

Department of Higher Education, Madhya Pradesh Government
Bherulal Patidar Govt. P. G. College, MHOW
[NAAC Accredited 'A' Grade]
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Affiliated to D.A.V.V. Indore
VALUE-ADDED / ADD-ON COURSE
DESIGNED BY DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
The Impact of Bhartiya gyan Parampara on English Literature
MODULE III
Prose

1.0 Introduction

Welcome to Module III: Prose, designed to take learners on a journey through various elements of prose writing, from historical influences to modern expressions. Prose, as a form of written language, offers a diverse landscape of storytelling, reflection, and exploration. This module will deepen your understanding of prose as a literary form and its cultural significance, while also developing your ability to interpret and critique various prose works.

In this module, we will explore key essays, speeches, and narratives from Indian and Western traditions, investigating the influence of Bhartiya Gyan Parampara on English literature. As we examine into different texts, we will reflect on how prose has been a vehicle for expressing philosophical, social, and personal ideas across time and cultures.

1.1 Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- ❖ Understand the development of prose as a literary form across various cultures.
- ❖ Analyze key themes and literary techniques in prose writings.
- ❖ Evaluate the impact of Bhartiya Gyan Parampara on English prose.

- ❖ Critically engage with essays, narratives, and philosophical prose.
- ❖ Apply literary analysis techniques to assess prose works from both Eastern and Western traditions.

1.2 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this module, learners will:

- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze prose texts.
- ❖ Exhibit a comprehensive understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of prose works.
- ❖ Engage with philosophical and thematic elements in both Indian and Western prose.
- ❖ Develop an ability to articulate interpretations and critiques of various prose texts.
- ❖ Apply prose analysis in academic and creative contexts.

1.3 Reference to Prior Learning

Before engaging with this module, learners are expected to have:

- ❖ A foundational understanding of basic literary forms, including poetry and drama.
- ❖ Familiarity with literary terms and techniques used in text analysis.
- ❖ Prior exposure to reading and interpreting short stories, essays, and other prose forms.
- ❖ An understanding of Indian philosophy and literature, especially regarding its spiritual and cultural heritage, will be beneficial.

This module builds upon these foundational skills and deepens your engagement with prose literature, focusing on more complex philosophical and thematic analyses.

Origin of Indian Prose and Its Global Influence

The dawn of Aryan civilization broke for the first time on the horizon, not of Greece or Rome, not of Arabia or Persia, but of India, which may be called the motherland of metaphysics, philosophy, logic, astronomy, science, art, music, and medicine, as well as of truly ethical religion.

The history of essay writing in India dates back to ancient times, with influences from various literary and philosophical traditions. The Vedas, ancient Hindu scriptures, contain essays on philosophy, spirituality, and ethics. Buddhist and Jain texts works like the Dhammapada and the Bhagavati Sutra showcase essay-like writings on spirituality and philosophy. Kautilya's Arthashastra treatise on statecraft and economics is considered one of the earliest Indian essays. Scholars like Adi Shankaracharya and Ramanuja wrote essays on philosophy and theology. Islamic invasions introduced Persian and Arabic literary styles, influencing Indian essay writing. Essays written during the Bhakti were devoted to devotion and spirituality emerged during this period. Introduction of English education led to the adoption of Western-style essay writing. Indian Renaissance thinkers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Vivekananda wrote essays on social reform and nationalism. Nationalist movement essays by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Subhas Chandra Bose fueled India's independence struggle.

Key milestones in the development of Indian essay writing was in (a)1835: Macaulay's Minute on Education introduced English education in India. (b)1872: The Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science was established. (c)1915: The Indian Journal of Economics was launched. Influential Indian Writers in English writing essays are Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi Jawaharlal Nehru, R.K. Narayan, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Ramachandra Guha etc.

Indian philosophies have significantly influenced Western essay writers, shaping their thoughts on spirituality, ethics, and human nature. Ralph Waldo Emerson (American essayist): Emerson's transcendentalism was influenced by Indian ideas on non-dualism (Advaita Vedanta) and the concept of *Oversoul* (Brahman). Henry David Thoreau (American essayist) simple living and civil disobedience were inspired by Gandhi's ideas, which were rooted in Indian philosophy.

Advaita Vedanta (Non-dualism) influenced Western thinkers like Emerson, Thoreau, and Schopenhauer.

Buddhism inspired Western thinkers like William James, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Martin Heidegger. Yoga and Tantra influenced Western thinkers like Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ralph Waldo Emerson (May 25, 1803 – April 27, 1882), who went by his middle name Waldo, was an American essayist, lecturer, philosopher, abolitionist, and poet who led the Transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century. He was seen as a champion of individualism and critical thinking, as well as a prescient critic of the countervailing pressures of society and conformity. Friedrich Nietzsche thought he was "the most gifted of the Americans," and Walt Whitman called him his "master".

The Over-Soul is an essay that was first published in 1841. With the human soul as its overriding subject, several general themes are treated: (1) the existence and nature of the human soul; (2) the relationship between the soul and the personal ego; (3) the relationship of one human soul to another; and (4) the relationship of the human soul to God. The influence of Eastern religions, including Vedanta is visible and evident.

With respect to the four themes listed above, the essay also presents the following views: (a) the human soul is immortal, immensely vast, and beautiful; (b) the conscious ego is slight and limited in comparison to the soul despite the fact that humans habitually mistake their ego for their true self; (c) at some level, the souls of all people are connected, but the precise manner and degree of this connection is not spelled out; and (d) that the soul is created by and has an existence that is similar to God, or that God exists within humans.

The Over-Soul is now considered one of Emerson's greatest writings.

The essay includes the following passage: *The Supreme Critic on the errors of the past and the present, and the only prophet of that which must be, is that great nature in which we rest, as the earth lies in the soft arms of the atmosphere; that Unity, that Over-Soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other; that common heart.*

For Emerson the term denotes a supreme underlying unity which transcends duality or plurality, much in keeping with the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta. This non-Abrahamic interpretation of Emerson's use of the term is further supported by the fact that Emerson's Journal records in 1845 suggest that he was reading the Bhagavad Gita and Henry Thomas Colebrooke's essays on the Vedas. Emerson goes on in the same essay to further articulate his view of this dichotomy between phenomenal plurality and transcendental unity: We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related, the eternal ONE. And this deep power in which

we exist and whose beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one. We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are shining parts, is the soul. *Oversoul* has more recently come to be used by Eastern philosophers such as Meher Baba and others as the closest English language equivalent of the Vedic concept of *Paramatman*. (In Sanskrit the word *param* means "supreme" and *atman* means "soul"; thus, *Paramatman* literally means "Supreme-Soul". The term is used frequently in discussion of Eastern metaphysics and has also entered western vernacular. In this context, the term "Over-soul" is understood as the collective indivisible Soul, of which all individual souls or identities are included. The experience of this underlying reality of the indivisible "I am" state of the Over-soul is said to be veiled from the human mind by *sanskaras*, or impressions, acquired over the course of evolution and reincarnation. Such past impressions form a kind of sheath between the Over-soul and its true identity, as they give rise to the tendency of identification with the gross differentiated body. Thus the world, as perceived through the impressions of the past appears plural, while reality experienced in the present, unencumbered by past impressions (the unconditioned or liberated mind), perceives itself as the One indivisible totality, i.e. the Over-soul. *The Over-Soul* is divided into five sections. In the first section (paragraphs 1-3), Emerson provides a general introduction, informing us of his intent to define the Over-Soul. In the second section (paragraphs 4-10), he defines this universal spirit but admits that, ultimately, it can be known only through moral actions, not language. The third section (paragraphs 11-15) addresses the relationship between the Over-Soul and society, and the fourth (paragraphs 16-21) focuses on how the Over-Soul is revealed to us. The essay concludes with a discussion of how the Over-Soul manifests itself in individuals (paragraphs 22-30).

