

# **Open Course**

## **Creative Writing Notes**

## **Syllabus**

### **Module 1**

Poetry - introduction: Chief elements: theme, structure, imagery and symbols, rhythm – reference to

major poetic forms [with representative/select examples] like lyric, sonnet, ode, ballad, epic, dramatic

monologue, and free verse.

Practice sessions: critical appreciation of the given poems - emphasis on theme, structure, style,

symbols, images, rhythm and diction.

- William Blake - “The Lamb”
- Emily Dickinson – “I Heard a Fly Buzz When I Died”
- Wole Soyinka – “Telephone Conversation”
- Rabindranath Tagore – “Where the Mind is Without Fear”
- Kamala Das – “A Hot Noon in Malabar”

Poetry writing sessions: based on common/everyday themes in various forms – to initiate students into

poetry writing.

### **Module 2**

Short Story - introduction: Characteristic features of short stories in general – plot construction,

characterization, narration, local colour, atmosphere and title.

Short story appreciation: critical appreciation of the given stories and their authors - emphasis on

theme, structure, style, images and dialogue.

- Edgar Allan Poe – “The Oval Portrait”
- Chinua Achebe – “The Voter”
- A.C. Doyle: The Adventure of the Speckled Band
- Kushwanth Singh – “The Portrait of my Grandmother”

Short story writing sessions: based on topics/themes - to be given in the class - from everyday life and

situations.

### **Module 3**

(a) Writing for Children: Varieties – themes – fantasy - language – imparting values and morals –

illustrative examples.

Required reading:

- Lewis Carroll – Alice in Wonderland [Abridged version]
- C.S. Lewis - The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.
- Khyrunnisa A – Howzzat Butterfingers! Puffin Books, 2010.

(b) Science Fiction: Characteristic features – characterization - plot construction – setting – title -

impact on films – representative examples: R.L.Stevenson: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, H.G. Wells: Time

Machine, Jules Verne: 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea.

### **Module 4**

Book and Film reviewing: Elements of book/film reviewing – pertinent questions that a good review

must answer – aim/purpose of book and film reviews - sample book/film reviews from newspapers and

magazines.

Practice sessions: Writing book and film reviews - of classics and recently published/released books/films.

## Module I: Poetry

### **The Lamb** *By William Blake*

Little Lamb who made thee  
Dost thou know who made thee  
Gave thee life & bid thee feed.  
By the stream & o'er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight,  
Softest clothing wooly bright;  
Gave thee such a tender voice,  
Making all the vales rejoice!  
Little Lamb who made thee  
Dost thou know who made thee

Little Lamb I'll tell thee,  
Little Lamb I'll tell thee!  
He is called by thy name,  
For he calls himself a Lamb:  
He is meek & he is mild,  
He became a little child:  
I a child & thou a lamb,  
We are called by his name.  
Little Lamb God bless thee.  
Little Lamb God bless thee.

**I Heard a Fly Buzz When I Died** *By Emily Dickinson*

I heard a Fly buzz - when I died -

The Stillness in the Room

Was like the Stillness in the Air -

Between the Heaves of Storm -

The Eyes around - had wrung them dry -

And Breaths were gathering firm

For that last Onset - when the King

Be witnessed - in the Room -

I willed my Keepsakes - Signed away

What portion of me be

Assignable - and then it was

There interposed a Fly -

With Blue - uncertain - stumbling Buzz -

Between the light - and me -

And then the Windows failed - and then

I could not see to see -

## Telephone Conversation *by Wole Soyinka*

The price seemed reasonable, location  
 Indifferent. The landlady swore she lived  
 Off premises. Nothing remained  
 But self-confession. "Madam" , I warned,  
 "I hate a wasted journey - I am African."  
 Silence. Silenced transmission of pressurized good-breeding. Voice, when it came,  
 Lipstick coated, long gold-rolled  
 Cigarette-holder pipped. Caught I was, foully.  
 "HOW DARK?" ...I had not misheard.... "ARE YOU LIGHT OR VERY DARK?" Button B. Button A.  
 Stench  
 Of rancid breath of public hide-and-speak.  
 Red booth. Red pillar-box. Red double-tiered  
 Omnibus squelching tar.  
 It was real! Shamed  
 By ill-mannered silence, surrender  
 Pushed dumbfoundment to beg simplification.  
 Considerate she was, varying the emphasis-  
 "ARE YOU DARK? OR VERY LIGHT" Revelation came  
 "You mean- like plain or milk chocolate?"  
 Her accent was clinical, crushing in its light  
 Impersonality. Rapidly, wave-length adjusted  
 I chose. "West African sepia" \_ and as afterthought.  
 "Down in my passport." Silence for spectroscopic  
 Flight of fancy, till truthfulness chaged her accent  
 Hard on the mouthpiece "WHAT'S THAT?" conceding "DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS." "Like  
 brunette."  
 "THAT'S DARK, ISN'T IT?"  
 "Not altogether.  
 Facially, I am brunette, but madam you should see the rest of me. Palm of my hand, soles of my  
 feet.  
 Are a peroxide blonde. Friction, caused-  
 Foolishly madam- by sitting down, has turned  
 My bottom raven black- One moment madam! - sensing  
 Her receiver rearing on the thunderclap  
 About my ears- "Madam," I pleaded, "wouldn't you rather  
 See for yourself?"

**Where the Mind Is Without Fear** *By Rabindranath Tagore*

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high

Where knowledge is free

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments

By narrow domestic walls

Where words come out from the depth of truth

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way

Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit

Where the mind is led forward by thee

Into ever-widening thought and action

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

**A Hot Noon in Malabar** *By Kamaladas*

This is a noon for beggars with whining  
Voices, a noon for men who come from hills  
With parrots in a cage and fortune-cards,  
All stained with time, for brown Kurava girls  
With old eyes, who read palm in light singsong  
Voices, for bangle-sellers who spread  
On the cool black floor those red and green and blue  
Bangles, all covered with the dust of roads,  
Miles, grow cracks on the heels, so that when they  
Clambered up our porch, the noise was grating,  
Strange..... This is a noon for strangers who part  
The window-drapes and peer in, their hot eyes  
Brimming with the sun, not seeing a thing in  
Shadowy rooms and turn away and look  
So yearningly at the brick-ledged well. This  
Is a noon for strangers with mistrust in  
Their eyes, dark, silent ones who rarely speak  
At all, so that when they speak, their voices  
Run wild, like jungle-voices. Yes, this is  
A noon for wild men, wild thoughts, wild love. To  
Be here, far away, is torture. Wild feet  
Stirring up the dust, this hot noon, at my  
Home in Malabar, and I so far away .....



## Explanations

### Summary and Critical Analysis of “The Lamb” by William Blake

The lamb is one of the simplest poems of Blake. The symbolic meaning of it is almost clearly stated in the poem The Lamb which is probably the most important among the poem of innocence. Here the symbols of child, lamb and Christ are assimilated each other. The poem begins with a child like directness and natural world that show none of the signs of grownups.

The poet addresses lamb itself. Lamb is pure, innocent and it is associated with Christ. Being a visionary Blake invites the reader to world free form reasoning. He describes the lamb as he sees it. The lamb has been blessed with life and with capacity to drink from the stream and feed from the meadow. It has been allotted with bright, soft and warm wool which serves as its clothing.

It has a tender voice which fills the valley with joy. The child, too, is an innocent child. Christ was also a child when he first appeared on this earth as the son of God. The child enjoys the company of the lamb who is analogous to the child. The poem displays the innocence the joy and affection. The lyric is counterparts to the tiger. “The Lamb” and “The Tyger” represent the two contrary states of the human soul. The lamb represents innocence and humanity whereas the tiger represents a fierce force within man.

The child asks who made the little lamb in a typical child’s tone, rhythm and diction. The lamb, he says, has been given the “clothing of delight”, soft and ‘wooly’ clothing, and such a tender voice that makes all the values rejoice. Besides, God has given the lamb the feet and told it to go and feed itself by the stream and over the meadow. But in the next stanza, the speaker himself tells the little lamb that his maker is known by the very name of the lamb. He is also gentle and mild. “I a child and thou a lamb, we are called by His (Christ’s) name”. We have here a realistic and sympathetic portrait of a lamb. But, the symbolic meaning goes much deeper. The poem seems that it is based on the biblical hope that “meek shall inherit the world”.

In the second stanza there’s an identification of the lamb, Christ, and the child. Christ has another name, that is, lamb, because Christ is meek and mild like lamb. Christ was also a child when he first appeared on this earth as the son of God. The child shows his deep joy in the company of the lamb who is just like him, meek and mild. Even on its surface level the poem conveys the very spirit of childhood the purity, the innocence, the tenderness, as well as the affection that a child feels for little creatures like the lamb. There are also overtones of Christian symbolism suggested by Christ as a child. The pastoral setting is also another symbol of innocence and joy.

The lamb has got not ordinary clothes but clothes of “delight”; this is the first indication of the symbolic meaning in this poem. The lamb itself is a symbol: it stands for the innocent state of the soul, a dweller of the world of innocence and an emblem of purity, naturalness, and spiritual, original and natural being. The word ‘wooly’ also reminds of Christ was being born with a soft wooly hair. The brightness may also be an indication of the halo or shining on the pure being. The voice could also be the word of Christ or that of the visionary and creative being, the poet and the prophet.

The Lamb is the most representative poem of the poems of 'innocence'. It tells almost everything it needs to for making us understand its symbolic theme. The child is a symbol of innocence, the state of the soul which has not yet been corrupted by the world of conventionalized pretensions called religion, culture, society and state and other codified systems. This overtly simple poem also subtly approaches the subject of creativity and the creator. While the speaker is speaking about a real physical lamb on the surface of it, the subtext of the poem derives from both Christian and classical mythology. The child is the symbol of Christ, the physical incarnation of the deity. The fact that it has been sent to feed among the meadow and along the stream indicates that it is to live by natural, instinctual means, or the Divine law of the nature. The woolly softness and the brightness that comes from within also support the divine nature of the lamb symbol. The voice of the lamb is also equally significant. The child, the lamb and the Christ are all close to the creative being; creativity is a child like occupation, since it also involves the natural spirit, sense of wonder and undefiled imagination.

### **Summary and Critical Analysis of "I Heard a Fly Buzz When I Died" By Emily Dickinson**

When the poem *I Heard a Fly Buzz* by Emily Dickinson begins the speaker is already dead and describing her experience of dying. She describes a stillness, and silence in the room, as in the center of a storm (hurricane). The poem's speaker suggests that there is a moment of absolute calm between the storms of life and death.

This opening of the poem leads the reader to wonder why the fly is significant enough to be the speakers' enduring memory of the experience of death. In the second quatrain, the metonymy "eye" represents the mourners themselves. "Eyes" means, quite literally, the eyes of the people who have been crying and drying their eyes for the loved one who is dying. The people at the deathbed are "gathering firm" in the understanding that the loved one will die. Their breathing has stopped shaking and trembling because they are calmly waiting, certain that she will live no longer.

In the third stanza, the speaker describes how she had completed her personal business to prepare herself to die. She made a last will and testament, giving "keepsakes," or token processions away to relatives and friends. When she was ready and waiting, "There interposed a Fly". This could mean that the speaker was actually expecting some other being to come, but something else 'interposed'.

In the last stanza, the speaker describes her last sensations before she died. The 'blue' of line 13 may be suggestive of her longing for the eternal or immortal. But with a dash suddenly giving a turn to the idea, the stumbling, buzzing fly comes into the scene. It comes between her and the light, symbolically meaning that it came between her and the light of reason and consciousness. The color blue is perhaps used ironically with the fly that is usually symbolic of mortality, death and decay. The windows can have two possible meanings in the poem. Perhaps the speaker is transporting the experience of the light falling to the windows. Or else, "windows" is a metaphor for the eyes, such as in the sense that person's description of blindness. It might be a spiritual blindness, indicating that there is no great spiritual vision after death but mere nothingness.

This poem deals with Dickinson's recurrent preoccupations with death. She writes this poem from a viewpoint after she has died. The persona describes the experience of dying. She is

describing the final experiences and sensations before the exact moment of death. There is disagreement over the symbolic significance of the fly and its relationship to the death of the persona. Although many people claim to return from near death experiences with stories of life after death, no one has ever been able to properly describe the moment of death itself. Dickinson offers her own sight into what is birth a common and indescribable mystery of human experience; she explores the mystery and curiosity of death imaginatively. One of the most puzzling questions about this somewhat enigmatic poem is; why does the speaker pay attention to a fly in the room? One reason might be because it is a petty annoyance that is distracting the speaker. It also shows that the speaker is still attached to the physical world. Another reason might be that because the fly is a creature that eats dead bodies, it is an ironic and cruel reminder of the fate of the dead-person's body after he or she is gone. When the sound of the Fly fades, the speaker also fades, until the poem's final moment of blindness and silence. The poem also indirectly rejects the traditional Christian belief about the spirituality of life and death; instead of some angels or Christ himself comes to take the soul of the person, a mere fly comes, and then there is total darkness and oblivion.

### **Summary and Critical Analysis of “Where the Mind is Without Fear” by Rabindranath Tagore**

“Where the mind is Without Fear” by Rabindranath Tagore is one of his vastly read and discussed poems. It was originally composed in Bengali possibly in 1900 under the title “Prarthana”, meaning prayer. It appeared in the volume called ‘Naibedya’ in 1901. Later in 1911 Tagore himself translated the Bengali poem into English and that translation appeared as poem 35 in his Nobel winning anthology “Gitanjali” (Song Offerings) published by the Indian Society, London in 1912.

So when the poem was written, India was under the British Rule and people were eagerly waiting to get their freedom from the British Rule. The poem is written in the form of a prayer to the God, the Almighty for a true freedom for his country. And thus Tagore reveals his own concept of freedom throughout the poem, Where the Mind is Without Fear.

