

NCERT SOLUTIONS

CLASS - 12th



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Class : 12th

Subject : English

Chapter : 4

Chapter Name : Why the Novel Matters

Q1 How does a novel reflect the wholeness of a human being?

Answer. A novel, like most other literary genres, consists of characters. The characters are the manifestations of real human beings on paper. The liveliness of the novel depends entirely upon its characters. There are several personality traits of the characters that the novel displays. It does not build up flat characters. Instead, it gives an insight into every deed of the character whether good or flawed and leaves it upto the interpretation of the readers. Thus, this is how the novel reflects the wholeness of the human being.

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Q2 Why does the author consider the novel superior to philosophy, science or even poetry?

Answer. The author considers the novel to be a superior genre among books. He believes that not all books possess the liveliness that a novel has. A novel induces a kind of liveliness in the readers which makes the entire man-alive tremble. In other words, it induces life in the readers which the other types of books like poetry, philosophy or science fail to do. Thus it is considered superior by the author.

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Q3 What does the author mean by 'tremulations on ether' and 'the novel as a tremulation'?

Answer. When the author says the novel is a 'tremulations on the ether' he means that it induces a kind of life in the readers which the other books are not capable of doing. Reading the other type of books is very similar to reading messages or hearing news being read over the radio. One can hear them and at the most feel sorry for them. However, one can never identify with them on a personal level. However, the novel provides a multidimensional view of the

characters and the readers can relate with them on a personal level. A novel gives the readers a crucial insight into valuable life lessons that the individual can then induce in their lives and mould their decisions. Thus, the novel is a life inducing agent of the writer's thought processes which have considerable effects on the readers.

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Q4 What are the arguments presented in the essay against the denial of the body by spiritual thinkers?

Answer. Lawrence does not believe that a body is a mere vessel for containing the soul and that the soul is the only alive entity. He provides the example of a hand. A hand writes the words. It has a life of its own. It hops from word to word like a grasshopper and knows the universe through the sensory route of touch. It numbs and slows down if the author writes for too long and it is just as much active and alive as the mind which dictates the words to be written. Hence, denying the hand to be a lifeless object only to be used as a medium of writing is completely incorrect according to the author. Similarly, a parson talks about the importance of souls in heaven. However, being a novelist, Lawrence says that 'paradise is in the palm of your hand'. A philosopher talks about infinity and the pure spirit who knows everything. However, Lawrence says that "infinity is just a handle to this self-same jug of a body of mine". A burning finger brings such incitement and knowing that it renders the concept of Nirvana as a mere conjecture. Hence, the body is alive, perhaps more alive than any other entity and denying it is an erroneous decision by spiritual thinkers.

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Q1 The interest in a novel spring from the reactions of characters to circumstances. It is more important for characters to be true to themselves (integrity) than to what I expected of them (consistency). ("A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds"- Emerson.)

Answer. The backbone of any literary text, especially that of the novel is its characters. The plot, the storyline all revolve around the characters depicted in the novel. Hence, it is crucial for the characters to be true to their integrity and this is what essentially juices up the characters. If not, they lose their charm and become dull and flat characters. Every novel consists of two types of characters- round characters and flat characters. Flat characters are those that remain unaffected during the entire course of the novel. Not a single incident changes them or has any impact on them. Round characters on the other hand keep on developing with the progression of the storyline. They help in peaking the interest level and keeping the readers glued to the novel. Thus, if every character is flat i.e. sticking to 'what should be done' rather than being round i.e. following their instincts, the novel will lose its charm and become

monotonous. Hence, Bergman believes, "It is more important for characters to be true to themselves (integrity) than to what I expected of them (consistency)."

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Q2 'The novel is the one bright book of life'. 'Books are not life'. Discuss the distinction between the two statements. Recall Ruskin's definition of 'What is a Good Book?' in Woven Words Class XI.

Answer. The novel, unlike the other books on philosophy, science, etc. portrays the real issues in life and depicts life in its truest form to its readers. The readers get an insight into life by reading it. They acquire several lessons in life. Hence, the novel has been called 'the bright book of life'. However, the author is quick to point out that 'Books are not life'. He means to say that although the novel portrays real-like issues and characters, yet it is not reality itself. It is a figment of someone's imagination which might have been inspired by real-life issues and characters. But it is a product of imagination after all. Thus, although it portrays reality, the novel isn't reality itself.

Ruskin Bond in his work, 'What is a Good Book?', says that it is important for the readers to understand what the author has wanted to convey. This idea is similar to Lawrence, who asks the reader to take inspiration from the novel.

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Q1 Certain catchphrases are recurrently used as pegs to hang the author's thoughts throughout the essay. List these and discuss how they serve to achieve the argumentative force of the essay.

Answer. The catchphrases are:

1. Body- the author portrays the importance of the body and depicts how it is the ultimate phase of being in learner mode.
2. Spirit- the author feels that the spirit is a misleading concept. It makes a man delve deep into vagueness. It leads men to things that are unreal.
3. Man alive- this is a realistic concept of the author and he believes that everything happens due to man being alive. From the tip of the hair to the tip of the toe a man is portrayed to be alive by the author and it is as if his entire body has a mind of its own.
4. Tremulations on the

ether- here tremulations are the ideas of the saints and philosophers because of which a man may be influenced to change.

5. Change- the only constant.

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Q2 The language of argument is intense and succeeds in convincing the reader through rhetorical devices. Identify the devices used by the author to achieve this force.

Answer. Given below is the list of rhetorical devices used to intensify the language of argument:

1. Allusion- The mention of the Bible.

2. Amplification- The repetitive use of words like man-alive, spirit, tremulations, etc. to emphasise the perspective of the author.

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