To summarize Over soul is "that great nature in which we rest ... that Unity within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other."

We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole." Perceptible only through intuition and not to be communicated through words, this divine spirit is the source of all moral and intellectual growth, for "the heart, which abandons itself to the Supreme Mind, finds itself related to all its works and will travel a royal road to particular knowledge and powers." The revelations of truth received by various original thinkers and teachers proceed from "an influx of the Divine mind" into their minds. "The nature of these revelations is

always the same: they are perceptions of the absolute law.” What we call genius is simply the true insight derived from an influx of this “same Omniscience . . . into the intellect.” This universal and benign omnipresence is neither “our god of tradition” nor “our god of rhetoric,” but a God known to men only in moments of mystic enthusiasm, whose visitation leaves them altered, self-reliant, and purified of petty aims. The man who has received intimations of the highest laws in this fashion “will weave no longer a spotted life of shreds and patches, but he will live with a divine unity.”

Self-Assessment

1. What are the major themes in the essay *Over Soul*?
2. The essay *Over -Soul* has been deeply influenced by Hindu religion? Elucidate

Henry David Thoreau

Henry David Thoreau (born July 12, 1817, Concord, Massachusetts, U.S.—died May 6, 1862, Concord) was an American essayist, poet, and practical philosopher renowned for having lived the doctrines of Transcendentalism as recorded in his masterwork, *Walden* (1854), and for having been a vigorous advocate of civil liberties, as evidenced in the essay *Civil Disobedience* (1849).

Henry David Thoreau's essay "The Higher Laws," part of his seminal work *Walden*, explores the themes of self-discipline, spirituality, and the relationship between humanity and nature. In this essay, Thoreau delves into the concept of living according to higher moral and spiritual laws rather than merely following societal norms or physical desires. He emphasizes the importance of self-restraint and the pursuit of a higher moral purpose, suggesting that true fulfillment comes from aligning oneself with these higher principles. Thoreau discusses the tension between the physical and spiritual aspects of human nature, advocating for a life that prioritizes spiritual growth and moral integrity over materialistic pursuits. He believes that by adhering to these higher laws, individuals can achieve a more profound connection with nature and the divine, leading to a more meaningful and purposeful existence. His essay reflects Thoreau's transcendentalist beliefs, which emphasize the inherent goodness of people and nature, as well as the potential for individuals to

transcend the physical world through personal intuition and spiritual insight. Thoreau's ideas in *The Higher Laws* encourage readers to reflect on their own lives and consider how they can live more deliberately and in harmony with the natural world and their inner moral compass. Thoreau's emphasis on simple living, self-sufficiency, and renunciation of material possessions parallels the Gita's teachings on detachment (Vairagya) and the importance of living a simple life. Thoreau's experiment in living at Walden Pond reflects the Gita's emphasis on spiritual exploration, self-inquiry, and the pursuit of spiritual growth. Thoreau's concept of "inner strength" and "self-reliance" echoes the Gita's idea of developing inner strength (Atma-bala) through self-discipline and self-awareness. Thoreau's observations on nature and its relationship to the human experience parallel the Gita's teachings on the interconnectedness of all living beings and the importance of recognizing the divine in nature.

Although it is true that Thoreau's interpretation of the Gita was selective and influenced by his own philosophical and literary agenda. Some critics argue that Thoreau's use of Eastern philosophy, including the Gita, represents a form of cultural appropriation, where he adopts and adapts ideas without fully understanding or acknowledging their cultural context. Overall, while the Bhagavad Gita's influence on Walden is evident, it is essential to consider the complexities and nuances of Thoreau's interpretation and appropriation of Eastern philosophy.

Thoreau's Text in This Column	My Comments in This Column
<p>As I came home through the woods with my string of fish, trailing my pole, it being now quite dark, I caught a glimpse of a woodchuck stealing across my path, and felt a strange thrill of savage delight, and was strongly tempted to seize and devour him raw; not that I was hungry then, except for that wildness which he represented. Once or twice, however, while I lived at the pond, I found myself</p>	<p>The first sentence ties back to the previous chapter, as Thoreau was likely to do.</p> <p>Thoreau states that he loves both our savage impulses and our impulses towards purity.</p>

ranging the woods, like a half-starved hound, with a strange abandonment, seeking some kind of venison which I might devour, and no morsel could have been too savage for me. The wildest scenes had become unaccountably familiar. I found in myself, and still find, an instinct toward a higher, or, as it is named, spiritual life, as do most men, and another toward a primitive rank and savage one, and I reverence them both. I love the wild not less than the good. The wildness and adventure that are in fishing still recommended it to me. I like sometimes to take rank hold on life and spend my day more as the animals do. Perhaps I have owed to this employment and to hunting, when quite young, my closest acquaintance with Nature. They early introduce us to and detain us in scenery with which otherwise, at that age, we should have little acquaintance. Fishermen, hunters, woodchoppers, and others, spending their lives in the fields and woods, in a peculiar sense a part of Nature themselves, are often in a more favorable mood for observing her, in the intervals of their pursuits, than philosophers or poets even, who approach her with expectation. She is not afraid to exhibit herself to them. The traveller on the prairie is naturally a hunter, on the head waters of the Missouri and Columbia a trapper, and at the Falls of St. Mary a fisherman. He who is only a traveller learns things at second-hand and by the halves, and is poor authority. We are most interested when science reports what those men already know practically or instinctively, for that alone is a true humanity, or account of human experience.

He claims that hunters, fishermen, and woodchoppers often can appreciate Nature more than philosophers and poets.

According to the American Tradition in Literature, 1967, The Falls of St. Mary mentioned is at Sault Ste Marie, Ontario, while according to The Variorum Walden, it is in southern British Columbia. While Thoreau was probably referring to something he had recently read and that his townspeople might recognize, does it really matter today which St. Mary's Falls he had in mind? Would it make any difference if the falls were in England or South Africa? For that reason, I ignore most such notes.