#### **Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;**

In the very first line, the poet prays to the Almighty that his countrymen should be free from any fear of oppression or forced compulsion. He wishes that everyone in his country has his head held high in dignity. In other words, according to him, in a truly free country every person should be fearless and should have a sense of self dignity.

#### **Where knowledge is free;**

In the second line the poet dreams of a nation where knowledge would be free. Education should not be restricted to the upper class only but everybody should be allowed to acquire knowledge. Not only that, the children should learn freely from the nature and the world around them. They should not be forced memorize some predetermined lessons. And this is Tagore's typical concept of education.

#### **Where the world has not been broken up into fragments**

#### **By narrow domestic walls;**

In the next two lines, the poet emphasizes the unity of not only of his countrymen but also of the entire world. He thinks there should be no division among people based on their caste, creed, color, religion or other baseless superstitions. In other words, prejudices and superstitions should not divide the people in groups and break their unity.

**Where words come out from the depth of truth;**

In line 5 of Where the Mind is Without Fear, Tagore wants a nation where people are truthful. They should not be superficial and words should come out from the depth of their hearts.

**Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;**

In the sixth line of the poem, the poet wants everyone to work hard to reach their goal, and in the long run to reach perfection. He thinks they should not be tired by working. People should not be lazy and ignoring their work.

**Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way**

**Into the dreary desert sand of dead habits;**

In line 7, the poet compares ‘reason’ or logical thinking to a “clear stream” and in the next line compares ‘dead habits’ or superstitious beliefs to a ‘dreary desert’. He wants the stream of reason not to lose its way into the desert of prejudices. In short, people’s thought should be monitored by rational thinking, not by superstition; logic should rule over old baseless beliefs.

**Where the mind is led forward by thee**

**Into ever-widening thought and action;**

In line 9 and 10 the poet wishes his countrymen to be progressive and broad-minded. He wants that their minds are “led forward” to “ever-widening thought and action” by the Almighty. In short, we should be open-minded and do something unusual or extraordinary, overcoming the narrowness of mind.

**Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake**

In the final line of the poem, the poet addresses the God as ‘Father’. He asks him to awaken his country into such a ‘heaven of freedom’ where the above conditions meet.

To make it clear, the poet prays to the Almighty (my Father) to raise or lift (awake) his country to such heights where freedom would be realised at its best (a heaven of freedom). In turn, he is actually praying that God awakens his countrymen so that they come out from the darkness of ignorance, prejudices, disunity and all other evils.

Another interpretation is that Tagore wants to awaken the God within us to free our mind from shackles and bondage. It is not invoking God but using it as metaphor for the higher self within us. Finally, In the poem the poet’s message is very clear. If all the people of a nation are not wise enough to lead a happy and peaceful life free from all evils, they cannot enjoy their freedom well. So to the poet, only political freedom is not so important unless you

are fearless, self dignified, knowledgeable, truthful, hard-working and broad-minded enough to enjoy it fully.

### **Summary: Telephone Conversation by Wole Soyinka.**

Soyinka's Telephone Conversation depicts a conversation between a white lady and an African American man which casts a harsh light on the racism and prejudice which grips society.

The title reveals the fact that two people are talking on the phone, so the beginning of the poem is on a positive note: The man is searching for a house and the land lady has named a considerable price, and the area where it is located is an impartial and not racially prejudiced. Also the man could enjoy his privacy as the land lady does not live under the same roof. The African man is ready to accept the offer, but maybe there has been a similar incident in his past, for he stops and admits to her that he is black, saying he prefers not to waste the time travelling there if she's going to refuse him on that bounds.

There is silence at the other end; silence which the black man thinks is the reluctant result of an inbred sense of politeness. However he is wrong because when she speaks again, she disregards all formalities and asks him to explain how dark he is. The man first thinks he has misheard but then realizes that that is not true as she repeats her question with a varying emphasis. Feeling as if he has just been reduced to the status of a machine, similar to the telephone in front of him, and asked to choose which button he is, the man is so disgusted that he can literally smell the stench coming from her deceptive words and see red everywhere around him. Ironically he is the one who is ashamed by the tense and awkward silence which follows, and asks for clarification thinking sarcastically that the lady was really helpful by giving him options to choose from. He suddenly understands what she is trying to ask, and repeats her question to her stating if she would like him to compare himself with chocolate, dark or light? She dispassionately answers and his thoughts change as he describes himself as a West African Sepia as it says in his passport. The lady remains quite for a while, not wanting to admit to her ignorance, but then she gives in to curiosity and asks what that is. He replies that it is similar to brunette and she immediately clarifies that that's dark.

Now the man has had enough of her insensitiveness. He disregards all constraints of formality and mocks her outright, saying that he isn't all black, the soles of his feet and the palms of his hands are completely white, but he is foolish enough to sit on his bottom so it has been rubbed black due to friction. But as he senses that she is about to slam the receiver on him, he struggles one last time to make her reconsider, pleading her to at least see for herself; only to have the phone slammed on him.

### **Critical Analysis: Telephone Conversation**

Wole Soyinka uses two main literary devices to drive home the message of the poem. The first of the two is imagery. Right at the beginning, the imagery used to describe the mental image the man has of the woman: "lipstick coated, gold rolled cigarette holder piped", just from listening to her voice shows one that he thinks that she is, socially speaking above him, from a higher social class.

Then when he hears her question regarding how dark he is, he is so humiliated and angry that he sees red everywhere. The imagery of the huge bus squelching the black tar is symbolic of how the dominant white community treats those belonging to the minor black one.

The next most evident use is that of irony. In the beginning of the poem, the African says that he has to “self-confess” when he reveals his skin colour to the lady. The colour of his skin is something that he has no control over, and even if he did, it is not a sin to be dark skinned, so the fact that the man feels ashamed and sorry for this is ironical and casts light on how ridiculous racism is that one should apologize or be differentiated against solely because of the colour of one’s skin. Also, it seems almost comical that anyone should be so submissive when he has actually committed no mistakes.

On the other hand, the lady is continuously described in positive terms, suggesting that she is of a good breeding and upper class. Even when the reader finds out that she is a shallow and racist person who exhibits extreme insensitivity by asking crude questions, the man seems to think that she is ‘considerate; and her clinical response to his question shows only ‘light impersonality.’ The repeated and exaggerated assertions of the woman’s good manners and sophistication drip with irony as her speech contradict this strongly.

Also the basis of the woman rejecting to lease her house to the man is because of the prejudiced notion that African Americans are a savage and wild people. This idea is completely discredited by the ironical fact that throughout the poem the man retains better manners and vocabulary than the woman, using words such as “spectroscopic” and “rancid”, whereas she does not know what West African Sepia is and is inconsiderate in her inquiries. Using irony in this manner, Soyinka proves how absurd it is to judge the intellect or character of a man depending on the colour of his skin only.

The poem deals with a foul subject, that of racism and prejudice, in a light-hearted, almost comical manner. A most important device which Soyinka has used to highlight this sense of racism, which was previously widespread in western society, is that of the telephone. Had the person been speaking face to face with the lady, this whole conversation would never have taken place. She would have either refused outright, or would have found a more subtle way of doing so. The whole back and forth about ‘how dark’ the man is wouldn’t have occurred. Thus the telephone is used to make the issue of racism clear and prove how nonsensical it really is.

Written in an independent style and delivered in a passively sarcastic tone, this poem is a potent comment on society. Soyinka might be speaking through personal experience, judging by the raw emotions that this poem subtly convey: those of anger, rage, shame, humility and an acute sense of disgust at the apathy and inhumanity of humans who won’t judge a book by its cover but would turn down a man for the colour of his skin. In today’s world, racism might be a dying concern; but that does not mean that discrimination against other minorities has been completely eradicated. Despite the progressing times, people continue to harbour prejudices and illogical suspicions about things they do not understand: may it be others ideals, religions or traditions and customs. Thus this poem remains a universal message for all of us, as Soyinka manages to convey just how absurd all prejudices are by highlighting the woman’s poor choice of rejecting the man just because he does not share the same skin colour.

‘Telephone Conversation’ is a favourite, both for its excellent use of rich language and the timeless message it conveys.

### **Summary: A Hot Noon in Malabar**

Kamala Das is a well known female writer in India. She writes in English as well as in Malayalam which is her mother-tongue. ‘A Hot Noon In Malabar’ is one of her poems that she wrote when she was reminiscing her memories back in Kerala. She compares Kolkata (where she was residing when she wrote the poem) to her hometown. In this poem, she describes minute observations about her hometown. Things like heat, dust and noise, that would annoy many a people, has impressed her.

The poetess talks about a hot noon in Malabar. She is in a nostalgic mood. She remembers the streets of Malabar which were full of interesting people and pleasing sounds. She remembers the beggars, who would, in whining tones beg for alms. She talks about the fortune tellers who pass by her home carrying parrots in a cage and fortune cards which were stained with dust. The dark skinned Kurava girls are a nomadic tribe with tired eyes. They read palms in sing song voices to impress their customers. The poetess talks about the bangle sellers who spread their bright and colourful bangles on the cool black floor. She says that the bangles are all covered with the dust of the roads. This expression signifies that these people travel a long distances to make a fortune.

These strange people have devouring rough feet, which have cracks because they walk for miles barefooted on the dusty rugged roads. So when they clamber onto the porch of the poetess’ house a grating noise is heard. These strangers peep through the windows to take a look inside. But as they have travelled so long under this sun they are unable to get a clear vision. Displeased by this they turn yearningly at the brick-ledge well so as to quench their thirst.

The poetess says that this is the noon for strangers with lack of trust in their eyes. They are dark, silent ones who rarely speak. If at all they speak their voices are wild, jungle like.

The poetess suddenly has a wild desire for love. She says that to be away from her hometown is torturous. She feels homesick. She feels passionately about her hometown and yearns to return to those childhood days when she was living this primitive life, on a hot afternoon in Malabar.

### **Critical Appreciation: A Hot Noon in Malabar**

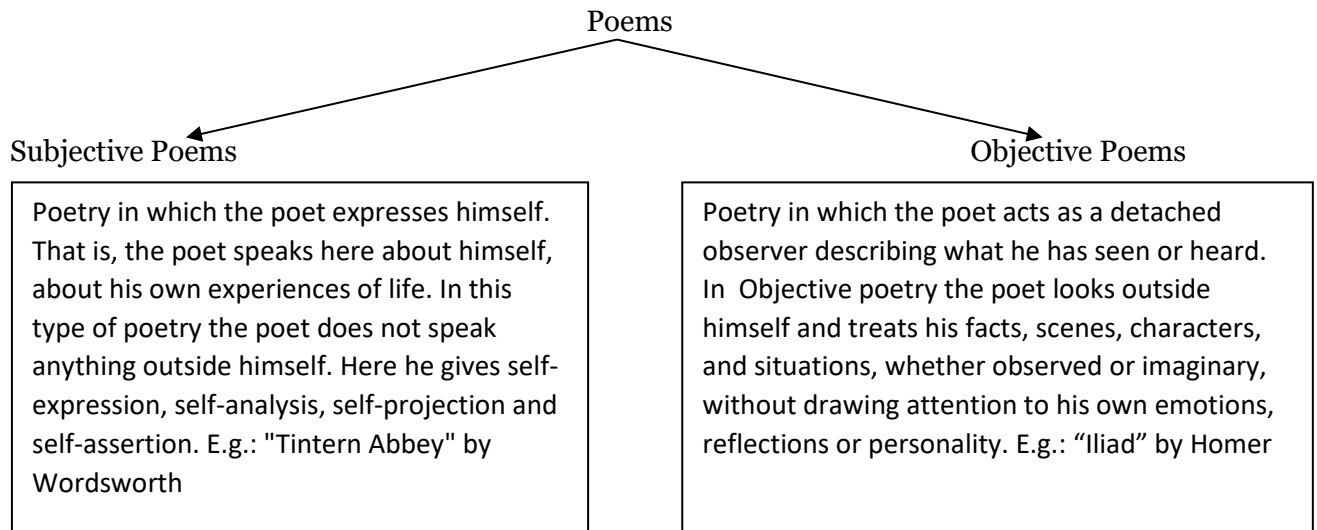
Kamala Das has expressed intense feeling of separation from her hometown, her primitive life in the simple town of Malabar.

She describes minute details about the passers-by who can be witnessed on such a hot afternoon. She has paid close attention to the stain on the cards of the fortune tellers. She has also observed the Kurava girls to have light sing-song voices. She has noticed that these little traders have hard heels with crack because of walking on the savage roads.

The poetess has noticed the pain in the eyes of these traders when they look into the windows of her house. She mentions the smallest of the details such as that of the colours of the bangles. This may also depict her age, which has been assumed to be her childhood.

The poetess feels that these primitive men have wild jungle like voices. She gets lost in admiring the simplicity of their lives. This poem mainly revolves around the theme of unfulfilled desires. She accepts the wilderness of her hometown and admires it. The poem ends with a deep longing for her hometown.

## Module I Theory



In Objective Poetry the poet acts as a detached observer, describing what he has seen or heard; in the other hand he brings to bear his own reflections upon what he has seen or heard. The same subject matter can be viewed either way. If the poet views it from without confining himself, that is to say merely to his externals, his treatment is objective; if he views it from within, giving expression, that is to say, to the thoughts and feelings it arouses in his mind, his treatment is subjective. Objective Poetry is impersonal and Subjective Poetry is Personal. In the former the focus of attention is something that is outward – a praiseworthy act, a thrilling occurrence, a beautiful sight; in the latter it is the poet himself: whatever the subject may be, his mind is centered on his own thoughts and feelings.

