The Dog of Tithwal Study Guide

The Dog of Tithwal by Saadat Hasan Manto

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Introduction

The inspiration for Saadat Hasan Manto's "The Dog of Tithwal," first published in English in a 1987 collection of Manto's stories titled *Kingdom's End and Other Stories,* translated by Khalid Hasan, was the partition of India in 1947. The partition split India into Muslim Pakistan and secular (but Hindu-dominated and Hindu-ruled) India, resulting in violent upheaval. When the national boundaries were redrawn, India cut through the center of Pakistan, which was, therefore, itself a nation divided. In addition, Muslims and Hindus were so hostile to each other that Muslims who found themselves living in India and Hindus who found themselves living in Pakistan were suddenly aliens in their own homes. At best, they were coldly tolerated. At worst, they were robbed, raped, attacked, and murdered. Chaos erupted as sixteen million refugees literally ran for their lives to the nation where they would find safety. Violence escalated, and more than half a million people died in 1947 alone. The governments of the newly drawn nations, themselves in turmoil, were unable to contain the violence. In 1948, India and Pakistan went to war over territorial boundaries, principally which nation would govern Kashmir. The war, however, spread all along the frontier.

This tragedy was the impetus for "The Dog of Tithwal," which gives a microcosmic view of the hateful struggle. Although nature continues in harmony in the story's mountain setting, the Pakistani and Indian soldiers who face each other there cannot be at peace. Looking for ways to express their frustration at being unable to kill each other, the leaders of the two groups of soldiers terrorize and kill a friendly dog who is looking for companionship.

Author Biography

Saadat Hasan Manto was a storyteller who took risks. Born on May 11, 1912, in Samrala, India, Manto was the son of Ghulam Hasan Manto, a judge, and Sardar, a widow. He wrote in the Urdu language, the primary language of Muslims in Pakistan and northern India and now the official language of Pakistan, but many of his works have been translated into other languages, including English. He wrote in many genres but is best known for his short stories. He chose controversial topics and was often on the receiving end of public disapproval. Two of his stories, "Colder than Ice" and "The Return," were deemed indecent by Pakistani censors. He was twice prosecuted for obscenity, once in the early 1940s and again in 1948.

Growing up, Manto was not a dedicated student; he later dropped out of college. When Manto was about twenty-one, his mentor, Bari Aligue, a writer who advocated socialism in India, introduced him to the editorial staff of *Masawat,* a weekly film publication. In 1937, Manto became an editor of the monthly film magazine *Mysawwir.*

Manto became part of the Progressive Writers' Movement in Urdu literature. This movement began in 1935 with Indian students who were urging political and social revolution. Manto used a matter-of-fact style to portray the problems of what he considered to be a materialistic world. Studying the works of nineteenth-century French and Russian realists, Manto portrayed the lower class as having sterling qualities that others lacked. One issue that appears in many of his stories is the mistreatment of women by men who are nevertheless thought of as respectable members of society.

Another frequent topic in Manto's writing is the suffering caused in 1947, when India was partitioned into India and Pakistan. "The Dog of Tithwal" is one of many of Manto's stories that revolve around the partition and its aftermath. Manto knew something of the pain of partition himself. He was living in Bombay at the time, a city he loved. As a well-known Muslim, however, he was increasingly unhappy and uncomfortable in Hindu India and moved to Pakistan in 1948. He never felt at home in Pakistan and missed India, especially Bombay.

Some of Manto's works include *Aao,* a collection of satirical plays; *Manto ke Numainda Asfane,* short stories translated as *Kingdom's End; andManto Ke Mazameen,* nonfiction writings. For most of his life, Manto found that earning money was difficult. A prolific writer, he sold individual stories to various publications. Some of these later became well known, such as "Toba Tek Singh," a story about inmates in an insane asylum, and "Thanda Ghosht," about the violence of 1947.

In addition to plays, radio scripts, and more than two hundred fifty short stories, Manto wrote film scripts. Among his prominent films were *Eight Days, Chal Chal Re Naujawan* and *Mirza Ghalib.* Manto also was known for his profiles of Indo-Pakistani film and music personalities.

Manto was married and had three daughters as well as a son who died as an infant. Manto himself died on January 18, 1955, when he was not yet forty-three years of age. The cause was diagnosed as cirrhosis of the liver. Manto was widely said to have knowingly drunk himself to death, and he wrote his obituary a year before his death.

Plot Summary

Indian Camp

"The Dog of Tithwal" begins with Indian and Pakistani soldiers entrenched in their positions along the nations' border in a mountainous area. Neither side has the advantage in the war; no air forces are involved, and heavy artillery is not in their armaments. It is more a standoff than a battle. The peace of the mountains pervades in spite of the tension. Flowers are in bloom, birds are singing, and clouds are scudding lazily through the skies. Manto compares nature to a symphony that plays beautifully and the men with their guns to discordant notes.

The action begins in the Indian camp, with Jamadar Harnam Singh on night watch. At two o'clock, he wakes Ganda Singh to take over the watch and lies down to sing a romantic song about a pair of shoes with stars on them. Banta Singh joins in with a song about love and tragedy. The soldiers feel sadness creeping over them; perhaps they are reminded that life should be about love rather than about war.

The barking of a dog interrupts this pensive scene. Banta Singh finds the dog in the bushes and announces that his name is Jhun Jhun. The soldiers are in a good humor and pleased to see the dog, until Harnam Singh decides that the dog cannot eat if it is a Pakistani dog. The other soldiers think he is joking, but he then declares that all Pakistanis will be shot, even Pakistani dogs. The dog recognizes something in his tone and reacts with fear, which seems to please Harnam Singh. Another soldier responds by leading the men in a declaration of "India Zindabad!" (an expression of nationalistic fervor).

Banta Singh makes a sign with the dog's name on it, along with the information that it is an Indian dog, and hangs it around the dog's neck.