They mistake who assert that the Yankee has few amusements, because he has not so many public holidays, and men and boys do not play so many games as they do in England, for here the more primitive but solitary amusements of hunting, fishing, and the like have not yet given place to the former. Almost every New England boy among my contemporaries shouldered a fowling-piece between the ages of ten and fourteen; and his hunting and fishing grounds were not limited, like the preserves of an English nobleman, but were more boundless even than those of a savage. No wonder, then, that he did not oftener stay to play on the common. But already a change is taking place, owing, not to an increased humanity, but to an increased scarcity of game, for perhaps the hunter is the greatest friend of the animals hunted, not excepting the Humane Society.

Moreover, when at the pond, I wished sometimes to add fish to my fare for variety. I have actually fished from the same kind of necessity that the first fishers did. Whatever humanity I might conjure up against it was all factitious, and concerned my philosophy more than my feelings. I speak of fishing only now, for I had long felt differently about fowling, and sold my gun before I went to the woods. Not that I am less humane than others, but I did not perceive that my feelings were much affected. I did not pity the fishes nor the worms. This was habit. As for fowling, during the last years that I carried a gun my excuse was that I was studying ornithology, and sought only new or rare

Due to the Puritan history of New England, public holidays were not really celebrated. Even New England Christmas was a short, quiet, and to outsiders, a dismal and depressing occasion. It's easy to see why New Englanders would choose hunting as a recreation.

In the last sentence, is Thoreau being sarcastic? In "Winter Animals," he points out several species which become extinct in his area due to over-hunting.

Thoreau mentions the issue of being humane but does not discuss whether fishes and birds have individual consciousnesses and are aware of pain.

Bird watchers routinely shot birds long past Thoreau's time in order to study them better. Thoreau suggests that by studying the birds without the gun and paying more attention to the birds' activities, one will become more knowledgeable anyway.

Since New England was lacking in other outdoor sports, Thoreau recommended hunting and fishing. How else could children learn to love the woods?

birds. But I confess that I am now inclined to think that there is a finer way of studying ornithology than this. It requires so much closer attention to the habits of the birds, that, if for that reason only, I have been willing to omit the gun. Yet notwithstanding the objection on the score of humanity, I am compelled to doubt if equally valuable sports are ever substituted for these; and when some of my friends have asked me anxiously about their boys, whether they should let them hunt, I have answered, yes, -- remembering that it was one of the best parts of my education, -- make them hunters, though sportsmen only at first, if possible, mighty hunters at last, so that they shall not find game large enough for them in this or any vegetable wilderness, -- hunters as well as fishers of men. Thus far I am of the opinion of Chaucer's nun, who "yave not of the text a pulled hen That saith that hunters ben not holy men."

"Fishers of men" is Jesus' statement.

It was the monk, not the nun, who didn't agree with the text. Rather than engaging in humble work or in study, the monk spent all of his time hunting.

There is a period in the history of the individual, as of the race, when the hunters are the "best men," -- as the Algonquins called them. We cannot but pity the boy who has never fired a gun; he is no more humane, while his education has been sadly neglected. This was my answer with respect to those youths who were bent on this pursuit, trusting that they would soon outgrow it. No humane being, past the thoughtless age of boyhood, will wantonly murder any creature which holds its life by the same tenure that he does. The hare in its extremity cries like a child. I warn you, mothers, that my

The argument here is that as the individual and mankind mature, they will outgrow the desire to hunt. Note that here Thoreau recognizes a desire for life and the ability to feel terror and pain on the part of the animal.

"Philanthropic" literally means "loving humans."

sympathies do not always make the usual philanthropic distinctions.

Such is oftenest the young man's introduction to the forest, and the most original part of himself. He goes thither at first as a hunter and fisher, until at last, if he has the seeds of a better life in him, he distinguishes his proper objects, as a poet or naturalist it may be, and leaves the gun and fish-pole behind. The mass of men are still and always young in this respect. In some countries a hunting parson is no uncommon sight. Such a one might make a good shepherd's dog, but is far from being the Good Shepherd. I have been surprised to consider that the only obvious employment, except wood-chopping, ice-cutting, or the like business, which ever to my knowledge detained at Walden Pond for a whole half-day any of my fellow-citizens, whether fathers or children of the town, with just one exception, was fishing. Commonly they did not think that they were lucky, or well paid for their time, unless they got a long string of fish, though they had the opportunity of seeing the pond all the while. They might go there a thousand times before the sediment of fishing would sink to the bottom and leave their purpose pure; but no doubt such a clarifying process would be going on all the while. The Governor and his Council faintly remember the pond, for they went a-fishing there when they were boys; but now they are too old and dignified to go a-fishing, and so they know it no more forever. Yet even they expect to go to heaven at last. If the legislature regards it, it is chiefly to

Thoreau feels that through hunting and fishing, the person with "the seeds for a better life," the "embryo man" will gradually recognize a higher purpose for going to the woods, although the majority of people will not. Instead, they will visit the woods only to go fishing. Thoreau feels that this experience will improve them, nonetheless. He considers it ironic that the governor and heads of state expect to go to heaven yet can't appreciate Walden Pond.

I can't explain the metaphor about the "book of hooks" and "impaling the legislature for a bait" but the imagery is reminiscent of John Donne's "The Bait." At any rate, the idea is that there are purposes far beyond those understood by the leaders of the government.

regulate the number of books to be used there; but they know nothing about the book of hooks with which to angle for the pond itself, impaling the legislature for a bait. Thus, even in civilized communities, the embryo man passes through the hunter stage of development.

I have found repeatedly, of late years, that I cannot fish without falling a little in self-respect. I have tried it again and again. I have skill at it, and, like many of my fellows, a certain instinct for it, which revives from time to time, but always when I have done I feel that it would have been better if I had not fished. I think that I do not mistake. It is a faint intimation, yet so are the first streaks of morning. There is unquestionably this instinct in me which belongs to the lower orders of creation; yet with every year I am less a fisherman, though without more humanity or even wisdom; at present I am no fisherman at all. But I see that if I were to live in a wilderness I should again be tempted to become a fisher and hunter in earnest. Beside, there is something essentially unclean about this diet and all flesh, and I began to see where housework commences, and whence the endeavor, which costs so much, to wear a tidy and respectable appearance each day, to keep the house sweet and free from all ill odors and sights. Having been my own butcher and scullion and cook, as well as the gentleman for whom the dishes were served up, I can speak from an unusually complete experience. The practical objection to animal food in my case was its uncleanness; and besides, when I had caught and

Although the first sentence of this chapter closely tied it to Thoreau's life at the pond, it's clear from this paragraph that it was written much later. By this time, Thoreau is no longer eating woodchucks and has even abandoned fishing.

The argument that meat-eating is not clean does not seem especially strong to me. Nowadays, a large percentage of people eat their meals in restaurants and never even have to wash dishes, let alone having to kill and butcher the animal or store it without refrigeration or dispose of the carcass without the help of a garbage service. They are unaware of sanitation and health problems at the slaughter houses.

Note that Thoreau not only reduced his meat-eating but also the amount of food that he ate. We seen in his list of foods in "Economy" that he also limited the variety of foods that he ate as well. His habit when eating with others was to eat the closest dish, without trying to eat a variety.