Objective Poetry is older than Subjective. The Primitive people among whom it developed, like the uncivilized races in some parts of the world today, were more interested in what they saw and heard than in what they thought. They valued the experiences of their eye and ear more than the experiences of their mind. Deep thinking may even have been irksome to them, considering that their life was simple, composed more of action than of thought. Their Poetry, therefore, dealt with deeds, events and the things they saw around them, and it called for the little mental efforts from their hearers. At the early stage man has not acquired a subjective outlook, which is the product of civilization. The Epic and the Drama are the forms of this objective poetry, in which, as in the ballad, the writer's personality remains in the background. The Lyric and the elegy, which belong to later times, represent the subjective variety.



A subjective novel is one in which the author intervenes to comment and deliver judgments about the characters and actions represented; an objective novel is one which the author is self-effacing and tries to create the effect that the story tells itself.

Critics agree, however, that the difference between a subjective and objective literary work is not absolute but a matter of degree.

### **Types of Poetry**

- Lyric
- Ode
- Sonnet
- Elegy
- Ballad
- Epic
- Mock Epic
- Dramatic Monologue
- Haiku

### **Lyric**

Lyric poetry is a formal type of poetry which expresses personal emotions or feelings, typically spoken in the first person. The term derives from a form of Ancient Greek literature, the lyric, which was defined by its musical accompaniment, usually on a stringed instrument known as a lyre. E.g. “I Felt a Funeral in my Brain” by Emily Dickinson

\*Dramatic Lyric: The lyric speaker is presented as addressing another person in a specific situation. E.g. “Tintern Abbey” by William Wordsworth

### **Characteristics of Lyrics**

1. It is a short poem, characterized by simplicity in language and treatment.
2. It deals with a single emotion which is generally stated in the first few lines. Then the poet gives us the thoughts suggested by that particular emotion. The last and concluding part is in the nature of a summary or it embodies the conclusion reached by the poet.
3. It is musical. Verbal-music is an important element in its appeal and charm. Various devices are used by poets to enhance the music of their lyrics.
4. A lyric is always an expression of the moods and emotions of a poet. The best lyrics are emotional in tone. However, a poet may not express merely his emotions, he may also analyse them intellectually.
5. Spontaneity is another important quality of a lyric. The lyric poet sings in strains of unpremeditated art. He sings effortlessly because he must, because of the inner urge for self-expression. Any conscious effort on his part makes the lyric look unnatural and artificial.

### **Ode**

An ode is a type of lyrical stanza. It is an elaborately structured poem praising or glorifying an event or individual, describing nature intellectually as well as emotionally. Ode is derived

from a Greek word *aeidein*, which means to chant or sing. A classic ode is structured in three major parts: the strophe, the antistrophe, and the epode.

Odes are of three types, including (1) Pindar ode, (2) Horatian ode, and (3) irregular ode.

**Pindaric Ode:** This ode was named after an ancient Greek poet, Pindar, who began writing choral poems that were meant to be sung at public events. It contains three triads; strophe, antistrophe, and final stanza as epode, with irregular rhyme patterns and lengths of lines.

**Horatian Ode:** The name of this ode was taken from the Latin poet, Horace. Unlike heroic odes of Pindar, Horatian ode is informal, meditative and intimate. These odes dwelled upon interesting subject matters that were simple and were pleasing to the senses. Since Horatian odes are informal in tone, they are devoid of any strict rules.

**Irregular Ode:** This type of ode is without any formal rhyme scheme, and structure such as the Pindaric ode. Hence, the poet has great freedom and flexibility to try any types of concepts and moods. William Wordsworth and John Keats were such poets who extensively wrote irregular odes, taking advantage of this form.

### **Sonnet:**

The word sonnet is derived from the Italian word “sonetto”. It means a small or little song or lyric. In poetry, a sonnet has 14 fourteen lines and is written in iambic pentameter. Each line has 10 syllables. Generally, sonnets are divided into different groups based on the rhyme scheme they follow. The rhymes of a sonnet are arranged according to a certain rhyme scheme. The rhyme scheme in English is usually abab-cdcd-efef-gg and in Italian abba-abba-cde-cde.

#### **Types of Sonnets**

1. **Italian or Petrarchan Sonnet:** Italian or Petrarchan sonnet was introduced by an Italian poet Francesco Petrarch of 14th century. The rhyme scheme of Petrarchan sonnet has first eight lines called octet that rhymes as abba -abba -cdc-dcd. The remaining six lines called sestet might have a range of rhyme schemes.
2. **Shakespearean Sonnet:** A Shakespearean sonnet is generally written in an iambic pentameter, there are 10 syllables in each line. The rhyme scheme of Shakespearean sonnet is abab-cdcd-efef-gg and this is difficult to follow. Hence only Shakespeare is known to have done it.
3. **Spenserian Sonnet:** Sir Edmund Spenser was the first poet who modified the Petrarch's form and introduced a new rhyme scheme. The rhyme scheme in this sonnet is abab-bcbc-cdcd-ee which is specific to Spenser and such types of sonnets are called Spenserian sonnets.

### **Elegy**

Elegy is a form of literature which can be defined as a poem or song in the form of elegiac couplets, written in honor of someone deceased. It typically laments or mourns the death of the individual. Elegy is derived from the Greek word “*elegus*”, which means a song of bereavement sung along with a flute. The forms of elegies we see today were introduced in the 16th century. “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” by Thomas Gray and “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd” by Walt Whitman are the two most popular examples of elegy.

## Characteristics of an Elegy

- An elegy typically starts with the invocation of the muse and then proceeds by referencing to the traditional mythology.
- It often involves a poet who knows how to phrase the thoughts imaginatively in the first person.
- Questions are raised by the poet about destiny, justice and fate.
- The poet associates the events of the deceased with events in his own life by drawing a subtle comparison.
- It goes beyond the main or crude subject to a deeper level where the connotations might be metaphorical.
- Towards the end the poet generally tries to provide comfort to ease the pain of the situation. The Christian elegies usually proceed from sorrow and misery to hope and happiness because they say that death is just a hindrance in the way of passing from the mortal state into the eternal state.
- An elegy is not always based on a plot.

### Pastoral Elegy:

Pastoral elegies are poems in which the poet speaks in the guise of a shepherd in a peaceful landscape and expresses his grief on the death of another shepherd. It deals with the urban poets' nostalgic image of the peace and simplicity of the life of shepherds and other rural folk in an idealized natural setting. The most famous example of the pastoral elegy is *Lycidas* (1638), by the English poet John Milton. The occasion for Milton's pastoral elegy (*Lycidas* 1638) was the death of Edward King, one of Milton's younger colleagues at Cambridge, who had drowned on his way to his native place in Ireland. King was also a poet-student like Milton at Cambridge. Other examples of pastoral elegies are Percy Bysshe Shelley's famous elegy on John Keats *Adonais* (1821) and Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis* (1866).

## Characteristics of Pastoral Elegy

- Pastoral poetry is a very ancient genre of poetry.
- It deals with the loves and lives of shepherds and shepherdesses, and other such country folk. They live far from towns, and spend their lives singing, sometimes mourning the loss of a sheep or a fellow shepherd or a love affair that has gone wrong.
- The countryside is idealized, since writers of the genre are usually city people.
- It is simple and the poetic expression uses a set of conventions that has varied little over the centuries.
- Sometimes, it is used symbolically. Often the shepherd is a poet; his songs become his poetry.
- A typical theme is the corruption of city life, and, through this theme, political statements are sometimes made.

## Conventions of Pastoral Elegy

- a pastoral context, where the subject is presented as a herdsman
- use of the myth of the vegetation deity

- the invocation of a muse
- the rebuking of nymphs for not being present to prevent death
- a procession of mourners, in this case animals, shepherds, and divine beings
- the use of the pathetic fallacy, the attribution of human emotions to the world of nature
- a sense of the natural order being disrupted by death
- catalogues of flowers and animals
- the apotheosis of the dead person

### **Ballad**

It is a type of poetry or verse which was basically used in dance songs in the ancient France. Later on, during the late 16th and 17th century, it spread over the majority of European nations. Owing to its popularity and emotional appeal, it remained a powerful tool for poets and lyricists to prepare music in the form of lyrical ballads and earn a handsome income from it.

Most of the ballad examples in ancient times used to be passed to the next generation through oral traditions. This is because there was no language in which to write them down. Ballads mostly rely on simple and easy-to-understand language or dialect from its origin. Stories about hardships, tragedies, love and romance are standard ingredients of ballads. This is irrespective of geographical origins. Example: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

### **Epic:**

The word epic is derived from the Ancient Greek adjective, “epikos”, which means a poetic story. In literature, an epic is a long narrative poem, which is usually related to heroic deeds of a person of an unusual courage and unparalleled bravery. In order to depict this bravery and courage, the epic uses grandiose style.

The hero is usually the representative of the values of a certain culture, race, nation or a religious group on whose victor or failure the destiny of the whole nation or group depends. Therefore, certain supernatural forces, *deus ex machina*, help the hero, who comes out victor at the end. An epic usually starts with an invocation to muse, but then picks up the threads of the story from the middle and moves on to the end. Eg: *Iliad* and *Odyssey* by Homer

### **Characteristics of an Epic**

- The hero is a figure of great national or international importance. Moreover, the characters must belong to the highest class in a society, raised above the common man by birth, position, manners and appearance. They must be kings and princes descended from heroes, and even from the gods, compelling in their deportment and arresting in their personal appearance
- The setting is ample in scale, sometimes world-wide, or even larger in the classical epic. The scope of *Paradise Lost* is cosmic, for it includes Heaven, Earth and Hell.
- The action involves heroic deeds
- The action should be an entire action, complete in itself. By this is meant that it should have a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- The next characteristic of the epic poem according to Aristotle is that it must have greatness, by which is meant that it must produce far-reaching consequences in which the destinies of great men and nations are involved.

- God are also used in the epic as a tragedy, as *deus ex machina*; the intervention of supernatural machinery advances the plot and solves its complications.
- An epic poem is a ceremonial composition and deliberately given a ceremonial style proportionate to its great subject and architecture.
- The poet begins by stating his theme, then invokes a Muse in his great undertaking and addresses the Muse.

### **John Milton's "Paradise Lost" is an Epic poem in English**

Milton's "Paradise Lost" is not a national epic like the Iliad or the Aeneid; nor is it an epic after any of the known types. It is an epic of the whole human species-an epic of our entire planet or indeed of the entire universe. It is a poetical representation of the historical connection between the created World and the immeasurable and inconceivable Universe of Prehuman Existence.

#### **Characteristics of an Epic in Paradise Lost**

- In Paradise Lost the hero is Adam, who incorporates in himself the entire race of man.
- The scope of Paradise Lost is cosmic, for it includes Heaven, Earth and Hell.
- Paradise Lost includes the war in Heaven, the journey of Satan to discover the newly created world, and his audacious attempt to outwit God by corrupting mankind.
- Milton uses Latinised diction and stylized syntax, resounding lists of strange and sonorous names, and epic similes, that is, sustained similes in which the comparison is developed far beyond the specific points

### **Mock Epic**

Mock-epic, also called mock-heroic, form of satire that adapts the elevated heroic style of the classical epic poem to a trivial subject. The tradition originated in classical times with an anonymous burlesque of Homer, the *Batrachomyomachia* (Battle of the Frogs and the Mice). An English mock-epic is Alexander Pope's "The Rape of the Lock" which concerns a society beau's theft of a lock of hair from a society belle; Pope treated the incident as if it were comparable to events that sparked the Trojan War.

Most mock-epics begin with an invocation to the muse and use the familiar epic devices of set speeches, supernatural interventions, and descents to the underworld, as well as infinitely detailed descriptions of the protagonist's activities. Thus, they provide much scope for display of the author's ingenuity and inventiveness.

### **Haiku**

A haiku is an unrhymed Japanese poetic form that consists of 17 syllables arranged in three lines containing five, seven, and five syllables, respectively. A haiku expresses much and suggests more in the fewest possible words. The form gained distinction in the 17th century, when Basho, a Japanese poet considered the greatest practitioner of the form, elevated it to a highly refined art. It remains Japan's most popular poetic form. The Imagist poets (1912–30) and others have imitated the form in English and other languages.

The first haiku written in English was arguably by Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro", published in 1913. Since then, the haiku has become a fairly popular form among English-

speaking poets. English haiku can follow the traditional Japanese rules, but are frequently less strict, particularly concerning the number of syllables and subject matter.

## **Dramatic Monologue**

Dramatic monologue, also known as a persona poem, is a type of poetry written in the form of a speech of an individual character. Examples include Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess," T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," etc.

### **Characteristics of Dramatic Monologue**

- A single person, who is patently not the poet, utters the speech that makes up the whole of the poem, in a specific situation at a critical moment.
- This person addresses and interacts with one or more other people; but we know of the auditors' presence, and what they say and do, only from clues in the discourse of the single speaker.
- The main principle controlling the poet's choice and formulation of what the lyric speaker says is to reveal to the reader, in a way that enhances its interest, the speaker's temperament and character.

### **Key Words**

1. **Simile:** A simile is a figure of speech that makes a comparison, showing similarities between two different things. A simile draws resemblance with the help of the words "like" or "as." Therefore, it is a direct comparison. We can find simile examples in our daily speech. We often hear comments like, "John is as slow as a snail." Snails are notorious for their slow pace, and here the slowness of John is compared to that of a snail. The use of "as" in the example helps to draw the resemblance.
2. **Metaphor:** Metaphor is a figure of speech that makes an implicit, implied, or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated, but which share some common characteristics. In other words, a resemblance of two contradictory or different objects is made based on a single or some common characteristics. In simple English, when you portray a person, place, thing, or an action as being something else, even though it is not actually that "something else," you are speaking metaphorically. For example, the phrase, "My brother is the black sheep of the family," is a metaphor because he is not a sheep, nor is he black. However, we can use this comparison to describe an association of a black sheep with that person. A black sheep is an unusual animal, which typically stays away from the herd, and the person being described shares similar characteristics.
3. **Symbolism:** Symbolism is the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities, by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense. Symbolism can take different forms. Generally, it is an object representing another, to give an entirely different meaning that is much deeper and more significant. Sometimes, however, an action, an event or a word spoken by someone may have a symbolic value. Symbols do shift their meanings depending on the context they are used in. "A chain," for example, may stand for "union" as well as "imprisonment".
4. **Free Verse:** Free verse is a literary device that can be defined as poetry that is free from limitations of regular meter or rhythm, and does not rhyme with fixed forms.