Pakistani Camp

The next morning the dog appears in the Pakistani camp. It turns out that it had spent a few days with the Pakistani soldiers before it went to the Indian camp. Like the Indian soldiers, the Pakistanis are tired of the war that has been dragging on for months. As Subedar Himmat Khan twirls his moustache and studies a map of the Tithwal sector of India, Bashir begins to sing a song about where a lover spent the night.

When the dog appears, Subedar Himmat Khan turns the lines of the song into an accusation against Jhun Jhun. "Where did you spend the night?" he screams. Bashir takes this as a joke and sings his song to the dog, but Subedar Himmat Khan throws a pebble at Jhun Jhun.

Bashir discovers the sign around the dog's neck. The soldiers ponder the sign to see if it could be in code; Subedar Himmat Khan reports the incident to his platoon commander,

who ignores the report because he finds it meaningless. While the commander is correct that the report is not of tactical significance, it is implied that his failure to investigate indicates a lack of discipline in the ranks. The soldiers are bored and seem to feel that their presence here is meaningless.

The Pakistani soldiers rename Jhun Jhun and put a sign around his neck saying that he is Shun Shun, a Pakistani dog. Subedar Himmat Khan then sends Jhun Jhun back to his "family," urging him to take the message to the enemy. The dog trots off, and Subedar Himmat Khan fires in the air. Feeling bored, he decides to fire at the Indians. For half an hour, the two sides exchange fire, after which Subedar Himmat Khan orders a halt. As he combs his hair, he wonders where the dog has gone.

Death

When Jhun Jhun comes around the hill where the Pakistani are entrenched, it seems to infuriate Subedar Himmat Khan. He shoots at the dog, hitting some stones. Jhun Jhun continues to run toward him, and Subedar Himmat Khan continues to shoot at the dog. Meanwhile, Harnam Singh fires. The two opposing soldiers enjoy scaring the terrified dog until Harnam Singh wounds the dog.

Still, Subedar Himmat Khan will not let Jhun Jhun return to the Pakistani camp. Khan tells the dog it is his duty to continue going toward the enemy camp. It is clear that, in Subedar Himmat Khan's mind, fanaticism has overcome any rationality.

When the wounded dog drags himself toward Harnam Singh, Jamadar Harnam Singh shoots and kills him. While the Pakistani Subedar Himmat Khan compares the killing to martyrdom, Harnam Singh says that Jhun Jhun "died a dog's death."

Summary

"The Dog of Tithwal" is a short story written in Urdu, one of the languages of India, by Sadaat Hasan Monto. It takes place during a war between India and Pakistan and concerns a two-day period between the two camps. The story illustrates the hate that the two groups have for one another and the fact that the war is doing little to bring about a resolution.

The story takes place in a beautiful and peaceful country setting. The sweet smell of the blooming wildflowers is wafting in the soft breeze. The birds are heard chirping overhead, and the treed mountains rise beyond the field. It is the end of September, and the sky is a calm blue. The weather is just right. However, on either side of this beautiful field are two enemy trenches, in which soldiers have been living for several weeks. The two groups randomly exchange fire with no consequence either way. There are no casualties, attempted attacks or starving, shivering soldiers. These two battalions take on a civility that is not often seen in war.

The atmosphere is so civil, in fact, that the soldiers have grown bored of the war, since there is hardly any real action. There is no venting of their motive for war. Each side is evenly matched, with no clear advantage, and thus an end is nowhere in sight. It is now that the story of "The Dog of Tithwal" begins. It is very early, two o'clock in the morning to be exact, when Jamadar Harnam Singh finishes his guard duty. After notifying the next man in line that his time to guard has arrived, he lies down to get a few hours of sleep. However, neither his body nor his mind will allow sleep to come, and so he sings himself a pretty little folk song to pass the time. The song makes him feel sentimental and homesick, which in turn causes him to wake up his fellow solders. The group of men takes turns singing songs, mostly of love and tragedy, and telling stories about their lives at home. A deep, reflective mood settles over the troop.

Suddenly, a dog's sharp barking is heard. Bantta Sing goes to investigate and returns from the bushes with a scrawny dog. Bantta announces that the dog has introduced himself as Jhun Jhun, which causes everyone to laugh. One of the solders throws the dog a cracker, but another soldier, Harnam Singh, snatches the cracker away, warning the group, somewhat jokingly, that the dog might be Pakistani. Only after the other soldiers assure him that the dog is Indian does Harnam surrender the cracker to the animal. Harnam goes on to explain that now every human and dog must identify as either Indian or Pakistani and that all of the Pakistanis will then be shot. His speech excites the soldiers, causing them to shout out for their side, India, to prevail.

Morning comes quickly, and the soldiers on both sides begin preparing breakfast, as the smoke coming from both camps shows. Over on the Pakistani side, another soldier is singing a song, "Where did you spend the night, my love..." He is sitting with another soldier, Himmat Khan, who notices the dog walking toward them. Himmat Khan begins to yell at the dog, asking him the very question that his fellow soldier is singing in the innocent song. The dog was at their camp for several days but disappeared last night, and Himmat wonders where exactly the dog was. He immediately suspects that the dog

visited the Indian trench. His suspicion is confirmed when the two soldiers notice a cardboard sign roped around the dog's neck that reads "Jhun Jhun." They rationalize that it must be a code written by the Indian soldiers.

Himmat tears up a package of cigarettes to use as scrap paper. He orders his fellow soldier to write "ShunShun" and "this is a Pakistani dog" on the scrap of package. They affix it to the rope collar and tell the dog to carry the message to the other side. Himmat adds that it is an order and the dog's duty as a Pakistani dog. With that, he shoots his rifle in the air.

Across the field, the Indian soldiers hear the rifle shot and are confused, as it is too early to start their daily exchange of fire. Boredom causes them to fire back. After a half an hour of shooting, both sides become bored and quit. Now, Subedar Harnam Singh, from the Indian side, spots the dog running from the Pakistani hill with something strapped around its neck. Harnam shoots at the dog, hitting the ground near its paws. He does so mostly to scare the dog. On the Pakistani side, Subedar Himmat Khan sees the dog running back scared and shoots at it for being a coward. The two men from both sides continue to take turns shooting at the dog, both of them laughing as the terrified dog runs back and forth in no man's land. Finally, Harnam Singh shoots the dog in the leg. The dog continues to drag itself away until Harnam puts it out of its misery, killing it with one more shot. Himmat Khan believes that the dog died as a martyr, while Harnam says he died a "dog's death."