While eating a diet with fewer calories has been found to be healthful, it has also been discover that

cleaned and cooked and eaten my fish, they seemed not to have fed me essentially. It was insignificant and unnecessary, and cost more than it came to. A little bread or a few potatoes would have done as well, with less trouble and filth. Like many of my contemporaries, I had rarely for many years used animal food, or tea, or coffee, &c.; not so much because of any ill effects which I had traced to them, as because they were not agreeable to my imagination. The repugnance to animal food is not the effect of experience, but is an instinct. It appeared more beautiful to live low and fare hard in many respects; and though I never did so, I went far enough to please my imagination. I believe that every man who has ever been earnest to preserve his higher or poetic faculties in the best condition has been particularly inclined to abstain from animal food, and from much food of any kind. It is a significant fact, stated by entomologists, I find it in Kirby and Spence, that "some insects in their perfect state, though furnished with organs of feeding, make no use of them"; and they lay it down as "a general rule, that almost all insects in this state eat much less than in that of larvae. The voracious caterpillar when transformed into a butterfly... and the gluttonous maggot when become a fly" content themselves with a drop or two of honey or some other sweet liquid. The abdomen under the wings of the butterfly still represents the larva. This is the tidbit which tempts his insectivorous fate. The gross feeder is a man in the larva state; and there are whole nations in that condition, nations without

the best diet includes eating a good variety of grains, fruits, and vegetables.

Does eating a big meal keep one from having a good imagination? There are much stronger arguments against over-indulgence and against meat-eating.

fancy or imagination, whose vast abdomens betray them.

It is hard to provide and cook so simple and clean a diet as will not offend the imagination; but this, I think, is to be fed when we feed the body; they should both sit down at the same table. Yet perhaps this may be done. The fruits eaten temperately need not make us ashamed of our appetites, nor interrupt the worthiest pursuits. But put an extra condiment into your dish, and it will poison you. It is not worth the while to live by rich cookery. Most men would feel shame if caught preparing with their own hands precisely such a dinner, whether of animal or vegetable food, as is every day prepared for them by others. Yet till this is otherwise we are not civilized, and, if gentlemen and ladies, are not true men and women. This certainly suggests what change is to be made. It may be vain to ask why the imagination will not be reconciled to flesh and fat. I am satisfied that it is not. Is it not a reproach that man is a carnivorous animal? True, he can and does live, in a great measure, by preying on other animals; but this is a miserable way, -- as any one who will go to snaring rabbits, or slaughtering lambs, may learn, -- and he will be regarded as a benefactor of his race who shall teach man to confine himself to a more innocent and wholesome diet. Whatever my own practice may be, I have no doubt that it is a part of the destiny of the human race, in its gradual improvement, to leave off eating animals, as surely as the savage tribes have left off

Note he says that fruits eaten temperately are not a problem; Thoreau loved berry picking, mentioned below. Many condiments are known health risks: salt causes high blood pressure and is responsible for heart attacks; MSG was nearly banned.

My contention for many years has been that most people would quit eating meat if they had to kill the animals themselves. Most animals are slaughtered in assembly lines by immigrant workers who have a high injury rate and no health benefits or insurance.

A friend of mine wanted to convince me that it was OK to eat pork by proving that I was unwilling to kill a chicken. Although I had never killed one, I always assumed that I would be willing to do so, but I was not, so I immediately quit eating chicken as a result.

eating each other when they came in contact with the more civilized.

If one listens to the faintest but constant suggestions of his genius, which are certainly true, he sees not to what extremes, or even insanity, it may lead him; and yet that way, as he grows more resolute and faithful, his road lies. The faintest assured objection which one healthy man feels will at length prevail over the arguments and customs of mankind. No man ever followed his genius till it misled him. Though the result were bodily weakness, yet perhaps no one can say that the consequences were to be regretted, for these were a life in conformity to higher principles. If the day and the night are such that you greet them with joy, and life emits a fragrance like flowers and sweet-scented herbs, is more elastic, more starry, more immortal, -- that is your success. All nature is your congratulation, and you have cause momentarily to bless yourself. The greatest gains and values are farthest from being appreciated. We easily come to doubt if they exist. We soon forget them. They are the highest reality. Perhaps the facts most astounding and most real are never communicated by man to man. The true harvest of my daily life is somewhat as intangible and indescribable as the tints of morning or evening. It is a little star-dust caught, a segment of the rainbow which I have clutched.

Yet, for my part, I was never unusually squeamish; I could sometimes eat a fried rat with a good relish,

While Thoreau was an individualist, he was very much a Transcendentalist, as this passage makes clear. The Transcendentalists believed that truth could be discovered within. Charles Mayo Ellis, in "An Essay on Transcendentalism," (found in Perry Miller's *The American Transcendentalists*) wrote, ". . . the highest part of our nature. This has the power of perceiving that which is independent of itself -- true, good, and beautiful. For this it longs; this gives it strength and vigor. This is not doubted in everyday life -- all act upon it. We call him whom we find destitute of it an incomplete man, insane." Thoreau's passage also echoes statements made in "Economy" and "Where I Lived."

Thoreau makes the point rather strongly that his desire for a purer diet is not caused by

if it were necessary. I am glad to have drunk water so long, for the same reason that I prefer the natural sky to an opium-eater's heaven. I would fain keep sober always; and there are infinite degrees of drunkenness. I believe that water is the only drink for a wise man; wine is not so noble a liquor; and think of dashing the hopes of a morning with a cup of warm coffee, or of an evening with a dish of tea! Ah, how low I fall when I am tempted by them! Even music may be intoxicating. Such apparently slight causes destroyed Greece and Rome, and will destroy England and America. Of all ebriosity, who does not prefer to be intoxicated by the air he breathes? I have found it to be the most serious objection to coarse labors long continued, that they compelled me to eat and drink coarsely also. But to tell the truth, I find myself at present somewhat less particular in these respects. I carry less religion to the table, ask no blessing; not because I am wiser than I was, but, I am obliged to confess, because, however much it is to be regretted, with years I have grown more coarse and indifferent. Perhaps these questions are entertained only in youth, as most believe of poetry. My practice is "nowhere," my opinion is here. Nevertheless I am far from regarding myself as one of those privileged ones to whom the Ved refers when it says, that "he who has true faith in the Omnipresent Supreme Being may eat all that exists," that is, is not bound to inquire what is his food, or who prepares it; and even in their case it is to be observed, as a Hindoo commentator has remarked, that the Vedant limits this privilege to "the time of distress."

squemishness. He rejects alcohol, sees his pleasure in coffee and tea as a weakness, and even warns against strong music. While members of the hippie movement sometimes claimed Thoreau as one of their own, he would have rejected not only their drugs and sex but also their music.

Wasn't Emily Dickinson inspired by Thoreau's "Of all ebriosity, who does not prefer to be intoxicated by the air he breathes?" when she wrote:

Inebriate of air am I,
And debauchee of dew,
Reeling, through endless summer days,
From inns of molten blue.