Such poems are without rhythm and rhyme schemes, do not follow regular rhyme scheme rules, yet still provide artistic expression. In this way, the poet can give his own shape to a poem however he or she desires. However, it still allows poets to use alliteration, rhyme, cadences, and rhythms to get the effects that they consider are suitable for the piece.

- Free verse poems have no regular meter or rhythm.
  - They do not follow a proper rhyme scheme; these poems do not have any set rules.
  - This type of poem is based on normal pauses and natural rhythmical phrases, as compared to the artificial constraints of normal poetry.
  - It is also called *vers libre*, which is a French word meaning “free verse.”
5. Imagery: Imagery means to use figurative language to represent objects, actions, and ideas in such a way that it appeals to our physical senses. Usually it is thought that imagery makes use of particular words that create visual representation of ideas in our minds. The word “imagery” is associated with mental pictures. However, this idea is but partially correct. Imagery, to be realistic, turns out to be more complex than just a picture.
- E.g. *It was dark and dim in the forest.* The words “dark” and “dim” are visual images.
- He whiffed the aroma of brewed coffee.* “Whiff” and “aroma” evoke our sense of smell, or olfactory sense.
6. Couplet: A couplet is a literary device which can be defined as having two successive rhyming lines in a verse and has the same meter to form a complete thought. It is marked by a usual rhythm, rhyme scheme and incorporation of specific utterances. It could be an independent poem, and could be a part of other poems such as sonnets in Shakespearean poetry. If a couplet has the ability to stand apart from the rest of the poem, it is independent and hence it is called a closed couplet. A couplet which cannot render a proper meaning alone is called an open couplet.
7. Theme
8. Theme is defined as a main idea or an underlying meaning of a literary work that may be stated directly or indirectly.
9. Major and Minor theme: Major and minor themes are two types of themes that appear in literary works. A major theme is an idea that a writer repeats in his work, making it the most significant idea in a literary work. A minor theme, on the other hand, refers to an idea that appears in a work briefly and gives way to another minor theme.
10. Difference between a Theme and a Subject: It is important not to confuse a theme of a literary work with its subject. Subject is a topic which acts as a foundation for a literary work while a theme is an opinion expressed on the subject. For example, a writer may choose a subject of war for his story and the theme of a story may be writer’s personal opinion that war is a curse for humanity.
11. A poem’s subject is the topic of the poem, or what the poem is about, while the theme is an idea that the poem expresses about the subject or uses the subject to explore. So, for example, in the Edgar Allan Poe poem “The Raven,” the subject is the raven, who continually repeats a single word in response to the speaker’s questions. The theme of the poem, however, is the irreversibility of death -- the speaker asks the raven, in a

variety of ways, whether or not he will see his dead beloved again, to which the raven always replies “nevermore.”

12. Motifs: Motif is an object or idea that repeats itself throughout a literary work.

- Motif and Theme: In a literary work, a motif can be seen as an image, sound, action or other figures that have a symbolic significance and contributes toward the development of theme. Motif and theme are linked in a literary work but there is a difference between them. In a literary piece, a motif is a recurrent image, idea or a symbol that develops or explains a theme while a theme is a central idea or message.
- Motif and Symbol: Sometimes, examples of motif are mistakenly identified as examples of symbols. Symbols are images, ideas, sounds or words that represent something else and help to understand an idea or a thing. Motifs, on the other hand, are images, ideas, sounds or words that help to explain the central idea of a literary work i.e. theme. Moreover, a symbol may appear once or twice in a literary work, whereas a motif is a recurring element.
- Function of Motif: Along with presenting a prevailing theme, writers include several motifs in their literary works as reinforcements. Motifs contribute in developing the major theme of a literary work and help readers to comprehend the underlying messages that writers intend to communicate to them.

13. Symbolism: Symbolism is the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense. Symbolism can take different forms. Generally, it is an object representing another to give it an entirely different meaning that is much deeper and more significant. Sometimes, however, an action, an event or a word spoken by someone may have a symbolic value. For instance, “smile” is a symbol of friendship. Similarly, the action of someone smiling at you may stand as a symbol of the feeling of affection which that person has for you.

Symbols do shift their meanings depending on the context they are used in. “A chain”, for example, may stand for “union” as well as “imprisonment”. Thus, symbolic meaning of an object or an action is understood by when, where and how it is used. It also depends on who reads them.

Symbolism gives a writer freedom to add double levels of meanings to his work: a literal one that is self-evident and the symbolic one whose meaning is far more profound than the literal one. The symbolism, therefore, gives universality to the characters and the themes of a piece of literature. Symbolism in literature evokes interest in readers as they find an opportunity to get an insight of the writer’s mind on how he views the world and how he thinks of common objects and actions, having broader implications.

In our daily life, we can easily identify objects, which can be taken as examples of symbol such as the following:

- The dove is a symbol of peace.
- A red rose or red colour stands for love or romance.
- Black is a symbol that represents evil or death.



## Module II: Short Stories

### **The Oval Portrait** by *Edgar Allen Poe*

**Introduction:** "The Oval Portrait" is a short story by Edgar Allan Poe involving the disturbing circumstances surrounding a portrait in a chateau. It is one of his shortest stories, filling only two pages in its initial publication in 1842.

#### **Summary:**

The tale begins with an injured narrator (the story offers no further explanation of his or her impairment) seeking refuge in an abandoned mansion in the Apennines. The narrator spends his or her time admiring the paintings that decorate the strangely shaped room and perusing a volume, found upon a pillow, that describes them.

Upon moving the candle closer to the book, the narrator immediately discovers a before-unnoticed painting depicting the head and shoulders of a young girl. The picture inexplicably entralls the narrator "for an hour perhaps". After steady reflection, he or she realizes that the painting's "absolute life-likeness" of expression is the captivating feature. The narrator eagerly consults the book for an explanation of the picture. The remainder of the story henceforth is a quote from this book — a story within a story.

The book describes a tragic story involving a young maiden of "the rarest beauty". She loved and wedded an eccentric painter who cared more about his work than anything else in the world, including his wife. The painter eventually asked his wife to sit for him, and she obediently consented, sitting "meekly for many weeks" in his turret chamber. The painter worked so diligently at his task that he did not recognize his wife's fading health, as she, being a loving wife, continually "smiled on and still on, uncomplainingly". As the painter neared the end of his work, he let no one enter the turret chamber and rarely took his eyes off the canvas, even to watch his wife. After "many weeks had passed," he finally finished his work. As he looked on the completed image, however, he felt appalled, as he exclaimed, "This is indeed Life itself!" Thereafter, he turned suddenly to regard his bride and discovered that she had died.

**Analysis:** The central idea of the story resides in the confusing relationship between art and life. In "The Oval Portrait", art and the addiction to it are ultimately depicted as killers, responsible for the young bride's death. In this context, one can synonymously equate art with death, whereas the relationship between art and life is consequently considered as a rivalry.

### **The Voter** by *Chinua Achebe*

**Summary:** The Voter by Chinua Achebe is about choices between tradition or modernity. Roof, a bicycle repairman, is given the opportunity to run a political campaign for a corrupt politician named Marcus. He aims to do his best and enthusiastically embraces his new profession. Unexpectedly, Roof is offered a bribe by the rival of Marcus named Maduka and is immediately seduced to take the money! His saving grace is a belief in the traditional; Igbo "Iyi" that demands people do as they promise. He solves his dilemma by tearing the paid votes in half and putting one piece in each voting box, keeping his word but cancelling out the vote!

Analysis: In *The Voter* by Chinua Achebe we have the theme of corruption, loyalty, guilt, power, greed and tradition. Taken from his *Girls at War and Other Stories* collection the story is narrated in the third person by an unnamed narrator and after reading the story the reader realises that Achebe may be exploring the theme of corruption.

## **The Adventure of the Speckled Band** *by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*

**Summary:** Sherlock Holmes wakes Dr. John Watson up early one morning, telling him that the housekeeper, Mrs. Hudson, roused him because a client has arrived, a young woman. Watson gets dressed, and they find their client waiting in Holmes' waiting room. She tells them that her name is Helen Stoner, and that she lives with her stepfather, Dr. Grimesby Roylott, the last survivor of the noble Roylott family of Stoke Moran. She explains that her mother met Roylott in India when she and her sister Julia were only two, but on their way back to England, her mother was killed in a railway accident. Despite this, they came to live in Stoke Moran. Holmes also learns that 250 pounds of the family money would go to each daughter once they married. Not long later, though, Julia became engaged, after which she was killed in her very own room. The dying woman's words were: "The band! The speckled band!" Helen also tells them that Roylott let a gypsy camp stay nearby. After she leaves, Roylott himself appears and threatens Holmes to stay out of his business.

Later, Holmes and Watson journey to Stoke Moran and investigate. They make a good observation of everything in Roylott's bedroom, and Helen's bedroom. Helen reveals that her stepfather moved her to Julia's room after her death, which is now her bedroom. Holmes then says that he has solved the case, and tells Helen that he and Watson will be at an inn nearby to catch the killer in the act.

That night, Holmes and Watson find a swamp adder snake (the speckled band) trying to kill Helen, at which point Holmes attacks. The adder attacks the first person it sees, which just so happens to be the mastermind behind the case: Roylott. He is killed by his own murder weapon. Holmes explains how he solved the case, and admits that he felt completely responsible for Roylott's death; but that he is unlikely to feel much guilt over the death.

## **Portrait of a Lady** *by Khushwant Singh*

**Summary:** Khushwant Singh draws here an interesting portrait of his grandmother. He presents her as a tender, loving and deeply religious old lady. Singh says that his grandmother was an old woman. She was so old that her face was wrinkled that at the present it was difficult to believe she would ever had been young and pretty. Her hair was white as snow. She had a little stoop in her back. She could be seen reciting her rosary all the time. The author says that "she was like the winter landscape in the mountains and expanse of pure white serenity breathing peace and contentment."

A picture of author's grandfather was hung on the wall. He appeared too old and it was that he ever had a wife. He appeared to have only lots and lots of grandchildren. Singh was the only child at that time. His parents had gone to live in the city leaving him behind the village under the care of his grandmother. She would get him ready for school. And would also feed

him with Chappathi. The School as attached with a temple. All the children sat in the verandah reciting alphabets while his grandmother is engaged reading holy scriptures. Finally in the evening, the author and the grandmother would walk back home feeding the dogs.

After a friendly relationship with his grandmother, he had to adopt a new life in the city. This itself was a turning point for the grandmother and the grandson. Both of them was sent for to settle down in the city with his parents. The author went to an English school but the grandmother never liked the way he was taught. Though Singh and his grandmother shared the same room, she was unable to help him. Apart from this, she was also disappointed that he was learning music that she considered not for gentlefolks. In due course, Singh went up to a University and because of that, he was given a separate room. This indeed made the common link of their relationship snapped down completely. The grandmother agreed the fact and she used to spin the wheel from sunrise to sunset to compensate that. Only during the afternoon she would relax by feeding the sparrows with little pieces of bread. They were her best friends and the sparrows also liked her company.

Later, Singh went up abroad for higher studies which was for 5 long years. He had a doubt in his mind that whether his grandmother may survive or not until he come back. His also taught that it might e the last physical contact between them when she came in the railway station to see him off. After 5 years he came back, incredibly he was welcomed y his grandmother who was not grown a single day older. Singh notices that even at this time when everyone is joyful about his return, grandmother's happiest moments was with her sparrows.

Later in the evening there was a change in her attitude. She celebrated the return of her grandson by collecting some women of neighbourhood and beating drum for several hours. But in the morning, grandmother's health deteriorates and she reveals that she was nearing her end. So she decides that she is not going to waste a single moment by talking so she prayed. Quite suddenly, the rosary falls from her hand and she exhaled her last breath and it was clear that she was no more. After making the preparations for the funeral, the family members went to fetch her body for the last journey. The golden blaze of light of the setting sun glittered her room. And to pay the last homage to the grandmother, thousands of sparrows gathered in and around her room. The sparrows never did cheered nor did they do anything normal. They don't even bother to notice the read pieces thrown at them. Along with her funeral, the sparrows flew away.

## **Module II-Theory**

A short story is a dramatic narrative intended to be read in a single sitting and designed to produce a single effect—Edgar Allan Poe "father of the modern short story"

### **Common Literary Elements**

1. *Plot*: It is the logical sequence of events that develops a story.
2. *Setting*: It refers to the time and place in which a story takes place.
3. *Protagonist*: It is the main character of story, novel or a play e.g. Hamlet in the play Hamlet

4. *Antagonist*: It is the character in conflict with the Protagonist e.g. Claudius in the play Hamlet
5. *Narrator*: A person who tells the story.
6. *Narrative method*: The manner in which a narrative is presented comprising plot and setting.
7. *Dialogue*: Where characters of a narrative speak to one another.
8. *Conflict*. It is an issue in a narrative around which the whole story revolves.
9. *Mood*: A general atmosphere of a narrative.
10. *Theme*: It is central idea or concept of a story.

## Irony

Irony is a figure of speech in which words are used in such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning of the words. It may also be a situation that may end up in quite a different way than what is generally anticipated. In simple words, it is a difference between the appearance and the reality. Irony makes a work of literature more intriguing and forces the readers to use their imagination and comprehend the underlying meanings of the texts. Moreover, real life is full of ironical expressions and situations. Therefore, the use of irony brings a work of literature closer to the life.