Analysis

The introductory paragraph of "The Dog of Tithwal" not only explains the setting of the short story but also the theme. The theme of the story deals with differences and similarities between people, and most importantly how ignorance perpetuates differences while ignoring overriding similarities. For instance, the described setting is beautiful and serene, and yet in the middle of such a tranquil setting, a war is going on. By placing a story about a war in such a quiet, beautifully described place, the writer has illustrated the ironic nature of war. War disrupts the status quo and often does more damage then good, even though the stated mission of the conflict is to arrive at a resolution.

War is also usually described as gory and full of action, and yet in this story, the conflict between the two sides closely resembles the setting in which it takes place. The calm setting symbolizes the stalemate that the two sides have come to after months of uneventful fire exchanges. Each side is bored with the war and yet is unwilling to make any changes to their tactics. Although they are living in trenches, they each have warm fires to sit by and prepare their meals with and supplies of luxuries such as tea. The two camps are even close enough to each other that they hear each other talk over dinner.

Both groups of men have similar daily schedules and rituals. They are from the same region, and therefore they eat the same food and have some of the same folklore and culture, such as songs and literature. Still, they are fighting on opposite sides. Both

sides sing songs of love and home when they are bored and reach out for the camaraderie of their fellow soldier for company. These qualities bring together the men of one camp in the early morning hours one night.

The soldiers are bonding when they hear the unfamiliar sound of a dog barking. The dog is a new character in the story and symbolizes the end of the rut and boredom that the soldiers feel and the escalading of conflict, an important element of the plot. Up until this point there is no contact between the two camps, not including the daily exchanges of fire.

The introduction of the dog also brings with it the opportunity for a dialogue to occur between the soldiers. Through this dialogue, the two opposing forces are revealed as Indian and Pakistani. There is extreme hatred on both sides for the people of the other side, and yet it is never explained why one group hates the other. For all the similarities previously explained, the only dissimilarity seems to be the label of Indian or Pakistani. Even a dog's nationality is up for question. This dog symbolizes the similarities between the two groups and that the only real difference is the label that one identifies with. Neither group really knows if this dog is from India or Pakistan; its origin remains unknown. Yet each side is suspicious and even willing to deny the dog food based on its nationality.

The Indian soldiers name the dog Jhun Jhun, an Indian name, and make a crude identification collar. They do so knowing that the dog will wonder away, most likely to the Pakistani side, and incite feelings of anger that their enemy has named the animal in their own language. Indeed, when the dog arrives at the enemy camp, the dog collar does incite the desired affect. It should first be noted that as the Pakistani camp is first introduced, a Pakistani soldier is humming a light song of melancholy love just as an Indian soldier was doing earlier that morning. This is yet another example of the similarities between the two groups of men. The Pakistani side counters the "message" of the dog color with one of their own. They increase the level of conflict by marking the dog as Pakistani and sending it on a "mission" to the Indian camp.

When Himmat fires his rifle, the daily exchange of fire begins early, but as is the norm, it does not last very long. However, when the Indian soldier recognizes the dog coming toward them with something new attached to its collar, the bored soldier shoots at it. He makes good on his earlier promise of shooting anything that is Pakistani. This begins a game between the two sides as to who can terrorize the dog the most until finally the dog is shot and killed.

The two commanding soldiers from both sides have very different views on how and why the dog died. Himmat Khan, the Pakistani soldier, believes that the dog died as a martyr. He believes this because he sees the dog as being Indian, and since an Indian soldier killed it, the dog purposely died for their cause. The Indian soldier, Harnam Singh, on the other hand believes that the dog died "a dog's death." He believes this because he sees the dog as being Pakistani. Harnam saw the dog as being a coward running from his mission and expressing fear in the face of danger, and thus he died crawling away from a fight dragging his injured limb. The expression a "dog's death" is a

symbol of how Harnam feels the true character of a Pakistani is like a dog crawling in the dirt.

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Characters

Bashir

A soldier in the Pakistani army, Bashir sings the song, "Where did you spend the night, my love, my moon?" Subedar Himmat Khan, fellow soldier, turns the song into an accusation of treachery against Jhun Jhun. Bashir is the soldier who reads the sign around Jhun Jhun's neck that gives the dog's name as written by the Indian army. Bashir is also called Bashirey.

Bashirey

See Bashir

Jhun Jhun

Jhun Jhun is a dog, trusting and very friendly. Unable to grasp the hatred between the Pakistani and Indian soldiers, Jhun Jhun greets both with equal enthusiasm. Jhun Jhun, perhaps demonstrating more wisdom than the men, treats them not as Indian and Pakistani, but as humans. Since the men have decided, however, that they are different, they expect the dog to choose sides.

In his innocence, Jhun Jhun represents the refugees and other victims of the partition of India. His death is a reflection of their deaths; even though his death is in reality senseless, the soldiers treat it as if it belongs to a cause. Subedar Himmat Khan of the Pakistani army says that Jhun Jhun has been "martyred" because he was killed by a member of the Indian army.

Subedar Himmat Khan

As a member of the Pakistani army, Subedar Himmat Khan watches over the Tithwal sector in India in an almost possessive way. He has a large mustache that he twirls, perhaps demonstrating his vanity. With his fixation on what is Pakistani and what is Indian, Subedar Himmat Khan represents unreasoning divisiveness and hatred. He sends Jhun Jhun into the enemy camp, refusing to let him come back. By firing at the dog, Subedar Himmat Khan means to scare him. He thinks that Jhun Jhun's terror is amusing and does not allow him to return even when the dog is injured.

Subedar Himmat Khan demonstrates the disregard for life that comes with blindly following a cause.