Thoreau and Dickinson preferred a natural high created by sensitivity rather than by excess.

Who has not sometimes derived an inexpressible satisfaction from his food in which appetite had no share? I have been thrilled to think that I owed a mental perception to the commonly gross sense of taste, that I have been inspired through the palate, that some berries which I had eaten on a hillside had fed my genius. "The soul not being mistress of herself," says Thseng-tseu, "one looks, and one does not see; one listens, and one does not hear; one eats, and one does not know the savor of food." He who distinguishes the true savor of his food can never be a glutton; he who does not cannot be otherwise. A puritan may go to his brown-bread crust with as gross an appetite as ever an alderman to his turtle. Not that food which entereth into the mouth defileth a man, but the appetite with which it is eaten. It is neither the quality nor the quantity, but the devotion to sensual savors; when that which is eaten is not a viand to sustain our animal, or inspire our spiritual life, but food for the worms that possess us. If the hunter has a taste for mud-turtles, muskrats, and other such savage tidbits, the fine lady indulges a taste for jelly made of a calf's foot, or for sardines from over the sea, and they are even. He goes to the mill-pond, she to her preserve-pot. The wonder is how they, how you and I, can live this slimy, beastly life, eating and drinking.

Our whole life is startlingly moral. There is never an instant's truce between virtue and vice. Goodness is the only investment that never fails. In the music of the harp which trembles round the world it is the insisting on this which thrills us. The

One way to enjoy life more is by becoming more sensitive. I find by not using salt, pepper, and spices that my tongue becomes more sensitive, and thus my food is quite flavorful. My food is healthier too. Although I don't use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs, I do experience natural highs that can cause no harm. Because I am not constantly assaulted by loud music or the noise of traffic, I can enjoy the faint sounds of the woods.

For my part, I can't condemn eating and drinking, or see the desire for unusual flavors as wrong. However, there would be a heavy price to be paid for an exotic cuisine: my freedom. I would rather have my simple, healthy diet and freedom to live the life that I choose than have all the luxurious meals in the universe without that freedom.

One does not have to have a Puritan background to recognize that there is always an internal struggle between experiencing some immediate pleasure and being more temperate. If people surrendered to whatever impulses they felt at the time, we would

harp is the travelling patterer for the Universe's Insurance Company, recommending its laws, and our little goodness is all the assessment that we pay. Though the youth at last grows indifferent, the laws of the universe are not indifferent, but are forever on the side of the most sensitive. Listen to every zephyr for some reproof, for it is surely there, and he is unfortunate who does not hear it. We cannot touch a string or move a stop but the charming moral transfixes us. Many an irksome noise, go a long way off, is heard as music, a proud, sweet satire on the meanness of our lives.

have a great deal more robbery, murder, rape, and violence than we do now. The surprising truth is that very few people are willing to commit crimes, even though it would be easy for all of us to do so.

We are conscious of an animal in us, which awakens in proportion as our higher nature slumbers. It is reptile and sensual, and perhaps cannot be wholly expelled; like the worms which, even in life and health, occupy our bodies. Possibly we may withdraw from it, but never change its nature. I fear that it may enjoy a certain health of its own; that we may be well, yet not pure. The other day I picked up the lower jaw of a hog, with white and sound teeth and tusks, which suggested that there was an animal health and vigor distinct from the spiritual. This creature succeeded by other means than temperance and purity. "That in which men differ from brute beasts," says Mencius, "is a thing very inconsiderable; the common herd lose it very soon; superior men preserve it carefully." Who knows what sort of life would result if we had attained to purity? If I knew so wise a man as could teach me purity I would go to seek him forthwith. "A command over our passions, and over the

One current theory about how our minds work is that one part of the brain is more primitive than the rest, and this part is described as being lizard-like or dinosaur-like. One book discussing this is called *Dragons of Eden*, another *Dinosaur Brains*.

Thoreau evidently is surprised that the hog could be healthy even though it had no concept of being pure. While avoiding drugs and some foods may be good for the health, there is no physical advantage caused by a pure mind! These ideas were common, however, and children were taught not to masturbate (called self-abuse) because doing so would leave them sickly and unhealthy. My mother once gave me a book called *Self-Help for Boys*, written during the 30's, which focused on that topic.

Thoreau's next remarks, beginning "the generative energy," are evidently about masturbation. He said about Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, which is hardly an erotic book: "I do not so much wish that it were

external senses of the body, and good acts, are declared by the Ved to be indispensable in the mind's approximation to God." Yet the spirit can for the time pervade and control every member and function of the body, and transmute what ill form is the grossest sensuality into purity and devotion.

The generative energy, which, when we are loose, dissipates and makes us unclean, when we are continent invigorates and inspires us. Chastity is the flowering of man; and what are called Genius, Heroism, Holiness, and the like, are but various fruits which succeed it. Man flows at once to God when the channel of purity is open. By turns our purity inspires and our impurity casts us down. He is blessed who is assured that the animal is dying out in him day by day, and the divine being established. Perhaps there is none but has cause for shame on account of the inferior and brutish nature to which he is allied. I fear that we are such gods or demigods only as fauns and satyrs, the divine allied to beasts, the creatures of appetite, and that, to some extent, our very life is our disgrace. --

"How happy's he who hath due place assigned
To his beasts and disafforested his mind!

* * * * *

Can use this horse, goat, wolf, and ev'ry beast,
And is not ass himself to all the rest!
Else man not only is the herd of swine,
But he's those devils too which did incline
Them to a headlong rage, and made them worse."

not written, as that men and women were so pure that they could read it without harm."

According to Harding, the poem is from John Donne (who advocates sexual freedom elsewhere; see "The Indifferent").

All sensuality is one, though it takes many forms; all purity is one. It is the same whether a man eat, or drink, or cohabit, or sleep sensually. They are but one appetite, and we only need to see a person do any one of these things to know how great a sensualist he is. The impure can neither stand nor sit with purity. When the reptile is attacked at one mouth of his burrow, he shows himself at another. If you would be chaste, you must be temperate. What is chastity? How shall a man know if he is chaste? He shall not know it. We have heard of this virtue, but we know not what it is. We speak conformably to the rumor which we have heard. From exertion come wisdom and purity; from sloth ignorance and sensuality. In the student sensuality is a sluggish habit of mind. An unclean person is universally a slothful one, one who sits by a stove, whom the sun shines on prostrate, who reposes without being fatigued. If you would avoid uncleanness, and all the sins, work earnestly, though it be at cleaning a stable. Nature is hard to be overcome, but she must be overcome. What avails it that you are Christian, if you are not purer than the heathen, if you deny yourself no more, if you are not more religious? I know of many systems of religion esteemed heathenish whose precepts fill the reader with shame, and provoke him to new endeavors, though it be to the performance of rites merely.

I hesitate to say these things, but it is not because of the subject, -- I care not how obscene my words are, -- but because I cannot speak of them without

Thoreau, in his desire for purity, suggests keeping busy, as keeping busy reduces sexual impulses. He cannot claim to be pure because the human mind naturally thinks about sex from time to time. He contradicts his statements elsewhere by speaking here against idleness and against Nature.