### Types of Irony

On the grounds of the above definition, we distinguish two basic kinds of irony i.e. verbal irony and situational irony. A verbal irony involves what one does not mean. When in response to a foolish idea, we say, “what a great idea!” it is a verbal irony. A situational irony occurs when, for instance, a man is chuckling at the misfortune of the other even when the same misfortune, in complete unawareness, is befalling him.

### Difference between Dramatic Irony and Situational Irony

Dramatic irony is a kind of irony in a situation, which the writers frequently employ in their works. In situational irony, both the characters and the audience are fully unaware of the implications of the real situation. In dramatic irony, the characters are oblivious of the situation but the audience is not. For example, in “Romeo and Juliet”, we know much before the characters that they are going to die.

## Characteristics of a Short Story

- **Length**: Short stories typically range from 3000 to 6000 words. Although authors and critics have debated the length of the short story throughout literary history, most agree on a minimum of 3000 and a maximum of 6000 words. In his own contribution to the debate, **Edgar Allen Poe** suggested that a short story should take 30 minutes to two hours to read.
- **Subject**: Short stories usually focus on a single subject or theme. Subjects or themes may range from something as mundane as a daily errand or as thrilling as a ghost tale. A single, easily contained plot is one of the hallmarks of the short story and helps shape its other characteristics.

- **'In medias res':** Short stories usually take place in a single setting and begin 'in medias res', which means 'into the middle of things' in Latin. In general, short stories tend to begin and end abruptly, with little to no prior information and no major lapses in time. As they involve just one plot line and are limited in word length, there is little room or need for the extended developments we frequently find in novels.
- **Limited number of characters:** Due to the limitations of the genre, short stories typically focus on just one or a couple characters. As short stories usually cover such brief periods of time, even a single character may never be fully developed. However, historical examples, like some of Geoffrey Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales,' may find interesting ways of involving many different people, as we'll discuss next.

**Setting:** The setting is both the time and geographic location within a narrative or within a work of fiction. A literary element, the setting initiates the main backdrop and mood of a story, often referred to as the story world.

**Hamartia:** The character flaw of an initially rich and powerful hero that leads to his tragic downfall. This is also referred to as the tragic flaw.

**Satire:** It is a genre of literature, and sometimes graphic and performing arts, in which vices, follies, abuses, and shortcomings are held up to ridicule, ideally with the intent of shaming individuals, corporations, government, or society itself into improvement. Although satire is usually meant to be humorous, its greater purpose is often constructive social criticism, using wit to draw attention to both particular and wider issues in society. Satire is nowadays found in many artistic forms of expression, including internet memes, literature, plays, commentary, television shows, and media such as lyrics.

### Reasons for the popularity of Short Stories

- The major reason for the popularity of this genre is its brevity. Most short stories can be finished in a single sitting
- The number of characters and the timeline is limited making it easier to follow
- There are no unnecessary or slow build-ups which might bore the reader. The story usually happens in the middle of the action.

### Short Story V/s Novel

A novel will often follow one character's journey. Other novels have intersecting stories, such as Colum McCann's "Let the Great World Spin", or Amy Tan's "Joy Luck Club". The novel uses length to develop its landscapes, plots and characters. Good examples of this method is the historical novel where a specific period in history is examined in great detail. A strong example of this is Hilary Mantel's "Wolf House" which follows the lives of Cardinal Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell in great detail. It would be difficult to condense all that information into a short story!

A short story takes a "slice" of life and focuses on, for example, a single incident, an aspect of love, a specific decision. Where a novel might be 300 pages, a short story will be anywhere from 5-30 pages. The main focus of a short story is to present the reader with a single

clarifying moment. An excellent example of this is "Love is Not a Pie" by Amy Bloom that begins with a funeral and ends with an understanding of the mother's life and loves.

### **Local Color**

Local color or regional literature is fiction and poetry that focuses on the characters, dialect, customs, topography, and other features particular to a specific region. According to the Oxford Companion to American Literature, "In local-color literature one finds the dual influence of romanticism and realism, since the author frequently looks away from ordinary life to distant lands, strange customs, or exotic scenes, but retains through minute detail a sense of fidelity and accuracy of description". Its weaknesses may include nostalgia or sentimentality and its customary form is the sketch or short story.

### **Atmosphere**

A literary technique, atmosphere is a type of feelings that readers get from a narrative based on details such as settings, background, objects and foreshadowing, etc. The purpose of establishing atmosphere is to create emotional effects. It makes a literary work lively, fascinating and interesting by keeping them more engaged to the story. It appeals to the readers' senses by making the description more real to make them to comprehend the idea easily. Since atmosphere makes the audience feel in an indirect way, writers can convey harsh feelings with less severity. Writers control the impact of prevailing atmosphere by changing the description of settings and objects.

## **Module III: Writing for Children and Science Fiction**

### **Varieties in Children's Literature**

Just as there are genres for adult readers, many types of children's books have appeared over the years. These vary in types of stories, illustrations and interaction with the readers. Following is a descriptive list of these types, as well as the sub-genres within each group.

1. Picture Books: These stories concentrate more on the illustrations than on the text. The text of the story compliments the artwork rather than the pictures adding to the story.

2. Rhythmic Books: These books usually rhyme or have a musical component. Popular examples of these books are "Green Eggs and Ham" and "The Cat in the Hat" by Dr. Seuss. This genre also includes nursery rhymes and lullabies.

3. Folklore: Tales such as these have been passed down through generations and oral traditions for centuries. Tomie dePaola, an author-illustrator, frequently uses folktales to create stories for children. Myths are often paired with folklore, and these stories specifically attempt to explain different aspects of life. The goal of these stories is to pass down knowledge to younger generations.

4. Fairytales: Princes fighting for princesses dominate this genre. These stories have a magical component and are a more detailed way of explaining the world.

5.Fantasy: Fantasy stories are predominantly magical in nature but also comment greatly through this lens on contemporary life. Often an intense struggle of good versus evil occurs.

6.First Books: Nowadays children are introduced to stories even before they are born. Public libraries run programs where caregivers bring their infants to the library and are taught how to read to them. Books made out of board, cloth and plastic all make up this category, and their stories introduce babies to the basic outline of our world.

7.Concept Books: Concepts ranging from getting dressed to sharing are covered in these stories. The example book made on this site is a concept book about the season of spring.

8.Issue Books: A new trend in children's books is the introduction of controversial issues facing society today. Examples of topics include divorce, abuse, sexuality and war. Debate surrounds whether or not children should be exposed to these at a young age.

## **Fantasy in Children's Literature**

Fantasy is a genre of literature that tends to polarise people. The oft-repeated logic is that "serious" readers prefer realism while fantasy caters primarily to children or those who view reading as a form of escapism. The assumption is that fantasy is of lesser value than realist writing – which is why it is commonly associated with children and the imagination.

This pitting of fantasy and realist writing against each other corresponded with the development of separate literatures for children and adults in the 18th and 19th centuries: the serious realist novel was for adult male readers, whereas fantasy and romance were relegated to the readership of women and children.

Fantasy is vital for the human mind. It begins as the psychological process by which a child learns to fill the gaps between knowledge, reality and experience, and becomes a vital adult coping mechanism. Fantasy offers children a rehearsed exploration of the too big, too wide, too dangerous world that is getting closer and more real every day. But fantasy needn't just be dungeons and dragons - it can be any element of pretend. This is why as they grow, children need stories that include divorce, bereavement, war, falling in love, becoming a hero and saving the world.

Fantasy provide developing emotions with a contextual framework within which to awaken and limber up, ready for "real life" when it hits.

## **Language features in Children's Literature**

Some of the important linguistic features of children's literature are

- the choice of words – suitable to audience and genre
- the structure of the story and how it is presented on the page

- repetition of words throughout the story and also the continuation of prominent characters or themes in a series
- rhyme and rhythmic flowing pace that carries the story along
- descriptive words/adjectives/onomatopoeia that really create the scene. (Illustrations play an important role too.)

### **Characteristics of Children's Literature**

The characteristics of children's literature include the following:

- It offers fantasy and magic: children's literature is full of characters that are not real but are used to create mental pictures amongst children.
- Use of animal characters: children are fond of animal characters unlike adults, and books for children are often illustrated, sometimes lavishly, in a way that is rarely used for adult literature.
- It teaches lessons: these lessons could be mythological, philosophical, sociological, or psychological in nature.
- It has a lot of dialogue which makes children improve their spoken English.
- It has simplicity and musical language: most folktales are simple and are accompanied by songs and repetition. This makes the story interesting as the children read and sing along.
- It has happy and optimistic ending: children's literature has smooth and happy ending, giving hope and comic relief to the children.

### **Importance of Children's Literature**

- It helps inculcate positive, personal, social and moral education. Some children do not have these values and literature helps to develop them in children. Through literature the importance of education can be inculcated in the children.
- It influences ideas, attitudes and beliefs of children. This is why children's literature has to be carefully selected for positive influence.
- It enriches the child's horizon by helping him to learn more about the world he lives in since he has limited knowledge of the world.
- It helps the children to develop the tendency to attach themselves with the characters they read about in the stories. This makes the characters become the imaginary friends of them.
- It develops an insight and understanding of children. Literature gives children the opportunity to know and learn many things in life. The child reflects, ponders, thinks and reasons about the stories he reads. For example, if a child reads about another child who suffers because his parents are dead while his own are alive, he learns and understands certain things. He turns to appreciate the fact that his parents are alive, and he thanks them for their care.
- It helps to answer the hows and whys the children usually ask.
- It develops in the children perceptive powers. By the time the child listens to and reads folktales, he begins to reason and think of how to find solutions to his problems. When the child reads widely he will broaden his mind.



- It teaches children that life is not static; that things sometimes change for better or for worse. For example, a child who grows up in the city may think that everything is good and glistering everywhere as in the city, Children's literature helps to teach them that things are not the same everywhere and every time. It promotes creativity by stimulating the child's imagination. By telling children stories and reading texts to them, a child would be in a good position to be imagining things around him. Children's literature helps to expose the child to the environment of reading.
- It helps to develop ethical standard value system. In children's literature, children are made to know that they grow in a society where negative things abound. For example, when a child sees a mother punishing her child in the neighbourhood for stealing or for whatever misdemeanor, it will inculcate moral lesson in him. He will know that stealing is not good and if he steals, his parents will punish him.

### **Teaching Morals through Children's Literature**

Children's stories with morals then can serve multiple purposes and the life lessons children are able to glean from these tales will stick with them throughout their lives. What kids learn in their formative years have a lasting effect and instilling proper behaviours in beliefs in your children when they are young helps stage them for success later in life.

Children's stories can be very open about the fact that they are teaching an important life lesson. Equally, the moral of the story may be buried in the storyline itself. Books of both varieties can be very useful in teaching life lessons to children and parents often decide to use storytelling techniques which include both styles of writing.

Classic children's stories which cover themes of central importance to building a strong character never lose their meaning. Tales like those from Aesop and other fables teach children clear messages about right and wrong, moral or ethical and non-moral behavior, and the consequences of not exhibiting strong ethics and morals at all times and under all circumstances. Storytelling techniques which are positive in nature have a healthier and more lasting effect on children's own moral compass development. Classic life lessons like treating people equally, appreciating what you have, and sharing with others are common themes in classic children's literature and many contemporary children's stories.

### **Children's Literature in India**

A number of respected Bengali writers began producing Bengali literature for children including Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, who translated some stories and wrote others himself. Nobel Prize winner Rabindranath Tagore wrote plays, stories, and poems for children, including one work illustrated by painter Nandalal Bose. They worked from the end of the 19th century into the beginning of the 20th century. Tagore's work was later translated into English, with Bose's pictures. Behari Lal Puri was the earliest writer for children in Punjabi. His stories were didactic in nature. The first full-length children's book (Indian) was Khar Khar Mahadev by Narain Dixit, which was serialized in one of the popular children's magazines in 1957.

## Notes for Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

### Themes

- Abandonment/Loneliness: Alice's initial reaction after falling down the rabbit-hole is one of extreme loneliness. Every attempt to establish a familiar basis of identity creates only the sense of being. Alice becomes, to the reader, a mistreated, misunderstood, wandering waif.
- The Child-Swain: Alice is the most responsible "character" in the story; in fact, she is the only real person and the only "true" character. Alice's innocence makes her a perfect vehicle of social criticism.
- Children and Animals: Most of the Wonderland animals (except the Gryphon) are the kind one finds in middle-class homes, pet shops, and in children's cartoons. Although they may not seem so in behavior, most of them are, really, pets. Alice feels a natural identity with them, but her relationship ultimately turns on her viewing them as adults.
- Death: Growing up in Wonderland means the death of the child, and although Alice certainly remains a child through her physical changes in size — in other ways, death never seems to be far away in Wonderland. For example, death is symbolized by the White Rabbit's fan which causes Alice to almost vanish; death is implied in the discussion of the Caterpillar's metamorphosis. And death permeates the morbid atmosphere of the "enchanted garden." The Queen of Hearts seems to be the Goddess of Death, always yelling her single, barbarous, indiscriminate, "Off with their heads!"

### Writing Style of Lewis Carroll

Although the Alice books are stories for children, they're probably above the reading level of children of Alice's own age (seven in *Through the Looking-Glass*). The introduction of longer vocabulary words and Victorian customs also adds to the difficulty for twenty-first-century readers. Still, for the most part, the books are written in simple language that most readers can understand. Most sentences are relatively short and straightforward, and when the language does become complicated, the narrator usually makes fun of it for us before it gets too heavy.