Banta Singh

The youngest of the Indian soldiers, Banta Singh has a sweet voice. He sings a lovelorn verse that inspires sadness in the others. Banta Singh is also the soldier who finds Jhun Jhun in the bushes and gives him a name. He does not see the dog as an enemy, nor does he wish to make the dog take sides; he sees the dog as a "poor refugee." He represents a viewpoint that is more rational than that of his fellow soldier, Jamadar Harnam Singh, who wants to make the dog a point of contention between the two armies.

Ganda Singh

A member of the Indian army, Ganda Singh is the first to be awakened by Jamadar Harnam Singh, who is on night watch. He, along with the other soldiers, is affected by the melancholy words of Jamadar Harnam Singh's song.

Jamadar Harnam Singh

A member of the Indian army, Jamadar Harnam Singh is the first character introduced in the story. He is on night watch and wakes the others. As he lies down, he sings a sentimental song. In some ways, he serves as a counterpoint to Bashir, the soldier in the Pakistani army who also sings a song. With his Punjabi folk song, Jamadar Harnam Singh underscores the similarities between the groups and the futility of their fight. But he also represents fanaticism when, before feeding Jhun Jhun a cracker, he demands to know if the dog is an Indian.

Jamadar Harnam Singh seems to lack compassion. He is the one who, for sport, shoots and injures Jhun Jhun. He is also the one who kills Jhun Jhun and then says that Jhun Jhun has "died a dog's death."

Themes

Darkness and Light

Manto uses images of darkness and light to demonstrate the difference between the men and the natural world around them. Darkness represents the men, blindness, and what is negative, and light represents nature, sight, and what is positive. During the night, the soldiers light huge fires in an attempt to ward off darkness. Yet they are able to overcome neither the darkness of night nor their own blindness. The biggest fires they can build can only illuminate a small patch of ground and do not enable them to see their enemies or to see within themselves. By contrast, Manto writes, "The morning broke . . . as if someone had switched on a light in a dark room. It spread across the hills and valleys." Nature is capable of producing an all-illuminating brightness that the men do not have.

Unity and Disunity

The Pakistanis and the Indians see themselves as separate from each other. There is no common human feeling between them, even though they both sing songs of romance and long for better days. The stream zigzagging down in the valley is like a literal line in the sand that emphasizes the division that the men are maintaining. Unlike the other elements of nature in the mountains, which move lazily, the stream moves furiously, like a snake. This seems to represent the energy the soldiers dedicate to lashing out at each other. They prefer disunity to unity. Other landmarks in nature also seem to draw attention to this disunity, such as the valley that separates the two hills behind which the opposing forces sit.

While the soldiers exhibit signs of common humanity, such as singing and cooking breakfast at the same time, they do not see or acknowledge these signs of underlying unity. Jhun Jhun, the one creature that ignores the fact that they are adversarial groups and points out their sameness, is put to death.

Warlike Humans versus Peaceful Nature

The mountains of Tithwal are calm and cheerful, but the soldiers are determined to kill. While it would be natural for them to adapt to their peaceful surroundings, the soldiers remain combative. At the time that Jhun Jhun enters the story, the soldiers have been inactive for some weeks, with no progress having been made on either side. The mood is one of dangerous idleness, a harbinger of the death to come. Though there is nothing to gain from exchanging fire, the opposing sides let off ritual shots daily. Unable to destroy each other, the soldiers destroy a harmless dog that is an element of nature. Because he is the only victim available, Jhun Jhun becomes a casualty of the soldiers' need to satisfy their bloodlust. Humankind's brutality is visited upon nature. It is not enough merely to scare the dog and make him run in terror; they need to destroy him.

Though Subedar Himmat Khan first wounds Jhun Jhun, to him the dog's death proves that the Indian forces are killers. Jamadar Harnam Singh, whose shot kills the dog, seems, even so, to blame the Pakistani forces. The two sides do not recognize that both have acted cruelly and absurdly. There is no regret for the killing, as there might be in peacetime, because it is seen as an act of war.

The difference between nature and humankind is underscored by the fact that the seasons are changing as the story takes place. The change is occurring gently; the days and nights are mild. While some literature depicts the seasons in conflict, Manto's story shows that in nature even oppo-sites such as summer and winter flow peacefully into each other. "It seemed as if summer and winter had made their peace," Man to writes. The men, on the other hand, although they are very much alike, cannot accept each other.

Style

Pastoral Setting

Pastoral literature portrays nature as being idyllic, peaceful, and free of the constraints and struggles of human society. Pastoral settings often allow human characters to find solace and peace that are not possible in a human-made setting.

The story is set in the mountains of Tithwal during temperate and pleasant days in late September. There is peace in the mountains, but, instead of escaping to the innocence of nature, the soldiers bring war with them. The men cannot enjoy the pleasant surroundings because they are not there to enjoy life but to kill.

Journalistic Style

Manto uses a direct, succinct style, almost like an unbiased reporter writing of an actual incident. There is no diatribe; Man to does not tell his readers what to think but lets the facts speak for themselves. His use of dialogue to tell the story further contributes to the journalistic style.

Tension and Foreshadowing

The contrast between the pleasant natural surroundings and the camouflaged soldiers creates tension and a mood of suspense that subtly foreshadow the tragedy to come. Tension builds as Manto describes the soldiers' boredom and melancholy. When the dog enters the Indian camp, Jamadar Harnam Singh does not greet him in a friendly manner, even though the other soldiers seem amused by his arrival. Jamadar Harnam Singh's mean treatment of the dog as a potential enemy is further foreshadowing. Subedar Himmat Khan repeats the harsh treatment in the Pakistani camp. As the story builds, the soldiers treat Jhun Jhun both as a potential enemy and as an informant being sent to the enemy camp—neither of which bodes well for the dog. The doom that has been hinted at throughout the story culminates when the dog, scrambling from one side to the other, can find no safe haven. Jhun Jhun's pitiful end is foreshadowed by the increasingly irrational and brutal behavior of the soldiers, which is emphasized by its contrast to their peaceful setting.

