

NCERT SOLUTIONS

CLASS - 12th



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Subject : English

Chapter : 2

Chapter Name : The Mark on the Wall

Q1 An account of reflections is more important than a description of reality according to the author. Why?

Answer. Reality is often a dry and monotonous explanation of things. It lacks the luster of emotions and a description of reality often fails to evoke the feelings that the author wants to convey through his or her work. Reflections, on the other hand, helps people to introspect. By composing characters who can reflect upon the deep hidden truths of life, the true meaning of the work can be conveyed. Woolf believes that true reflections are required to make the character a round character and the depths of that character can be explored through such reflections. While reality can inspire the author, however, only portraying the character's realist side tends to make it flat and dry devoid of any underlying emotions. Hence, according to the author an account of reflections is more important than a description of reality.

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Q2 Looking back at objects and habits of a bygone era can give one a feeling of phantom-like unreality. What examples does the author give to bring out this idea?

Answer. The author gives the example of William Shakespeare, one of the most popular Elizabethan dramatists, who perfectly depicts the phantom-like unreality of a bygone era. The image of Shakespeare sitting by the fireside with his hands in his head in quiet solitude while the heavens showered him with ideas and inspirations, seemed extremely unreal and improbable. She does not believe that any such phenomena can take place to provide inspiration. Inspirations come naturally to a person through his/her surroundings. For her, the concepts of Hell and Heaven or Good and Evil or Devil and God, all seem too unreal to exist.

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Q3 How does the imagery of (i) the fish (ii) the tree, used almost poetically by the author, emphasize the idea of stillness of living breathing thought?

Answer. Woolf contemplates the life a tree and a fish to depict the idea of the 'stillness of living, breathing thought'. She says "Wood is a pleasant thing to think about it. It comes from a tree, and trees grow, and we don't know how they grow". The phenomena of a tree quietly growing without any external interference describes how nature works in solitude in its own way. She further explains it using the imagery of a fish saying, "I like to think of the fish balanced against the stream like flags blown out" to describe the still nature around us which is often left unseen.

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Q4 How does the author pin her reflections on a variety of subjects on the 'mark on the wall'? What does this tell about the way the human mind functions?

Answer. The method of narration portrayed in this chapter is the technique of "Stream of consciousness". The author jumps between narrowly related thoughts in order to solve the mystery behind the mark on the wall. This portrays the workings of the complex human mind and the mental processes. For solving the mere issue of the mark on the wall, she goes into unimaginable depths. The mark on the wall makes her dig into history as far as Shakespeare and consequently provokes her mental processes to look into the future. Thus, the vast scope of the human mind is portrayed through this story and it uses the technique of 'stream of consciousness' to depict the complex workings of the human mind.

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Q5 Not seeing the obvious could lead a perspective mind to reflect upon more philosophical issues. Discuss this with reference to the 'snail on the wall'.

Answer. The story 'The Mark on the Wall' decidedly revolves around the mark present on the wall from across the author. Instead of going for the obvious action of getting up from her chair and inspecting the mark, she decidedly delves into several mental processes in order to solve the mystery behind it. Through this process, she reflects upon more philosophical issues. She

travels to the past and the future fleeting between thoughts, reflecting upon philosophies and at the same time trying to solve the mystery behind the mark. It is revealed at the end that the mark was made by something as simple as a snail. However, she fails to see the obvious and having a perspective mind, reflected upon a lot of philosophical issues through the entire process.

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Q1 'In order to fix a date, it is necessary to remember what one saw'. Have you experienced this at any time? Describe one such incident and the non-chronological details that helped you remember a particular date.

Answer. The technique employed by the author is the technique of 'Stream of consciousness'. It is when the mind hops, skips and jumps from one thought to another related by a narrow thread of similarity between them. Thus when the author says, "In order to fix a date, it is necessary to remember what one saw", she means to say that since the mind is more receptive to images than writings, hence, if someone has to mark an important date, and if he has forgotten about it, the visual images that happened on that particular day may help him trace back to the date of the day.

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Q2 'Tablecloths of a different kind were not real tablecloths'. Does this sentence embody the idea of blind adherence to rules and tradition? Discuss with reference to 'Understanding Freedom and Discipline' by J. Krishnamurti that you've already read.

Answer. The concept of freedom has been restructured by both J. Krishnamurthi and Virginia Woolf in their works. Both are against the concept of blind adherence to rules without questioning their intent and purpose. In both their works, 'The Mark on the Wall' and 'Understanding Freedom and Discipline', they bring to the notice of the readers that rules have gravely restricted individual freedom. People are made to question their desires. Woolf also pinpoints the importance given to knowledge and learning and the depiction of Shakespearean reality and by rejecting these traditional norms she implements her own ideas on learning and reality.

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Q3 According to the author, nature prompts action as a way of ending thought. Do we tacitly assume that 'men of action are men who don't think'?

Answer. Woolf assumed that nature is creating distractions to end the mental processes of her thoughts i.e. it is providing obstacles in her thought processes. She takes this as a challenge and does not give in to the temptation of standing up and solving the mystery behind the mark on the wall, in less than a minute. Instead, she chooses to take her own time and solve the mystery with her powerful mental process. This leads to a flood of thoughts in vast directions. For the narrator, knowledge is all about the ability to think and nature sets hurdles for us. Those who act, don't think, according to the narrator and therefore in the context of the story it is right to say that, 'Men of actions are men who don't think'.

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Q1 Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of narration: one, where the reader would remain aware of some outside voice telling him/her what's going on; two, a narration that seeks to reproduce, without the narrator's intervention, the full spectrum and continuous flow of a character's mental process. Which of these is exemplified in this essay? Illustrate.

Answer. 'The mark on the wall' is a perfect example of Virginia Woolf's 'Stream of Consciousness', which is a narration that seeks to reproduce, without the narrator's intervention, the full spectrum of and continuous flow of a character's mental process. Throughout the story, the narrator focused on her interpretations of the mark across from her, on the wall. Through the process of solving the mystery behind the mark, Woolf comes up with a collection of vast unconnected thoughts and opinions. The flood of thoughts that the mark provokes in the narrator's mind is completely unrelated to the actual reason behind the mark- the snail. Her contemplations on and interpretations of several philosophical ideas set the narrative technique of the essay. It portrays the 'stream of consciousness' narrative technique exemplified in the essay.

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Q2 This essay frequently uses the non-periodic or loose sentence structure: the component members are continuous, but so loosely joined, that the sentence could have easily broken

without damage to or break in thought. Locate a few such sentences, and discuss how they contribute to the relaxed and conversational effect of the narration.

Answer. The following set of sentences drawn from the text is a perfect example of the continuous loosely joined sentence structure. This narrative structure provides a relaxed tone to the narration. The depiction of the narrator, sitting on her chair, smoking her cigarette and trying to solve the mystery behind the mark on the wall implies her reluctance to stand up and solve the mystery in less than a minute, thus providing an aura of sluggishness to the scene. At the same time the broken tone is adding up a conversational effect to the text, so the reader is completely involved in it and knows that the narrator is actually talking to him/her. This tone adds a sort of curiosity in the mind of the readers to know about the mysterious mark on the wall. "I want to sink deeper and deeper, away from the surface, with its hard separate facts. To steady myself, let me catch hold of the first idea that passes... Shakespeare... Well, he will do as well as another. A man who sat solidly in an arm-chair, and looked into the fire, so- A shower of ideas fell perpetually from some very high Heaven down thoughts his mind. He leaned his forehead on his hand, and people, looking in through the open door,- for this scene is supposed to take place on a summer's evening- But how dull this is, this historical fiction! It doesn't interest me at all"

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