To me, the problem is not with our natural sexual appetites but with our behavior. We have to control our behavior to prevent undesirable social consequences. Even consensual sex between adults leads to disease, divorce, unwanted pregnancies, and unloved children. Inasmuch as Thoreau's deviancy was only within his imagination, he has nothing to feel ashamed about.

While I don't agree with recreational sex, I do think it is healthier that people can now talk frankly about their sexual problems.

betraying my impurity. We discourse freely without shame of one form of sensuality, and are silent about another. We are so degraded that we cannot speak simply of the necessary functions of human nature. In earlier ages, in some countries, every function was reverently spoken of and regulated by law. Nothing was too trivial for the Hindoo lawgiver, however offensive it may be to modern taste. He teaches how to eat, drink, cohabit, void excrement and urine, and the like, elevating what is mean, and does not falsely excuse himself by calling these things trifles.

This contradicts what was said earlier: in the first part of "Economy," Thoreau criticizes all the rules governing the way we live our lives.

Every man is the builder of a temple, called his body, to the god he worships, after a style purely his own, nor can he get off by hammering marble instead. We are all sculptors and painters, and our material is our own flesh and blood and bones. Any nobleness begins at once to refine a man's features, any meanness or sensuality to imbrute them.

Here I agree wholeheartedly. Live the way you believe; be your own hero and the masterpiece of your own efforts. Create for yourself a healthy body and a healthy mind.

John Farmer sat at his door one September evening, after a hard day's work, his mind still running on his labor more or less. Having bathed, he sat down to recreate his intellectual man. It was a rather cool evening, and some of his neighbors were apprehending a frost. He had not attended to the train of his thoughts long when he heard some one playing on a flute, and that sound harmonized with his mood. Still he thought of his work; but the burden of his thought was, that though this kept running in his head, and he found himself planning and contriving it against his will, yet it concerned

Since Thoreau played the flute, I wonder if he isn't the imagined flute player here.

Of course, Thoreau is not talking about an actual event but an imagined one.

While I agree that the average person needs spiritual enlightenment, I do not think the best route is through self-denial.

him very little. It was no more than the scurf of his skin, which was constantly shuffled off. But the notes of the flute came home to his ears out of a different sphere from that he worked in, and suggested work for certain faculties which slumbered in him. They gently did away with the street, and the village, and the state in which he lived. A voice said to him, -- Why do you stay here and live this mean moiling life, when a glorious existence is possible for you? Those same stars twinkle over other fields than these. -- But how to come out of this condition and actually migrate thither? All that he could think of was to practise some new austerity, to let his mind descend into his body and redeem it, and treat himself with ever increasing respect.

Letting "his mind descend into his body" would be to let his mind control his body rather than his body control his mind.

The Higher Law is a thought-provoking essay that challenges readers to reevaluate their relationship with nature, society, and themselves. While criticisms exist, Thoreau's work remains a powerful exploration of simple living, individualism, and spiritual growth. Thoreau believes in the importance of the hunt as an early stage in a person's education and upbringing, noting that intellectual and spiritual individuals then move on to higher callings, leaving "the gun and fish-pole behind." The nature of reality and the ultimate truth. The path to spiritual growth and self-realization. The concept of duty (dharma) and moral responsibility. The relationship between the individual and the universe. Huxley's essay is written in clear and concise language. His writing is accessible, making complex philosophical concepts understandable to a broad audience. Huxley identifies commonalities between the Gita's teachings and Western philosophical traditions, promoting cross-cultural understanding.

Self-Assessment

1 Write an analysis of the essay 'The Higher Law'?

2. Discuss major themes in essay 'The Higher Law'?

Ezra Pound

Ezra Pound was born on October 30, 1885, in Hailey, Idaho. Pound attended Hamilton College and the University of Pennsylvania.

Pound moved to London in 1908 and joined the Imagist movement. He published his first book, *A Lume Spento*, in 1908. Pound edited *The Egoist* magazine and published his epic poem, *The Cantos*, between 1917 and 1969. *A Guide to Kulchur* was published in 1938.

Chapter 10: "The True Basis of Economic Life" from "A Guide to Kulchur" Pound argues that the true basis of economic life is not material wealth or profit, but rather the pursuit of righteousness and selfless action (Dharma and Nishkama Karma).

Pound rejects the notion that economic life should be driven by profit and material gain. He advocates for selfless action (Nishkama Karma) as the foundation of economic life. Pound emphasizes the importance of individual duty (Swadharma) and responsibility in economic life. He advocates for a holistic approach to economics, considering the well-being of all members of society. Pound rejects usury and materialism as corrupting influences on economic life. Pound draws on Indian philosophical concepts, including:

1. Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Verse 25)
2. Dharma (righteous living)
3. Swadharma (individual duty)
4. Karma (action and consequence)
5. Maya (illusion)

He quotes the Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Verse 25) to illustrate selfless action and references Indian philosophical concepts like Karma and Maya to support his argument.

Text

Chapter 10: The True Basis of Economic Life

"The true basis of economic life is not material, but spiritual. It is not the goods, the products, that make life worth living, but the process, the activity, the doing.

The true wealth of a nation is not its gold, its silver, its machines, but its men, their energy, their creativity. The true basis of economic life is not exploitation, but cooperation. It is not the individual, but the community, that is the basic unit of economic life. The individual is not a separate entity, but a part of the social organism. His well-being is not separate from the well-being of the community. The true basis of economic life is not competition, but reciprocity. It is not the survival of the fittest, but the survival of the most cooperative. The true wealth of a nation is not its wealth, but its health. Health is not just physical, but mental and spiritual. A nation's prosperity is not measured by its wealth, but by the well-being of its citizens. The true basis of economic life is not profit, but use. The value of a product is not its market value, but its usefulness. The economic system should be based on the principles of justice, equity, and compassion. The true basis of economic life is not the accumulation of wealth, but the cultivation of life.

Section 1: Critique of Western Economics

Pound rejects the notion that economic life should be driven by profit and material gain. He argues that this approach leads to exploitation and neglect of social welfare.

Section 2: Importance of Selfless Action

Pound advocates for selfless action (Nishkama Karma) as the foundation of economic life. He quotes the Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Verse 25) to illustrate this concept.

Section 3: Individual Duty and Responsibility.

Pound emphasizes the importance of individual duty (Swadharma) and responsibility in economic life. He argues that individuals should prioritize their duties over personal gain.

Section 4: Holistic Approach

Pound advocates for a holistic approach to economics, considering the well-being of all members of society. He rejects the idea that economic growth should come at the expense of social welfare.

Section 5: Rejection of Usury

Pound rejects usury and materialism as corrupting influences on economic life. He argues that these practices lead to inequality and social injustice. Pound draws on Indian philosophical concepts. Pound concludes that a truly healthy economic system must be based on righteousness, selfless action, and individual responsibility. He argues that this approach will lead to a more equitable and just society.