However, despite the use of simple syntax and short sentences, the style of both books is extremely clever. Plays on words, puns, homophone confusion, and metaphors becoming literal embellish and embroider Lewis Carroll's otherwise simple prose. These clever permutations of language add richness to the text and another level of enjoyment for adults or more educated readers.

In addition, both books incorporate poetic language, in the form of parodies of nursery rhymes and songs, as well as Carroll's own original nonsense poetry. The most famous poem in the Alice books is "Jabberwocky," which appears in the first chapter of *Through the Looking-Glass*.

### Nonsensical language of Alice in Wonderland

One of the key characteristics of Carroll's story is his use of language. Much of the "nonsense" in Alice has to do with transpositions, either of mathematical scale (as in the

scene where Alice multiplies incorrectly) or in the scrambled verse parodies (for example, the Father William poem). Much of the nonsense effect is also achieved by directing conversation to parts of speech rather than to the meaning of the speakers — to definitions rather than to indications. When Alice asks the Cheshire-Cat which way to go, he replies that she should, first, know where she's going. The Frog-Footman tells her not to knock on the door outside the Duchess' house; he can only open the door when he is inside (though Alice, of course, manages to open the door from the outside). And some of the nonsense in Wonderland is merely satirical, such as the Mock Turtle's education. But the nature of nonsense is much like chance, and rules to decipher it into logical meaning or sense patterns work against the principal intent of Carroll's purpose — that is, he wanted his nonsense to be random, senseless, unpredictable, and without rules.

### **Notes on Chronicles of Narnia- The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**

'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' is the second book in the 'Chronicles of Narnia' series by C.S. Lewis. These books take place in the fantasy world of Narnia. Journey Into a New World

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is a fantasy book written by British author C.S. Lewis. The series is made up of seven books overall, charting the development of many different characters. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe was published in 1950, the first book of the 'Chronicles of Narnia' series to be released but the second novel of the series when the books are plotted in chronological order.

Lewis's follows the four Pevensie children - Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy - after their evacuation from London in 1940. They're transplanted to a large English country estate. The story opens on a rainy day, when the youngest child, Lucy, hides in a wardrobe during a game of hide-and-seek that transports her to the magical land of Narnia.

Time moves much quicker in Narnia than in "our world,". Lucy's first few visits through the wardrobe last mere seconds, and when the whole Pevensie clan returns from the years they spend reigning over the land, they discover they've been turned back to being children. Their long journey has taken about two or three minutes.

### **Characters in Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**

Aslan - The king and god of Narnia. The noble lion sacrifices his life so that the Witch will spare Edmund. After being resurrected the next morning, Aslan rises and defeats the White Witch once and for all. In the context of the book's Christian allegory, Aslan represents Christ.

The White Witch - This evil queen of Narnia places a spell on the land so that it is winter and never Christmas. She wields a wand that turns creatures and people to stone. The wand also produces the Turkish Delight that enslaves Edmund and makes him greedy. The Witch kills Aslan, and it is only after he rises from the dead that he defeats her. Like any malicious character, the Witch, an embodiment of evil, could represent Satan, or she may be a servant of Satan.

Peter Pevensie - Peter is the oldest of the Pevensie children, and he is noble and courageous. He matures into a young man during his first few days in Narnia. He immediately proves himself after protecting Susan from a ferocious wolf. Aslan knights him, and eventually

crowns him the High King of Narnia. During his reign he is known as King Peter the Magnificent.

Susan Pevensie - The second oldest of the Pevensie children, Susan is the beauty among the Pevensies. She is sweet and kind, and perhaps a little bland. Santa Claus gives her a horn to blow if she ever finds herself in a dangerous situation. When she becomes queen at Cair Paravel, she is known as Queen Susan the Gentle.

Edmund Pevensie - The third oldest Pevensie child, Edmund is a brat for most of The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe. Edmund is spiteful and mean, and likes to tease his sister, Lucy. His greed for the enchanted Turkish Delight leads him to act as a traitor against his siblings. Edmund joins forces with the White Witch, but eventually sees the error of his ways and returns to the good side.

Lucy Pevensie - The youngest Pevensie is cheerful, kind, and brave. This curious, happy-go-lucky girl is the first of the children to venture into Narnia. Later, she urges her siblings to search for her friend, Tumnus, when they find that the faun's home is ransacked. In the beginning, she is the protagonist, although Aslan fills that role later in the novel. We view much of the action through her optimistic eyes, as a foil to the skeptical eyes as Edmund. Santa Claus gives Lucy a cordial, which she uses to heal the wounded following the battle with the Witch's troops. She is known as Queen Lucy the Valiant.

Tumnus - Lucy meets Tumnus, a faun, on her first excursion into Narnia. He initially intends to kidnap her and bring her to the White Witch. Tumnus does not go through with it, and he spares her life. For his crime, the Witch ransacks his home and petrifies him. Later, Aslan rescues Tumnus from the spell. Kind, sensitive, and caring, Tumnus and Lucy become fast friends once it is settled that he is not going capture her. He also makes a mean cup of tea.

Professor Kirke - Professor Kirke is a slightly eccentric, elderly professor. He takes care of the Pevensie children so they can escape the air raids in London during World War II. Wise and open-minded, he helps Peter and Susan understand that Narnia may indeed exist.

Mr. Beaver - Mr. Beaver is Tumnus's friend, and he aids the Pevensie children in the search for the petrified faun. Mr. Beaver introduces the Pevensies to Santa Claus and ultimately brings them to the Stone Table and Aslan

Mrs. Beaver - She is Mr. Beaver's wife. Mrs. Beaver is kindly, good-natured, motherly, and a good cook.

Dwarf - The dwarf is one of the Witch's evil henchman and is her right-hand man.

Maugrim - Maugrim is a wolf and the chief of the Witch's Secret Police. Peter murders the evil wolf after Maugrim chases Susan up a tree.

Father Christmas - Father Christmas is also known as Santa Claus and he makes a cameo appearance in the land of Narnia. He explains that Christmas has arrived in Narnia and as a gift, gives special tools to each of children.

## **Critical Appreciation of Howzzat Butterfingers by Khyrunnisa. A**

As his nickname suggests, Amar is habitually clumsy with a penchant for dropping objects, from books to people (even elephants, as his friend Kishore remarks). An ardent cricket buff, he's appointed the vice captain of the school cricket team. 'It's a matter of pride' for the team to win the Colonel Nandkarni Under 15 Interschool Limited Overs Cricket Trophy. But the task is far from easy. The team captain suddenly turns 15, the star all-rounder suffers an arm injury and the school may even lose its playground. The onus is on a bumbling Amar to lead his team to victory -- but he too has to face his demons of clumsiness which haunts him every now and then. How he tries to lead his team to victory forms the crux of the story.

'Butterfingers' stands out with its simple-elegance. The story is simple and uncomplicated. It takes one back to his/her school days. Every minor facet of the story is explained with concise descriptions. Khyrunnisa has in fact measured her words to the right amount making no compromise on quality. Her style bears resemblance to English authors of the sixties -- a welcome relief from the new-age jargon of modern authors. Tongue-in-cheek humour has also been weaved into the plot, adding an endearing quality to it.

Khyrunnisa has brought out her characters (about 15 of them) impeccably. All lead characters are inspired by the author's friends, and her son -- whose names have also been adapted for the book. This makes the characters sound real -- to the extent that one can actually visualise them.

The highlight of the book is cricket. Conciseness is Khyrunnisa's forte, and one gets to see it in action, during descriptions of the interschool cricket matches. All matches are described in great detail - using the least number of words. A reader gets the feel of watching the match live; the excitement is palpable and infectious.

However, the book is not without flaws, albeit minute. At the end of the day, it is a book meant for children, and not all readers would be equally enamored by it. Besides, like all simple stories, the 'happy ending' is predictable. At 166 pages, the book is too short, and makes the reader yearn for more.

## **Characteristics of Science Fiction**

Science fiction is largely based on writing rationally about alternative possible worlds or futures. It is related to, but different from fantasy in that, within the context of the story, its imaginary elements are largely possible within scientifically established or scientifically postulated physical laws (though some elements in a story might still be pure imaginative speculation).

The settings of science fiction are often contrary to those of consensus reality, but most science fiction relies on a considerable degree of suspension of disbelief, which is facilitated in the reader's mind by potential scientific explanations or solutions to various fictional elements. Science fiction elements include:

- A time setting in the future, in alternative timelines, or in a historical past that contradicts known facts of history or the archaeological record (anachronism)
- A spatial setting or scenes in outer space (e.g. spaceflight), on other worlds, or on subterranean earth.

- Characters that include aliens, mutants, androids, or humanoid robots and other types of characters arising from a future human evolution.
- Futuristic or plausible technology such as ray guns, teleportation machines, and humanoid computers.
- Scientific principles that are new or that contradict accepted physical laws, for example time travel, wormholes, or faster-than-light travel or communication.
- New and different political or social systems, e.g. utopian, dystopian, post-scarcity, or post-apocalyptic.
- Paranormal abilities such as mind control, telepathy, telekinesis.
- Other universes or dimensions and travel between them

### **Impact of Science fiction on films**

Science Fiction Films are usually scientific, visionary, comic-strip-like, and imaginative, and usually visualized through fanciful, imaginative settings, expert film production design, advanced technology gadgets (i.e., robots and spaceships), scientific developments, or by fantastic special effects. Sci-fi films are complete with heroes, distant planets, impossible quests, improbable settings, fantastic places, great dark and shadowy villains, futuristic technology and gizmos, and unknown and inexplicable forces. Many other SF films feature time travels or fantastic journeys, and are set either on Earth, into outer space, or (most often) into the future time. Quite a few examples of science-fiction cinema owe their origins to science fiction writers such as Jules Verne and H.G. Wells.

Jules Verne was the first major science fiction author to be adapted for the screen with *Melies Le Voyage dans la Lune* (1902) and *20,000 lieues sous les mers* (1907), which used Verne's scenarios as a framework for fantastic visuals. By the time Verne's work fell out of copyright in 1950, the adaptations were treated as period pieces. His works have been adapted a number of times since then, including *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954), *From the Earth to the Moon* (1958), and two film versions of *Journey to the Center of the Earth* in 1959 and 2008.

2001: A Space Odyssey, the landmark 1968 collaboration between filmmaker Stanley Kubrick and classic science fiction author Arthur C. Clarke featured groundbreaking special effects, such as the realization of the space ship *Discovery One*.

H. G. Wells novels *The Invisible Man*, *Things to Come* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau* were all adapted into films during his lifetime while *The War of the Worlds* was updated in 1953 and again in 2005, adapted to film at least four times altogether. *The Time Machine* has had two film versions (1961 and 2002) while *Sleeper* in part is a pastiche of Wells' 1910 novel *The Sleeper Awakes*.

With the drop-off in interest in science fiction films during the 1940s, few of the 'golden age' science fiction authors made it to the screen. A novella by John W. Campbell provided the basis for *The Thing from Another World* (1951). Robert A. Heinlein contributed to the screenplay for *Destination Moon* (1950), but none of his major works were adapted for the screen until the 1990s: *The Puppet Masters* (1994) and *Starship Troopers* (1997). Isaac Asimov's fiction influenced the *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* films, but it was not until 1988 that a film version of one of his short stories (*Nightfall*) was produced. The first major motion picture adaptation of a full-length Asimov work was *Bicentennial Man* (1999) (based on the short stories *Bicentennial Man* and *The Positronic Man*, the latter co-written with Robert

Silverberg), although *I, Robot* (2004), a film loosely based on Asimov's book of short stories by the same name, drew more attention.

The adaptation of science fiction author Arthur C. Clarke's novel as *2001: A Space Odyssey* won the Academy Award for Visual Effects and offered thematic complexity not typically associated with the science fiction genre at the time. Its sequel, *2010*, was commercially successful but less highly regarded by critics. Reflecting the times, two earlier science fiction works by Ray Bradbury were adapted for cinema in the 1960s with *Fahrenheit 451* and *The Illustrated Man*. Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* was filmed in 1971 and *Breakfast of Champions* in 1998.

Philip K. Dick's fiction has been used in a number of science fiction films, in part because it evokes the paranoia that has been a central feature of the genre. Films based on Dick's works include *Blade Runner* (1982), *Total Recall* (1990), *Impostor* (2001), *Minority Report* (2002), *Paycheck* (2003), *A Scanner Darkly* (2006), and *The Adjustment Bureau* (2011). These films are loose adaptations of the original story, with the exception of *A Scanner Darkly*, which is close to Dick's book.

### **Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde**

*Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* published in 1886 by Robert Louis Stevenson, is about a man who transforms between two personae: Dr. Henry Jekyll and Mr. Edward Hyde. It is an example of the Gothic genre.

Gothic stories typically blend elements from horror stories with elements from Romantic stories. The persona-changing potions, murders, and eventual suicide in the novel are all examples of the horror elements at work in the text. The Romantic element in the novel comes across in the theme of science versus nature, since Romantic works often are seen as a rebellion against science's rationalization of nature. Gothic novels often explore the human psyche and supernatural phenomena, too.

The phrase 'Jekyll and Hyde' is sometimes used colloquially to refer to someone whose actions cannot be reconciled with each other.

*Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* focuses on John Utterson, a lawyer and friend of Dr. Jekyll. The novel begins with John Utterson talking with his other friend, who has just witnessed an odd situation. A man identified as Edward Hyde ran over a girl, only to pay off her family later with a check from Dr. Jekyll. The situation is made even stranger because Jekyll's will has recently been changed. Mr. Hyde now stands to inherit everything.

John, believing that the two men are separate people, thinks that the cruel Mr. Hyde is somehow blackmailing Dr. Jekyll. John questions Dr. Jekyll about Hyde, but Jekyll tells him to mind his own business. Unfortunately, John cannot do that.