Historical Context

Partition of India

The historical context for "The Dog of Tithwal" is the Indian-Pakistani conflict that arose after the partition of India in 1947. The partition came after India won its independence from British rule on August 14, 1947. India was divided into two countries formed on the basis of religion, with Pakistan as a Muslim state and India as a secular nation ruled by the Hindu majority. Boundary issues and religious disputes brought about terrorism, war, and continuing disharmony between India and Pakistan. Even the imposition of official boundaries did not cause the conflict to cease.

The decision to partition India resulted in barbaric treatment of citizens who happened to be living in the "wrong" nation after the boundaries were drawn. By law, people were required to live in the new nation that "matched" their religion— Muslims in Pakistan, Hindus and Sikhs in India— regardless of where they lived before the partition. Sixteen million refugees streamed across the borders, hoping to make homes in regions entirely foreign to them. The entire region dissolved into disarray.

Since there was no experienced government to effectively deal with the chaos and violence, it fed on itself. In addition to more than half a million deaths, looting and rape were commonplace. In particular, the Hindus and the Muslims used women to intimidate each other: "ghost trains" filled with severed breasts of women were sent from each country to the other.

Decades after the partition, Indian and Pakistan are still in conflict, and individuals and families are still affected by the material, psychological, and financial losses of partition and its aftermath.

British Rule

To understand the reasons for the partition, it is necessary to look at the history of India. Starting in the late thirteenth century and continuing for more than three hundred years, Muslims ruled the subcontinent under the Mughal Empire. Then India became part of the British Empire under Queen Elizabeth I. Over a period of three hundred and fifty years, the British consolidated their power in India. The British treated the Muslims and Hindus almost as if they were residents of two different nations and ruled them separately. Even in the census, the British categorized Indians according to religion.

As the British Empire expanded, so too did the land it held in India. By World War II, the British held a large area that was subject to Hindu and Muslim conflicts. The Muslims, who were not interested in learning English, were at a disadvantage to Hindus when it came to holding positions in government. The Muslims resented the fact that Hindus held better jobs, especially since, formerly, Muslims had been in power. Meanwhile, the

Hindus had not forgotten Muslim rule. They tried to replace Urdu, a Muslim language, with Hindi as the official national language.

In an attempt to reduce conflict, British and Indian leaders decided to divide the subcontinent of India so that Muslims would have their own nation. The resulting partition, in 1947, carved Pakistan out of India. Part of Pakistan was on the west side of India, near the Indus River, and another part was to the east. (The eastern region is now the nation of Bangladesh.) More than one thousand miles of Indian territory separated the two regions of Pakistan—yet another challenge to the new country's inexperienced leaders.

Critical Overview

Manto's writings are among the few Urdu works that have been translated into English. Translators of Manto's work include Khushwant Singh and Khalid Hasan.

Manto is known for being part of Urdu literature' s Progressive Writers Movement. The Progressive Writers Movement (1935-1960) was launched when three Indian students, Sajjad Zaheer, Mulk Raj Anand, and Mohammad Deen Taseer, issued a manifesto on the decadence and feudalism that they believed pervaded Indian society and influenced others to rebel by speaking out against the established order. As a spokesman for social reform, Manto often depicted characters from low stations in life.

Manto's writings explore sexuality, exploitation, and the human condition without regard for conventional restrictions. His essays, screenplays, and short stories received varied receptions. Some works were received well, but others were considered obscene or sensationalist. His use of direct language resulted in his being prosecuted for obscenity several times. In reviewing *Manto's World,* a collection of Manto's fiction and nonfiction translated by Khalid Hasan, Sarwat Ali of *News International* wrote that Manto had "a fresh, no holds barred approach which insisted on calling a spade a spade."

"The Dog of Tithwal" was first published in English in a collection of Manto's stories entitled *Kingdom's End and Other Stories,* translated by Khalid Hasan. In a review of *Kingdom's End and Other Stories,* a critic for *Publishers Weekly* wrote that Manto has a "talent for vivid description and narrative momentum" but that because his writings on the partition are relatively remote from the modern Western reader in culture, time, and place, he is not likely to find a large readership in the West.

Although during his lifetime he was criticized for his undeviating portrayal of humanity's underside, Manto continued to write about the world around him as he saw it. After his death in 1955 at the age of forty-two, Manto gradually became more widely accepted in literary circles so that now he is, according to Ali, "the most popular story writer of Urdu" and even "something of a cult figure."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2

Critical Essay #1

Norvell is an independent educational writer who specializes in English and literature. She holds degrees in linguistics and journalism. In this essay, Norvell discusses why Manto's use of a dog as the victim in his story is effective and gives the story a universality it otherwise would not have.

Manto's choice of a dog to be the innocent victim of brutality in "The Dog of Tithwal" is appropriate and effective in many ways. Although the story's subject matter is remote from the experience of contemporary Western readers, Manto's use of the dog gives the story universal impact.

The relationship between dogs and humans is, of course, unique. With no other animal have humans formed a bond so close and complex. In most cultures, the dog is esteemed and even loved, though in a few parts of the world dogs are shunned by humans. The vast majority of human beings respond to dogs as innocents and as members of a species with which humans have entered into a mutual agreement of trust and harmlessness. Human treachery and cruelty toward dogs, therefore, is seen as especially repugnant.

In many cultures, including the modern Western one, the dog is not only a beloved companion but also a symbol of loyalty, protection, and nobility. In some cultures, such as that of the ancient Greeks, the dog has been considered a messenger and a guardian of passageways. Hinduism's perspective can be summed up in a story from the *Mahabharata,* the great epic of Hinduism. Near the end of the epic, a noble hero, Yudhishthira, approaches the gates of heaven with his faithful dog. When he is told that he may enter heaven but must leave his dog behind, Yudhishthira replies that he will not abandon the dog who has been so faithful to him and who has come to trust and depend on him, even for the joys of heaven. The gatekeeper repeatedly tries to convince Yudhishthira that it would not be cruel to abandon the dog, even saying that the dog is an unclean animal and has no soul. Yudhishthira's final response is:

I do not turn away my dog; I turn away you. I will not surrender a faithful dog to you. . . . Whoever comes to me from fright or from disaster or from friendship—I never give him up.