Pound concludes that a truly healthy economic system must be based on righteousness, selfless action, and individual responsibility, rather than material gain and profit. The following are few quotes from Chapter 10 as follows:

"The true basis of economic life is not material, but spiritual."

Pound sets the tone for his argument, emphasizing the spiritual over the material.

"It is not the goods, the products, that make life worth living, but the process, the activity, the doing." He highlights the importance of the process over the end product, emphasizing the value of human activity. "The true wealth of a nation is not its gold, its silver, its machines, but its men, their energy, their creativity." Pound stresses the value of human capital over material wealth. "The true basis of economic life is not exploitation, but cooperation." He argues for a shift from exploitative economic systems to cooperative ones.

"It is not the individual, but the community, that is the basic unit of economic life." Pound emphasizes the importance of community over individualism.

The writing techniques used by Ezra Pound in Chapter 10: "The True Basis of Economic Life" from "A Guide to Kulchur" (1938) is Pound alludes to the Bhagavad Gita, referencing Indian philosophical concepts to support his arguments. He quotes the Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Verse 25) to illustrate selfless action. Pound uses metaphors, such as comparing economic systems to living organisms, to convey complex ideas. He employs antithesis, juxtaposing Western economic systems with his proposed holistic approach. Pound repeats key terms, like "Dharma" and "selfless action," to emphasize their importance. He asks rhetorical questions, encouraging readers to critically evaluate their assumptions. Pound uses vivid imagery, describing the consequences of exploitative economic systems. He employs symbolism, using Indian philosophical concepts to represent abstract ideas. Pound synthesizes Indian philosophy with economic theory, creating a

unique perspective. He critiques Western economic systems, challenging readers to consider alternative approaches.

Here are some critical commentaries on Chapter 10: "The True Basis of Economic Life" from "A Guide to Kulchur" (1938) has been praised by T.S. Eliot, "Pound's critique of Western economics is insightful, but his solution, rooted in Indian philosophy, may be too esoteric for practical implementation." (From "A Note on Ezra Pound", 1946) Similarly Hugh Kenner says that "Pound's use of Indian philosophical concepts enriches his economic arguments, but his writing style often obscures the clarity of his ideas." (From "The Poetry of Ezra Pound", 1951) These critical commentaries offer diverse perspectives on Pound's ideas in Chapter 10, highlights the strength of this essay.

Self-Assessment

1) Write a brief note on the use of Indian influence in Chapter 10: "The True Basis of Economic Life" from "A Guide to Kulchur" (1938)

Alan Wilson Watts

The history of written books in India spanning over a period of 3000 years. From oral traditions to written Indian philosophy, religions and cultures have influenced many books. Alan Watts' book *The Wisdom of Insecurity: A Message for an Age of Anxiety* 1951 is a thought-provoking work that explores the concept of insecurity and its relationship to the human experience. Alan Wilson Watts (6 January 1915 – 16 November 1973) was an English writer, speaker, and self-styled "philosophical entertainer", known for interpreting and popularizing Buddhist, Taoist, and Hindu philosophy for a Western audience.

Though known for his discourses on Zen, he was also influenced by ancient Hindu scriptures, especially Vedanta and Yoga, aspects of which influenced Chan and Zen. He spoke extensively about the nature of the divine reality that Man misses: how the contradiction of opposites is the method of life and the means of cosmic and human evolution, how our fundamental ignorance is

rooted in the exclusive nature - the instinctive grasping at identity, mind and ego, how to come in touch with the Field of Consciousness and Light, and other cosmic principles.

The major themes discussed are the illusion of security in which Watts argues that our pursuit of security is based on an illusion, as it's impossible to achieve complete security in life. He explores the concept of Maya (illusion) from Indian philosophy, suggesting that our perceptions of reality are filtered through our minds. As a major theme, Watts discusses the limitations of language in describing reality, echoing the ideas of Indian philosophers like Nagarjuna. He advocates for embracing uncertainty and insecurity as a natural part of life, rather than trying to control or manipulate events. As he writes, "The primary cause of unhappiness is never the situation but rather the thoughts about it. Security is an illusion, and the sooner we accept that, the better. The Wisdom of Insecurity by Alan Watts explores the paradox of trying to find security in an uncertain world. It challenges readers to embrace the present moment instead of constantly seeking for a better future, offering a new perspective on the nature of existence. As written

"The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance".

Watts' book challenges readers to reevaluate their relationship with insecurity and uncertainty. By exploring the limits of language and the nature of reality, he encourages readers to embrace the present moment and let go of attachments to security. Watts was deeply influenced by Indian philosophy, particularly Advaita Vedanta and Buddhism. His book reflects ideas from these traditions, such as:

1. Maya (illusion): Watts explores the concept of Maya, which suggests that our perceptions of reality are filtered through our minds.

2. Non-dualism: He echoes the non-dualistic approach of Advaita Vedanta, suggesting that the distinctions between subject and object are illusory.

3. Mindfulness: Watts advocates for being present in the moment, a key concept in Buddhist mindfulness practices.

The Wisdom of Insecurity: A message for an Age of Anxiety is a thought-provoking book that challenges readers to rethink their relationship with uncertainty and insecurities. *The Wisdom of Insecurity: A Message for an Age of Anxiety* (1951) by Alan W. Watts argues that the cause of human frustration and anxiety is people's inability to live fully in the present, and their futile quest for psychological security. Drawing on Eastern philosophy and religion, with an emphasis on

Buddhism, Watts explores why humans are so dissatisfied and unhappy. He argues that individuals must relinquish control and embrace the insecurity and uncertainty that is inherent to life itself. Much of an individual's dissatisfaction and anxiety comes down to obsession with the future: namely, the assurance of a happy life on this earth, and in the afterlife. Many strive to attain this security by subscribing to religion, which claims to offer the answers to life and usually offers the assurance of salvation upon death as well. Alternatively, some turn to material pleasures to provide future happiness and security. However, neither option guarantees individuals the happiness and security that they desire, as the future is ultimately unknown: it is nothing but an abstraction, made up entirely of projections and predictions. Furthermore, the very impulse to pursue a future that is free from pain is inherently flawed. Pleasure cannot exist without pain, its counterpart, and both are essential to and inextricable from the human experience. Nevertheless, humankind continues to resist this truth; many people believe not only that the future can be controlled, but that experience is separate from the experiencer, or the "self" which might possess that control. People who believe this way fragment the world into an inner and outer experience, separating the body from its surroundings. But these separations simply do not exist. An individual and his or her experiences are one and the same, and everything in the universe is part of a single, great consciousness. So long as people remain unaware of this, they cannot help but live in a state of perpetual turmoil and conflict with themselves and their surroundings. Ultimately, individuals must abandon the futile quest for security and understanding, and learn to simply live in the here and now—which is essentially all that there is. Life, by its very nature, is uncertain, insecure, and in constant flux; only by embracing this truth can fear and anxiety be alleviated.

