murder of Ikemefuna**

After the dastardly murder is committed, Okonkwo is overwhelmed by a strong feeling of guilt. He consumes unlimited quantities of palm wine to assuage his guilty feeling. But it is all in vain. What is worse, his own son Nwoye keeps himself at a distance and even refuses to obey his father's dictates. The gap between the father and the son soon grows to an unbridgeable extent.