A year later, Mr. Hyde attacks someone else: he beats a man with a cane, resulting in the man's death. The police involve John because he knew the victim. John takes them to Mr. Hyde's apartment, where they find the murder weapon, which is a gift that John himself gave to Dr. Jekyll. John questions Dr. Jekyll about Mr. Hyde again, but Jekyll insists that Mr.

Hyde has run away. He shows John a goodbye note from Mr. Hyde, but the handwriting is suspiciously similar to Dr. Jekyll's.

For a while, things seem to improve. Mr. Hyde does not reappear, and Dr. Jekyll seems happier. But then one of John's friends dies suddenly. Before he dies, however, the friend gives John a letter. He says it should only be opened if Dr. Jekyll either dies or disappears.

Dr. Jekyll starts acting even weirder and shuts himself up inside his laboratory. Eventually, his butler and John break into the laboratory, concerned because the voice they heard inside is not the doctor's. Once inside, they find Mr. Hyde dressed in Dr. Jekyll's clothes and dead. He has committed suicide. Next to his body is a letter.

After he goes home again, John reads both letters now in his possession. They reveal the truth about what has been happening. The letter written by his friend who died explains that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are the same person and that they transform back and forth via potions. The second letter, written by Dr. Jekyll, explains the purpose of the transformation: Dr. Jekyll wanted to separate his good side and his bad side. He thought he could control it with the potions, but eventually the transformations got out of control and he would transform involuntarily without the aid of the potions.

Dr. Jekyll tried several things to stop the transformations, but nothing worked. He knew he would turn into Hyde permanently. The letter was his last conscious act as Dr. Jekyll. Since Mr. Hyde is dead, it can be assumed that, unwilling to face the consequences of his violent actions, Mr. Hyde decided to kill himself first.

### **Time Machine by H.G. Wells (Summary)**

The book's protagonist is a Victorian English scientist and gentleman inventor living in Richmond, Surrey, and identified by a narrator simply as the Time Traveller. The narrator recounts the Traveller's lecture to his weekly dinner guests that time is simply a fourth dimension and demonstrates a tabletop model machine for travelling through the fourth dimension. He reveals that he has built a machine capable of carrying a person through time, and returns at dinner the following week to recount a remarkable tale, becoming the new narrator.

In the new narrative, the Time Traveller tests his device. At first he thinks nothing has happened but soon finds out he went five hours into the future. He continues forward and sees his house disappear and turn into a lush garden. The Time Traveller stops in A.D. 802,701, where he meets the Eloi, a society of small, elegant, childlike adults. They live in small communities within large and futuristic yet slowly deteriorating buildings, and having a fruit-based diet. His efforts to communicate with them are hampered by their lack of curiosity or discipline. They appear happy and carefree, but fear the dark and in particular fear moonless nights. Observing them, he finds that they give no response to mysterious nocturnal disappearances. (Perhaps they had become traumatized and would not discuss it.) He speculates that they are a peaceful society.

Returning to the site where he arrived, the Time Traveller is shocked to find his time machine missing and eventually concludes that it has been dragged by some unknown party into a nearby structure with heavy doors, locked from the inside, which resembles a Sphinx. Luckily, he had removed the machine's levers before leaving it (the time machine being unable to travel through time without them). Later in the dark, he is approached menacingly by the Morlocks, ape-like troglodytes who live in darkness underground and surface only at



night. Exploring one of many "wells" that lead to the Morlocks' dwellings, he discovers the machinery and industry that makes the above-ground paradise of the Eloi possible. He alters his theory, speculating that the human race has evolved into two species: the leisured classes have become the ineffectual Eloi, and the downtrodden working classes have become the brutal light-fearing Morlocks.

Deducing that the Morlocks have taken his time machine, he explores the Morlock tunnels, learning that due to a lack of any other means of sustenance, they feed on the Eloi. His revised analysis is that their relationship is not one of lords and servants but of livestock and ranchers. The Time Traveller theorizes that intelligence is the result of and response to danger; with no real challenges facing the Eloi, they have lost the spirit, intelligence, and physical fitness of humanity at its peak.

Meanwhile, he saves an Eloi named Weena from drowning as none of the other Eloi take any notice of her plight, and they develop an innocently affectionate relationship over the course of several days. He takes Weena with him on an expedition to a distant structure that turns out to be the remains of a museum, where he finds a fresh supply of matches and fashions a crude weapon against Morlocks, whom he must fight to get back his machine. He plans to take Weena back to his own time. Because the long and tiring journey back to Weena's home is too much for them, they stop in the forest for the night. They are then overcome by Morlocks in the night, whereby Weena faints. The Traveller escapes when a small fire he had left behind them to distract the Morlocks catches up to them as a forest fire; Weena and the pursuing Morlocks are lost in the fire and the Time Traveller is devastated over his loss.

The Morlocks open the Sphinx and use the time machine as bait to capture the Traveller, not understanding that he will use it to escape. He reattaches the levers before he travels further ahead to roughly 30 million years from his own time. There he sees some of the last living things on a dying Earth: Menacing reddish crab-like creatures slowly wandering the blood-red beaches chasing enormous butterflies, in a world covered in simple lichenous vegetation. He continues to make jumps forward through time, seeing Earth's rotation gradually cease and the sun grow larger, redder, and dimmer, and the world falling silent and freezing as the last degenerate living things die out.

Overwhelmed, he goes back to the machine and returns to his own time, arriving at the laboratory just three hours after he originally left. He arrives late to his own dinner party, whereupon, after eating, the Time Traveller relates his adventures to his disbelieving visitors, producing as evidence two strange white flowers Weena had put in his pocket.

The original narrator then takes over and relates that he returned to the Time Traveller's house the next day, finding him preparing for another journey and promising to return in a short time. However, the narrator reveals that he has waited three years before writing and stating the Time Traveller has not returned from his journey.

### **20000 Leagues Under the Sea by Jules Verne (Summary)**

During the year 1866, ships of several nations spot a mysterious sea monster, which some suggest to be a giant narwhal. The United States government assembles an expedition in New York City to find and destroy the monster. Professor Pierre Aronnax, a French marine biologist and narrator of the story, who happens to be in New York at the time, receives a last-minute invitation to join the expedition, which he accepts. Canadian whaler and master harpoonist Ned Land and Aronnax's faithful servant Conseil are also brought aboard.

The expedition departs Brooklyn aboard the United States Navy frigate Abraham Lincoln and travels south around Cape Horn into the Pacific Ocean. The ship finds the monster after a long search and then attacks the beast, which damages the ship's rudder. The three protagonists are then hurled into the water and grasp hold of the "hide" of the creature, which they find, to their surprise, to be a submarine very far ahead of its era. They are quickly captured and brought inside the vessel, where they meet its enigmatic creator and commander, Captain Nemo.

The rest of the story follows the adventures of the protagonists aboard the creature—the submarine, the Nautilus—which was built in secrecy and now roams the seas free from any land-based government. Captain Nemo's motivation is implied to be both a scientific thirst for knowledge and a desire for revenge upon (and self-imposed exile from) civilization. Nemo explains that his submarine is electrically powered and can perform advanced marine biology research; he also tells his new passengers that although he appreciates conversing with such an expert as Aronnax, maintaining the secrecy of his existence requires never letting them leave. Aronnax and Conseil are enthralled by the undersea adventures, but Ned Land can only think of escape.

They visit many places under the ocean, some real-world and others fictional. The travelers witness the real corals of the Red Sea, the wrecks of the battle of Vigo Bay, the Antarctic ice shelves, the Transatlantic telegraph cable and the legendary submerged land of Atlantis. The travelers also use diving suits to hunt sharks and other marine life with air-guns and have an underwater funeral for a crew member who died when an accident occurred under mysterious conditions inside the Nautilus. When the Nautilus returns to the Atlantic Ocean, a pack of "poulpes" (usually translated as a giant squid, although in French "poulpe" means "octopus") attacks the vessel and kills a crew member.

Throughout the story Captain Nemo is suggested to have exiled himself from the world after an encounter with the forces that occupied his country that had devastating effects on his family. Not long after the incident of the poulpes, Nemo suddenly changes his behavior toward Aronnax, avoiding him. Aronnax no longer feels the same and begins to sympathize with Ned Land. Near the end of the book, the Nautilus is attacked by a warship of some nation that had made Nemo suffer. Filled with hatred and revenge, Nemo ignores Aronnax's pleas for mercy. Nemo—nicknamed "angel of hatred" by Aronnax—destroys the ship, ramming it just below the waterline, and consequently sinking it into the bottom of the sea, much to Aronnax's horror, as he watches the ship plunge into the abyss. Nemo bows before the pictures of his wife and children and is plunged into deep depression after this encounter. For several days after this, the protagonists' situation changes. No one seems to be on board any longer and the Nautilus moves about randomly. Ned Land is even more depressed, Conseil fears for Ned's life, and Aronnax, horrified at what Nemo had done to the ship, can no longer stand the situation either. One evening, Ned Land announces an opportunity to escape. Although Aronnax wants to leave Nemo, whom he now holds in horror, he still wishes to see him for the last time. But he knows that Nemo would never let him escape, so he has to avoid meeting him. Before the escape, however, he sees him one last time (although secretly), and hears him say "Almighty God! Enough! Enough!". Aronnax immediately goes to his companions and they are ready to escape. But while they loosen the dinghy, they discover that the Nautilus has wandered into the Moskenstraumen, more commonly known as the "Maelstrom". They manage to escape and find refuge on a nearby island off the coast of Norway, but the fate of the Nautilus is unknown.

## **Module IV: Book and Film Reviewing**

### **Components of a good Film Review**

- **Condensed Plot Synopsis:** This is a brief description of the film's plot that probably emphasizes the most important moments of the film without revealing the film's ending. Nothing is worse than revealing too much about the movie and thus ruining it for the viewer.
- **Background Information:** Background information about the film consists of information about the stars, the director, and the production staff of the film. It can also include interesting information about the making of the film. It may incorporate information about the film's source material as well as mentioning the type of genre the film fits into. If the reviewer is so inclined, it may also include comments from other reviewers and industry insiders that are designed to indicate to the reader what the film's reception is likely to be (in case of a recently released film)
- **Abbreviated Arguments About The Film** The abbreviated arguments about the film are generally the main focus of the review. This is the section in which the reviewer analyzes and critiques the film. The focus of this segment is to point out what does and does not work in the movie and why. Most reviewers attempt to combine this information with a little background information. For example, if the lighting and composition of the film are particularly noteworthy the reviewer will generally take the time to note who the film's cinematographer was, etc.
- **Evaluation:** The reviewer's evaluation of the film generally includes a recommendation to either see or avoid seeing the film. This evaluation is always based on the reviewer's arguments about the film and is frequently backed up with his/her comments regarding the film's background.

Generally speaking, when a reviewer is evaluating a film he/she tends to be assessing some, or all, of the following: the motivation for what happens in the film, the film's entertainment value, the film's social relevance and social value, and the film's aesthetic value.

### **Components of a good book review**

- **Well balanced:** It takes into account that everyone has different likes and dislikes, and while this book may not be our cup of tea, it could be someone else's absolute favourite.
- **It should be about the book, not the author:** A good review focuses on the writing, on the treatment of the topic, on the characters, on the storyline, on the research, on the facts, and so on. It should not be influenced by the author's faith, intelligence, relationships, parenting skills, race, etc.
- **A good review is about the author's craft, not the book's packaging:** A good reviewer should not be swayed by the reviews on the cover or endorsements.
- **A good book review doesn't give an extensive summary of the book and then one or two lines about your thoughts.** Readers can get the summary from lots of places.
- **Even more important, a good review doesn't give away the ending or the plot twists.** While a brief introduction of the story could be included in a review it should never spoil the enjoyment of a reader who might read the book afterwards.
- **A good book review is specific.** General descriptions such as it was good or bad is often confusing when it comes to a book review. A good reviewer should focus on

specific elements of the book and could address questions such as a) What did you like or dislike about the writing? b) What drew you to—or left you cold about—the topic or characters? c) What moved or challenged or inspired or infuriated or disappointed you?, etc.

## **Review of a Malayalam book**

### **Review of Aadujeevitham**

When sorrows fill our thoughts tears spill out. When life spills out from a book the reader might be reduced to tears. Benyamin's 'Aadujeevitham' (Life of Goat) is one such book which is full of life which will make us think and appreciate the conditions we live in and look at life on a positive note. More than this, the book convincingly paints a life of a human in a situation highly different from ours and makes us think from their point of view.

The novel begins with a short section from near the end of his time in Saudi Arabia, and since it opens with him trying to get himself arrested and put into prison it's already clear things have not gone well. But he has concluded that: "prison was the best option to survive my circumstances", suggesting he's had quite an ordeal up to this point. The facility for foreigners isn't even that bad -- and, appropriately: "more like a disaster-relief camp". Even here, however, he's not home-free yet: employers routinely make the rounds at the facility, and claim their: "absconding workers -- a tear-filled day in prison", and, like everyone, Najeeb is terrified that his 'arbab' ('boss') will show up and drag him back before he can be deported (the true release he yearns for).

Najeeb's fate is still in the air when the story jumps back to the beginning, to the long middle section that describes Najeeb's three-year nightmare. What sounds so simple, if also a bit scary getting a visa to the Gulf, traveling there, following whoever picks him up works out more or less as expected -- until he and another local reach Riyadh. They don't immediately find their future arbab but one eventually comes and decides they're good enough and drives off with them. First his traveling companion Hakeem is let off, and then Najeeb is taken to his new workplace.

Najeeb does not find himself a worker on a construction crew, as he had imagined. He finds himself in the middle of nowhere, on a goat farm.

The one-time diver, used to the moist and wet climate of Kerala, finds himself in a place where water (trucked in) is so limited and precious that he never can even clean himself with it, much less bathe or wash his one set of smelly clothes. There's no way for him to communicate with the outside world, much less home, and he is basically a goat-tending (and milking) slave in the middle of the desert. Soon enough he identifies more with the goats than any human.