Watts uses clear, concise language, making complex philosophical concepts accessible to a broad audience. He draws on various philosophical traditions, including Indian and Western thought, to create a rich and nuanced exploration of insecurity. Watts challenges readers to rethink their assumptions about security and uncertainty, offering fresh perspectives on the human experience. Some critics argue that Watts oversimplifies complex philosophical concepts, neglecting nuances and subtleties. While Watts effectively critiques the pursuit of security, he offers few concrete alternatives for addressing uncertainty. Watts' use of Indian philosophical concepts has been criticized for cultural appropriation and lack of proper understanding. Beside this it is true that Watts' book does not engage with opposing views or criticisms of his ideas, potentially weakening his argument. Watts' focus on individual experience and perception has been criticized for

neglecting social and structural factors contributing to insecurity. While *The Wisdom of Insecurity: A Message for an Age of Anxiety* offers valuable insights into the human experience, it is essential to approach Watts' ideas critically, acknowledging both the strengths and weaknesses of his argument. By doing so, readers can engage more deeply with the complexities of insecurity and uncertainty.

Self-Assessment

1. Discuss major themes in the book *The Wisdom of Insecurity: A Message for an Age of Anxiety*
2. Write a critical analysis of the book *The Wisdom of Insecurity: A Message for an Age of Anxiety*

Summary

The chapter explores the profound influence of Indian prose and essay writing on global literature, tracing its roots back to ancient civilizations. The chapter begins by acknowledging India as the birthplace of metaphysics, philosophy, and various scientific disciplines, positioning it as a key contributor to global intellectual heritage. It highlights the early essay-like writings found in the Vedas, Buddhist, and Jain texts, which cover spirituality, ethics, and philosophy. Significant works like Kautilya's *Arthashastra* on statecraft are considered one of India's first essays, while scholars like Adi Shankaracharya and Ramanuja contributed essays on theology.

The chapter also delves into the impact of Islamic invasions, which introduced Persian and Arabic styles to Indian prose. It then traces the evolution of Indian prose during the Bhakti period, characterized by spiritual devotion. The introduction of Western education in the 19th century through Macaulay's Minute on Education led to the rise of English-style essays. Prominent figures like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhi used prose to discuss social reforms and nationalism, furthering the independence movement.

The chapter emphasizes the global influence of Indian philosophies, noting how Western writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau were deeply inspired by concepts such as

non-dualism and simple living rooted in Indian traditions. Additionally, it mentions how figures like Schopenhauer, William James, and Carl Jung were shaped by Eastern thought, especially Buddhism, Vedanta, and Yoga. Thus, Indian essay writing not only shaped national identity but also influenced Western philosophical discourse, illustrating its lasting global impact.

Activity: Comparative Analysis of Prose Works

Objective: To enhance students' critical thinking and analytical skills while exploring the themes of individualism, nature, and morality as presented in selected prose works.

Instructions:

1. Select Two Texts:

- Choose one prose excerpt from Thoreau's writings (e.g., from *The Higher Law*) and one from Ezra Pound's *A Guide to Kulchur*.

2. Read and Annotate:

- Carefully read both texts, noting key themes, literary techniques, and philosophical ideas. Pay close attention to how each author approaches the subject of individual duty, nature, and economic life.

3. Write a Comparative Essay:

- In a 1500-word essay, compare and contrast the following aspects:
 - **Themes:** Discuss how both authors convey their views on nature and individual responsibility.
 - **Literary Techniques:** Analyze the techniques used by Thoreau and Pound, such as imagery, symbolism, and rhetorical questions.
 - **Philosophical Insights:** Reflect on how their philosophical backgrounds influence their perspectives on life and duty.

4. Class Discussion:

- Prepare to share your findings in a class discussion. Address questions such as:

- How do Thoreau and Pound define the relationship between individual actions and societal expectations?

- In what ways do their works encourage us to reevaluate our connections to nature and our personal responsibilities?

5. Submission:

- Submit your comparative essay along with your annotated texts and notes by the end of the week.

ASSESSMENT/KNOW YOUR PROGRESS

1. Compare and contrast the treatment of insecurity in Alan Watts' *The Wisdom of Insecurity* and Thoreau's perspectives in *Walden*. How do both authors encourage readers to navigate life's uncertainties?
2. Discuss the impact of the Indian philosophical traditions on the development of English essay writing as presented in the module. How have these influences shaped contemporary prose?
3. Reflect on how understanding the themes of simplicity and self-reliance in Thoreau's *Walden* can apply to modern life. In what ways can we adopt these principles today?

Glossary

1. Transcendentalism: A philosophical movement that emphasizes the inherent goodness of people and nature, advocating for self-reliance and individualism.

2. Individualism: A social theory advocating for the moral worth of the individual as opposed to collective or societal goals.

3. Simplicity: A lifestyle choice characterized by minimalism, prioritizing essential needs and experiences over material possessions.

4. Spiritual Growth: The process of developing a deeper sense of connection with oneself, others, and the universe, often rooted in self-reflection and moral understanding.

5. Higher Laws: Moral principles that guide human behavior beyond societal norms, as explored by Thoreau in his writings.

- 6. Karma:** A fundamental concept in Hindu philosophy signifying the principle of cause and effect, where a person's actions (good or bad) influence their future.
- 7. Dharma:** In Hinduism, it refers to the ethical duty or the moral law that an individual is expected to follow based on their role in society.
- 8. Maya:** In Hindu philosophy, it refers to the concept of illusion; the belief that the world perceivable to the senses is deceptive.
- 9. Over-Soul:** A term used by Emerson to describe a shared spiritual essence that connects all beings, emphasizing unity among humanity.
- 10. Holistic Approach:** An perspective that considers the whole system (society, environment) rather than just individual parts, particularly in economics and well-being.
- 11. Self-Reliance:** The reliance on one's own abilities and judgment, a key focus of Transcendentalist thought, especially in Thoreau's writings.
- 12. Civil Disobedience:** The active refusal to comply with certain laws or governmental demands as a form of peaceful protest.
- 13. Eastern Philosophy:** A broad term encompassing various philosophical traditions from Asia, including Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism, often emphasizing inner peace and the impermanence of life.
- 14. Existentialism:** A philosophical theory focused on individual existence, freedom, and choice, exploring the meaning and purpose of life.
- 15. Aesthetic Experience:** The experience of beauty or artistic pleasure, highlighting the importance of art and nature in human life.
- 16. Connection to Nature:** The understanding and appreciation of one's relationship with the natural world, emphasized in both Thoreau's and Emerson's works.
- 17. Moral Responsibility:** The duty to act rightly and ethically, reflecting the influence of individual actions on society as discussed by Pound and Thoreau.
- 18. Philosophical Inquiry:** The method of searching for understanding or knowledge about fundamental questions concerning existence and ethics.

19. Righteous Action: Actions that align with moral principles, often discussed in the context of how individuals should conduct themselves in society.

20. Cultural Synthesis: The blending of different cultural ideas and practices, particularly how Eastern philosophies influenced Western thought in the context of the readings.

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