The heavenly gatekeeper tells Yudhishthira that this has been one last test of his goodness, and the dog is revealed to be Dharma, the god of justice, in disguise. Accordingly, in Hindu culture dogs are considered unclean animals, yet all creatures are deemed to deserve compassionate treatment. Dogs that are companions of warriors and hunters are especially esteemed. In Islamic culture, however, the dog is a symbol of impurity and is considered a positive presence only in the role of guard dog.

Consciously or not, Manto has constructed his story in such a way that all these human views of Jhun Jhun's species are demonstrated. The Muslim (Islamic) soldiers, indeed, respond to Jhun Jhun as if he is impure. Subedar Himmat Khan, far from seeing the dog

as loyal, distrusts him because he left the camp during the night. Jhun Jhun did not act as a guard dog for the Pakistanis, and so they have no affection toward him, only suspicion. Although Subedar Himmat Khan's treatment of Jhun Jhun is extreme in its cruelty, his attitude toward the dog is grounded in his religious and cultural background.

The Indian soldiers in the story are Sikhs, not Hindus, as indicated by the designation "Singh" after their names. Sikhism is a blend of elements of Hinduism and Islam. Appropriately, the Sikh soldiers have a mixed reaction to Jhun Jhun. It is an Indian soldier—a warrior, as Yudhishthira was— who befriends the dog; it is also an Indian soldier who kills him.

In these depictions of the soldiers' responses to Jhun Jhun, Manto has drawn from his characters' cultural realities and has made his story authentic. But Manto himself emphasizes, in Jhun Jhun, the qualities that Western cultures attribute to dogs. Both groups of soldiers make Jhun Jhun a messenger, and he is also a guardian—or at least a traverser— of the passageway between the two hills and the two camps. Each side hangs around Jhun Jhun's neck a message for the other and sends him into the no-man's land that serves as a passage between the camps.

But it is the qualities of loyalty and nobility that make Jhun Jhun and, in turn, the story so effective and affecting. Jhun Jhun's loyalty is not to one camp or the other, as the soldiers would have it. It is a loyalty of a higher order: to all humans and to the bond between the two species. Whereas the two groups of soldiers see only differences between themselves, Jhun Jhun sees only similarity. As the men have certain culturally based expectations of Jhun Jhun, the dog has certain inbred expectations of the men. He expects them to behave as humans are supposed to behave toward dogs, according to that age-old agreement between the two. He expects that his friendly, trusting approach to all men will be recognized as a signal of harmessless and loyalty. Jhun Jhun conveys, "I know about the agreement between us. I intend to abide by it."

When the men torture and kill Jhun Jhun, they are not just killing a dog; they are breaking a longstanding and sacred trust between humans and dogs. Men, having long ago tamed the dog's vi-ciousness and engendered its trust and loyalty, now turn on the dog with a senseless cruelty that even a wild creature could neither comprehend nor anticipate. This is the most despicable kind of brutality.

Terrified and wounded, Jhun Jhun, to the end, honors the relationship that the men disregard. In this, he shows the nobility attributed to his kind. There is only one thing more heart-rending than seeing an innocent treated cruelly, and that is seeing the victim remain noble in the face of betrayal and death. Jhun Jhun does not growl, threaten, or attack. As men show themselves absolutely inhuman, Jhun Jhun remains harmless and submissive; he remains true to the nature that better men have bred into him.

In Jhun Jhun, Manto has created the ideal foil for his human characters. Jhun Jhun shows the reader, more effectively than any human character could, how debased these men are. The dog, with its inability to comprehend cruelty and with loyalty and nobility

that surpass that of many humans, shows by its death that, in the name of religion and country, these men have sunk beneath the level of beasts.

Western readers may feel a distance between themselves and the issues and events of partition. They may even feel a distance between themselves and the human victims of partition, because those people were remote in time, place, and culture; it is a fact of human nature that people have more empathy for others who are like them. But Jhun Jhun is not remote. Any reader who has known any dog immediately grasps this dog's nature. Every reader is aware of that eons-old agreement and bond between Jhun Jhun's species and human beings. Thus, every reader feels the magnitude of the crime committed against Jhun Jhun. The shock waves of that wrong reverberate across time, place, and cultures, much as the shock waves of partition still pulse through India and Pakistan.

Source: Candyce Norvell, Critical Essay on "The Dog of Tithwal," in *Short Stories for Students,* The Gale Group, 2002.

Critical Essay #2

Sanderson holds a master of fine arts degree in fiction writing and is an independent writer. In this essay, Sanderson examines Saadat Hasan Manto 's use of contrasts and similarities to highlight the absurdities of war and national conflict in his short story.

Much of Saadat Hasan Manto's work reflects the pain, anguish, and brutality resulting from the 1947 creation of Pakistan out of parts of India, a division made on religious grounds. Pakistan became a Muslim state and India became a secular country controlled by Hindus but accepting Sikhs. Violence quickly ensued; many Muslims in India were attacked, as were Hindus who remained in what is now Pakistan. Manto often wrote about the result of the 1947 partition of the two countries, focusing on the absurdity of the situation as well as on the plight of those caught in the middle of a decision not of their making.

"Dog of Tithwal" offers a snapshot of the military aftermath of India and Pakistan's bloody partition and the effect these events have had on all parties to the conflict. Just as the artificial line drawn across the subcontinent to delineate India and Pakistan was evidence of human conflicts imposed on the natural world, Manto involves nature in the contrasts and similarities he draws in the story. However, he is careful in his technique to show no preference or favoritism for either the Indian or the Pakistani characters, making it clear that everyone and everything involved in the conflict has been equally damaged. Manto's use of contrasting features and peculiar similarities reflects the conflict between the Pakistani and Indian people provoked by the events of 1947 and highlights the absurdity and senselessness of that situation. Manto's story pushes forth the question: How meaningful are nations, borders, and nationalities when a group of men can decide one day that all the people on one side of an artificially and capriciously drawn line have suddenly lost their citizenship?

Though the story begins with an immediate image of soldiers who have been "entrenched in their positions for several weeks," Manto paints a romantic canvas of the lushness of a countryside deep in the contentment of a fall day. He notes that the air around the soldiers "was heavy with the scent of wild flowers" and the "bees buzzed about lazily." This is a relaxed scene, a moment of repose after the energy and intensity of spring and summer. Briefly, the story reads as if the men in this pastoral setting are ready for a picnic. Their real goal—to kill each other—is as disguised as they are by the mountain's rocks and bushes. In fact, Manto's placing the story in the fall, "the end of September, neither hot nor cold," is a portent of the death to come. As suddenly as the first storm in winter can transform a beautiful fall afternoon, the story moves in a very few paragraphs to a place where death is the reigning motif and two groups of men see evil in a friendly dog.

The story starts not only imbued with a romantic quality but also as if its omniscient narrator is looking at the soldiers and their positions from an elevated vantage point. In the first paragraph, nature is portrayed as a nearly sentient creature, "following its course, quite unmindful of the soldiers hiding behind rocks and camouflaged by

mountain shrubbery." Manto presents his story's world first from a distance, so that man is but a small and somewhat insignificant part of the landscape. Nature is the ruling presence. As the story progresses, however, the narration moves closer to the human scale and becomes more involved with the actions of the individual men on the ground. In this way, Manto has immediately created tension and contrast in his story. Nature is at peace with itself but, with a closer look, man can be seen causing havoc.

Manto develops an interesting aspect within the story that goes against expected contrasts. Even though the two armies are battling each other (although with little enthusiasm), the author portrays them as having numerous similarities. Many of the actions and behaviors of the Indians are echoed in those of the Pakistanis, and vice versa. For example, in both camps soldiers sing bittersweet songs about love, and both of their songs are interrupted by the appearance of Jhun Jhun, the "ordinary mongrel" dog. Both armies are similarly equipped and "at night, they would light huge fires and hear each others' voices echoing through the hills." In the morning, both camps prepare breakfast in a similar fashion, as the Indian soldier Harnam Singh notes through his binoculars. Man to also highlights the universal human feature of vanity on both sides when he has a Pakistani soldier admire and care for his "famous moustache" and an Indian soldier comb his long hair and look at himself in the mirror. The two camps are similar even in their tactical positions, for, as the narrator notes in the story, "no one side had an advantage," with each occupying a hill of equal elevation. The two camps being near perfect mirrors of each other stresses Manto's message that the 1947 partition damaged all parties involved, no matter their position or nationality.

With the similarities of the two armies made clear, Manto has exposed a world in which absurdity rules. Not only does he have two sides that look and sound alike fighting each other, but they are also equally armed and positioned. This has created a standoff in which gunfire is "ritually exchanged" on a regular basis; in fact, so regular is the daily burst of brief gunfire that when the Pakistani soldier Subedar Himmat Khan lets off a shot to encourage the dog back to the Indian side, the Indians are confused and surprised at the break in the anticipated pattern of hostilities. "[I]t was somewhat early in the day for that sort of thing," notes the story's narrator, as though casually describing someone having a drink before the cocktail hour. For the next thirty minutes, however, because the Indian soldiers are feeling bored, the two sides exchange gunshots, "which, of course, were a complete waste of time."

Meaninglessness and absurdity put the soldiers into a situation in which it seems perfectly normal that they should exchange ineffectual gunfire at pre-appointed times and, as well, demand that a dog claim a nationality. When the Indian soldier Harnam Singh demands that the dog, Jhun Jhun, prove his nationality, one unnamed soldier observes, "Even dogs now will have to decide if they are Indian or Pakistani." Manto's use of the dog points to the plight of the refugees caught between India and Pakistan, struggling in a world where differences between people are much more important than any similarities they may share. In fact, the very features of dogs that have placed them so firmly within human communities—that they recognize no differences between humans concerning national boundaries or religious distinctions and offer affection and loyalty toward whomever they are with—are the ultimate reasons for Jhun Jhun's death.

Throughout the story, the soldiers work to demarcate and draw contrasts between themselves and nearly everything around them, including the dog. Jhun Jhun must be either an Indian or Pakistani dog, not simply the "mongrel" he is. Just before Jhun Jhun reappears at the Indian camp, Banta Singh muses that "Dogs can never digest butter" according to a "famous saying"—an almost surreal effort to distinguish Jhun Jhun from humans and make the subsequent and casual efforts to shoot him somehow easier to manage for the soldiers.

Even in the waning moments of the story, Manto continues to stress similarities and contrasts between the soldiers to highlight the painful absurdity of the partition. The Indian soldier Harnam Singh and the Pakistani soldier Himmat Kahn both shoot at Jhun Jhun at the same time, and both find the "game" between them a source of great humor. They shoot at the dog for very different reasons, however, which are reflected in the words each says when Jhun Jhun is finally dead. Himmat Kahn shoots at the dog to encourage him to complete his "mission" and do his "duty" in delivering the message to the Indians that Jhun Jhun is, according to the sign they have attached to him, "a Pakistani dog." According to Himmat Kahn, Jhun Jhun dies a martyr's death. Harnam Singh, on the other hand, shoots at Jhun Jhun because he is seen as an enemy dog approaching the Indian camp from the "Pakistani hill." He portrays the dog as a traitor and declares that Juhn Juhn "died a dog's death."

Not only do the contrasts and peculiar similarities highlight the absurdities of war, but they ultimately allow Manto to question what constitutes a nation. Manto challenges the meaning and value of nationality when he has the soldiers claim that a stray dog can hold Pakistani or Indian citizenship. The border this dog crosses is meaningless to him, as he sees the soldiers, not as Pakistanis or Indians, but as humans who have sometimes been kind to him. There are no contrasts for Jhun Jhun, only similarities. From the vantage point of the story's beginning, above the ground and looking down on the scene, there are no obvious lines clearly showing where one country ends and another begins. The natural world is enduring and seamless and shows no false borders that impulsively restrict the movements of birds or rivers. "The birds sang as they always had," notes the narrator, indicating a certain timelessness to natural events and nature's disregard for such erratic events as war. The story's soldiers, on the other hand, are part of the species that insists on creating and defending artificial borders to separate and isolate large numbers of people from one another. By creating these named divisions between people, humans in "Dog of Tithwal" have constructed distinctions—the ultimate contrast between "us" and "them"—where there are none naturally occurring, and the result is certain pain and death.

Source: Susan Sanderson, Critical Essay on "The Dog of Tithwal," in *Short Stories for Students,* The Gale Group, 2002.

Topics for Further Study

Write either an alternate ending for the story or an epilogue that tells what happens next.

Compare and contrast the characters of Subedar Himmat Khan of the Pakistani army and Jamadar Harnam Singh of the Indian army. What do you think the author meant to convey through their similarities and differences? Why did he draw these characters as he did?

Both songs in "The Dog of Tithwal" are about love. Why do you think the author chose to use songs in this story, and why do you think he chose songs about love?

Research current relations between India and Pakistan. Prepare a report on your findings and include your thoughts about how the partition of India in 1947 continues to influence the relationship between the two countries.

Compare and Contrast

1940s: The end of British colonial rule of India comes in 1947. India is split, with two regions of Pakistan divided by India. Muslims are to live in Pakistan; Hindus and Sikhs in India.

Today: Celebrations of the partition—though not of its violence—take place in 1997 as fifty years of Indian and Pakistani independence are commemorated. Yet even in the celebrations, there is disagreement. Bangladesh marks its anniversary of independence not from 1947 but from February 21, 1952, called "Martyr's Day" to commemorate the first people to die in eastern Pakistan's struggle for nationhood.

1940s: Immediately after partition, those responsible for it declare its success, whereas those who actually live through it suffer immeasurably. It is not until the 1970s that the true story of the partition and its aftermath is widely known.

Today: There is still a division between people who believe that partition was worthwhile—or at least necessary—and others who condemn it. Some say that India and Pakistan have stabilized; others say that instability, corruption, and conflict between the two nuclear-armed nations are worse than ever.

1940s: The social order in which religious groups coexist is abruptly changed under a separatist policy that religious groups must remain apart. According to Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya in *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia,* the violence that follows deepens differences between groups and increases persecution of minority groups. Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh fanatics loot property, kill the young and defenseless, and commit brutal acts in the name of God and country. Millions of refugees lose their homes and have to relocate to a foreign land. The economic stability of the area declines as normal activities are disrupted.

Today: Animosity still exists between Indian and Pakistani peoples, and they prefer to remain separate even when they emigrate to live abroad. *India Abroad* notes that Indians and Pakistanis are forming a new "partition" in Britain, with Indians settling in the south of England and Pakistanis in the north. In 2001, out of a total of 540,000 Pakistanis in England, 229,000 (more than half) live in the north. In the south of England, Indians dominate.

What Do I Read Next?

A translator of Man to's work and an author himself, Khushwant Singh also writes on the horrors of the Indian partition. His book *Train to Pakistan* (1990) is a fictional story, based on real events about a train full of dead Sikhs that arrives in a small village on the frontier between India and Pakistan in 1947. The train's arrival stirs up animosity against the Muslims in the village, and a gangster is the unlikely hero who must try to save them.

The Vintage Book of Indian Writing (1947— 1997), published in 1997 and edited by Salman Rushdie and Elisabeth West, chronicles fifty years of Indian writing translated into English. Manto's short story "Toba Tek Singh," included here, underscores the senselessness of the partition by showing the confusion of Sikh and Hindu mental patients being transferred to India. A memorable incident that demonstrates the madness of the partition occurs when a patient decides to take up residence in a tree so that he does not have to live in either India or Pakistan.

"The Old Banyan" and Other Stories (Pakistan Writers Series) (2000), is a collection written by Ahmad Nadim Qasmi and translated by Faruq Hasan. The fifteen stories by Qasmi, a contemporary Urdu writer who follows the principles of the Progressive Writers Movement, have mostly rural settings and feature realistic narration of dilemmas in the lives of the characters.

An Evening of Caged Beasts (1999), edited by Asif Farrukhi and translated by Farrukhi and Frances W. Pritchett, is a selection of works by contemporary Urdu poets. The volume includes poems by Afzal Ahmed Syed, Azra Abbas, Sarwat Hussain, Sara Shagufta, Zeeshan Sahil, and others. The poems portray the pain and passion of today's Pakistan.

Stars from Another Sky: The Bombay Film World in the 1940s (1998), by Manto, is a collection of thirteen profiles, translated by Khalid Hasan, of prominent people of the 1940s film world in Bombay. The work deals with the linguistic identity of Punjabi-speaking film workers and their struggle to fit into the modern world.

Further Study

Bhalla, Alok, *Life and Works of Saadat Hasan Manto,* Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1997.

This relatively new biography of Manto examines both his life and his body of work.

Harrison, Selig S., Payl H. Kreisberg, and Dennis Kux, eds., *India and Pakistan: The First Fifty Years,* Cambridge University Press, 1999.

This collection of essays covers topics such as political, economic, and social development in India and India's foreign and security policies. It also covers India's relationship with the United States. In addition, the book discusses the socioeconomic changes since partition and looks at challenges for India's future.

Menon, Ritu, and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition,* Rutgers University Press, 1998.

Menon and and Bhasin have compiled transcripts of oral histories of women's experiences in Pakistan, India, and East Pakistan (Bangladesh) during the 1947 partition. The women share horrific memories of abductions, rape, and death.

Moon, Penderel, *Divide and Quit: An Eyewitness Account of the Partition of India,* South Asia Books, 1998.

This book chronicles Moon' s experience as a member of the Indian Civil Service. As an administrator in the region split by partition, he saw the tragedies that followed partition and how they affected India.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Short Stories for Students (SSfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, SSfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of SSfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of SSfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in SSfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by SSfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

SSfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Short Stories for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SSfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SSfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Short Stories for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Short Stories for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from SSfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Short Stories for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from SSfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

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Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Short Stories for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

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Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Short Stories for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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