Eventually, however, he finds an opportunity to escape, with Hakeem (who has been working on a neighbouring farm) and another man, in the novel's final section. Escape, across the inhospitable (but not devoid of animal-life) desert, proves a great challenge as well, and while we know from the beginnings of the novel that Najeeb makes it to (relative) safety, the toll is enormous.

Najeeb's is not a typical tale of foreign workers in Saudi Arabia -- an estimated nine million, compared to a native population of about thirty million, but the isolation and abuse he is subjected to are in many ways representative. By placing Najeeb more or less all alone much of the time, Benyamin can focus on his predicament, which is simply a more extreme variation of that so many foreign workers find themselves in.

Najeeb finds himself in a situation that, in its outlines, resembles one he always dreamed of yet when it becomes reality. The relatively simple story of *Goat Days* is reasonably well presented, and Benyamin does well in describing the extreme situations Najeeb finds himself in. The arduous and frustrating goat-tending -- the animals can practically never be kept under control -- is used well, while there's actual suspense in Najeeb's escape attempt (and his possible fate in prison).

Somewhat disappointingly, an 'Author's note' at the conclusion explains that Najeeb's is a true story. Benyamin eventually insisting: "This is not just Najeeb's story, it is real life". Suggesting that the novel is, in fact, fictionalized reportage, with Benyamin merely assuming Najeeb's voice, might give a sheen of pseudo-'authenticity' to the work, but also makes it feel more like 'just a story'. If the power of the story is supposed to be taken from the fact that it is based on a real-life story, then surely a real-life account (i.e. non-fiction) would have been more appropriate. "Aadujeevitham" doesn't need the justification of being based on real events, and could stand well enough on its fictional own; it's clear enough that whatever it is based on -- an individual's experience, or the impressions of millions who have experienced some of what Najeeb lived through -- reflects real conditions and experiences. (There is also an unfortunate sense of the author sticking too closely to the real-life Najeeb's actual story, limiting some of what Benyamin might have done at some points of the story, especially its edges -- the before and after, little of which is shared here.)

An unusual worker's-tale from the Gulf States where, instead of (technological) modernity, building and consumer frenzies, and oil-related activity one is confronted almost only with the most desolate of rural locales, *Goat Days* is an interesting slice of Saudi life -- but one that also reaches far beyond its specifics, much of the novel's strength coming from how universal the tale is (even as few actually experience what Najeeb did, at work, in the desert, and in prison).

## **Review of an English Book**

Review of *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho

"When you really want something, the universe always conspires in your favour."

This is one of the key repeated phrases found in *The Alchemist*, and if you look at those lines as a true cynic and start by doubting it, the book is powerful enough to convince you of this point

Coelho's short 163-page book is a singularly inspirational masterpiece. The plot line is that of a simple quest -- a Spanish shepherd boy, Santiago, keeps getting the same dream that there is treasure lying underneath the Egyptian pyramids. After meeting an old king who offers him some advice and some magic stones, Santiago embarks on his journey to cross the Mediterranean and the Sahara to find his treasure and accomplish his Personal Legend (a concept equivalent to our purpose in life). Santiago faces challenges on his journey to get closer to the treasure. He travels to places he's never been to, learns new languages, meets

new people & learns from them, learns to listen to his heart/intuition, learns to read the omens/signs of the nature and even meets an alchemist.

Santiago finds the one treasure all humans seek at some point in our life: true love. Also, once again the author brings up the idea that true love doesn't stop you from following your path, if it does, then it's not true love.

But reading this book simply for the plot would be akin to viewing *Starry Night* as globs of paint – losing at least 70% of the beauty Coehlo truly presents. With a dreamy and pensive writing style, the author weaves into the storyline multiple sage concepts which a philosopher could ponder for years on. Insightful ideas about one's own destiny, about rising above failure, about the unity of the universe, are all things Coehlo pens into the comparatively simplistic diction of the text. The descriptions are awe-inspiring and the word choice is immaculate, but really it's the depth of soul behind Coehlo's words that spin the magic of this novel.

The book emphasizes the values of spirituality, faith, hope and love through symbolic narration of a fascinating story of an ordinary boy with extra-ordinary beliefs. It teaches its readers, in a very subtle and effective way, the power of positivity. Also, the desert locations that the book encompasses lend a greater mystique to the plot. The alchemist Santiago meets in the desert is the real thing. He actually can turn base metals into gold, the goal of the medieval alchemists. Santiago asks why the other alchemists never succeeded, and gets the strange answer, 'They were only looking for gold.' That is, they were seeking only the treasure of their destiny rather actually trying to live the destiny. Their focus on a prize lessened the quality of the present. This is similar to Hindu concept of not seeking the fruit of our actions, but just doing according to our dharma, or purpose. There is a subtle distinction between living out the destiny, as you have comprehended it, and scrabbling to achieve some distant goal. Destiny is not a prize but a state of being, realised only when, as the camel driver counsels Santiago, we live in the present. Alchemy is difficult to understand for today's mind, because it was a 'science' that blended matter and spirit. The alchemists spent years patiently heating and purifying metals, but the end result, a product of their total immersion in the task, was a purification of themselves. The moral being can make the distinction between the prize and the journey.

Though the book has several oriental philosophies it was originally written in Portuguese. The book has won the Guinness World record for being the most translated book by a living author. The style of the book is third person narrative. The language is simple, yet effective. Every word lends a meaning to the story. It is ideal for readers with a basic command over English language, as well as, for those who are proficient.

For anyone who reads not only to escape reality but also to understand reality, *The Alchemist* can offer the best of both worlds. The events of the novel sit just on the borderline of miraculous and the ambience is simply just not that of our humdrum teenage world. However, *The Alchemist* also supplies insight and inspiration that extends beyond Santiago's Sahara and into all lives, whether young, old, or teenage.

## Review of a Malayalam Movie

### Review of Manichitrathazhu

Manichitrathazhu is considered as one of the all-time great Malayalam films ever released and resulting impact it was able to create in the minds of the audience is what created its legacy.

The movie takes place in Madambi tharavaadu, the ancestral home of Nakulan (Suresh Gopi). He comes to his native place with his wife Ganga (Shobana) and settles in Madambi until his architectural work project is done. His superstitious uncle Thampi (Nedumudi Venu) objects to his decision but gives in owing to the beliefs of city people. Ganga opens a room that was apparently locked by a Manichitrathazhu lock covered with sacred threads and mantras, which was used to seal in two spirits; Nagavalli and ancestor Sankaran Thampi. Nagavalli is a dancer, who was brought from Thanjavoor as Sankaran Thampi's concubine. She was in love with a dancer named Ramanadan who lived near Madambi. After knowing about their affair, Sankaran Thampi kills her. Her spirit is said to be haunting the palace ever since. After this, supernatural occurrences happen in the palace and Nakulan suspects it as the deeds of his cousin Sreedevi (Vinaya Prasad) who previously had a history of mild depression as she was dumped by her husband. He asks his psychiatrist friend Sunny (Mohanlal) to stay in Madambi to treat her. Sunny digs deeper into the mystery and finds the result which leads to shocking revelations.

The movie has every flavor that is seen in a typical used in Malayalam; comedy, song sequences, a little bit of melodrama and location in native Kerala. In 1993, the filming process itself was quite endearing as the movie was shot in 2 different locations, Padmanabhapuram palace in TVM and Hill palace in EKM, shown as a single palace. The movie has a peculiar structure where the POV (point of view) shifts from one character (Ganga) to another (Sunny) resulting in a completely different scenario by the second half. Not to mention, the hero appears only after an hour in this movie. With comedy, drama and art blended within the suspense thriller, Manichitrathazhu presented a theme that is different from a typical Malayalam masala movie. The movie deals with psychiatry and each supernatural occurrence that is perceived by each character is explained with respect to science. Great priest Brahmadattan Namboothiripaadu (Thilakan) concurs with Sunny's scientific explanations, thus reducing the gap between the science and religion in a way. Manichitrathazhu can be enjoyed as comedy, suspense thriller and a musical. Another memorable aspect is the casting. Each and every character is unique in their respective roles. Other than the leads, even minor people like Dasappan (Ganesh Kumar), Alli (Rudra) even Vaidyar who plays aksharaslogam with Unnithan (Innocent) will be remembered. Mohanlal is adept in his role. He has established himself as a versatile at the time of the film's release, not to mention, this was during the golden age of Malayalam cinema which introduced new talents into the mainstream. His portrayal as an eccentric yet brilliant psychiatrist is fun to watch. However, the presentation has flaws. For eg: a psychiatrist does not make fun of their patients or insult them. Yet, Sunny is shown attacking a person calling him a "vattucase" and, the famous (or infamous) "vellom!" scene. As a doctor, he was shown in a bad light though the comic timings will make one laugh. That was the one objection I had in terms of his portrayal otherwise he is apt. The way he transcends from his eccentricities to seriousness is adroit highlighting Mohanlal's versatility. Suresh Gopi stuck to his standard although he looked off at times, but his sincerity and unconditional love towards Ganga is a

positive streak. The one who rules the movie is Shobana whose astounding portrayal contributed to the film's cult status. People watch this movie in order to witness Ganga, notably the famous "Vidamaatte?!" scene. Her grace and ease in acting makes Ganga who she is and added more than 100 cents as the "other person". Shobana received a well-deserved national award for her performance but the authenticity is something that needs to be questioned as Ganga's voice is dubbed by Bhagyalakshmi and Durga. The vocal performance is as important as the physical and facial acting so giving awards to dubbed performances is a huge question. Half the credit in "vidamaatte" scene should go to Durga for her vocal performance. Vinaya Prasad is a highly underrated actress. Her performance as Sreedevi is likable. She is bold, calm and loyal, in a way making hers the best character from the film, as she was ready to sacrifice her image for Nakulan's sake, although presented in a subdued manner. Nedumudi Venu, K.P.A.C Lalitha, and Innocent were great as usual. Innocent dominates the screen with his comic timings and he makes a fantastic pair with K.P.A.C Lalitha. Sudheesh makes an adorable presence.

Another peculiarity is the direction which makes the scenario look different in each situation as the second unit directors are established in their work. Fazil's direction along with upgraded camera work and editing is apt. Massive improvement in technical side is seen, the background music is creepy and it is dissolved in the situation shown. We see montages which match the emotions of the character; for e.g.: the kathakali scene where Ganga goes missing and the fast beats of the drums emphasizing Sunny's tension. The song sequences are shot well, my favorites being "varuvaanilaa" and "oru murai". Although, personally I feel that the song "pazhathamizh paattu" was unnecessary. The scenario itself was too cheesy; Sunny sits down to sing a song amidst unenthusiastic group after locking a screaming woman up in a room. Why the song was was even put there? Why did he have to sing it out loud? The story is structured such that we won't have any more questions left. The film has twists, turns, and a clever build-up. People, especially today, will end up questioning the superstitions of the circumstances and the methods used by religion to cure psychiatric illness. Above all, on how Sunny chose to treat a patient by targeting the person psychologically instead of giving medicines and on why he kept it a secret from everyone. The argument that can be brought is that it is a thriller and thrill lies in the anonymity.

## **Review of an English Movie**

### **Review of The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas**

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas (released as The Boy in the Striped Pajamas in the United States) is a 2008 British-American historical period drama based on the novel of the same name by Irish writer John Boyne. Directed by Mark Herman, produced by BBC Films and Heyday Films, and distributed by Miramax (North America) and Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures (International), the film stars Vera Farmiga, David Thewlis, Asa Butterfield, and Jack Scanlon. The Holocaust drama explores the horror of a World War II Nazi extermination camp through the eyes of two 8-year-old boys; Bruno (Butterfield), the son of the camp's Nazi commandant Ralf, and Shmuel (Jack Scanlon), a Jewish inmate.

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas is a powerful fictional story that offers a unique perspective on how prejudice, hatred and violence affect innocent people, particularly children, during wartime. Through the eyes of an eight-year-old boy largely shielded from the reality of World War II, we witness a forbidden friendship that forms between Bruno, the son of Nazi commandant, and Shmuel, a Jewish boy held captive in a concentration camp. Though the



two are separated physically by a barbed wire fence, their lives become inescapably intertwined. The imagined story of Bruno and Shmuel sheds light on the brutality, senselessness and devastating consequences of war from an unusual point of view. Together, their tragic journey helps recall the millions of innocent victims of the Holocaust.

The setting is established by the camera moving in through 'Nazi flags' onto a town square in Berlin. This camera shot is an aerial view of the town square which then swoops in to show the characters in the opening sequence of them pretending to fly. This link to the genre of the film, the Nazi flags, the town square of Berlin and the children pretending to fly, could show the genre of the film, which is about the war. Characters are established by running through the town square, showing the innocence and vulnerability of the children during the second world war. Other characters are established by the journey of the children running through the town going past people sitting in the town square, navy and war soldiers sat on the benches and in the war transport. The characters being established like this shows what the children see.

Conveying the horrors of the Holocaust through the eyes of a child would have been considered an impossibility by many, but Herman has brought out this beautifully in the movie. Much of the actual horrors, including torture and mass extermination happens away from the child's eyes and thus away from the screen as well. But Bruno sees enough to be suspicious and curious, but never enough to really lose his innocence completely. The low camera angles used throughout the movie also help with this aspect. We see the surroundings and other characters from Bruno's height. The audience is only given the information that Bruno himself has. As such, we are not directly told the concentration camp is Auschwitz or that the smoke coming from the chimneys is the smoke from burning bodies. One of the rare exceptions to this rule in the movie is when Elsa (Bruno's mother) is indirectly told by one of the soldiers that the stench of smoke is the smell of burning flesh. While the audience can forgive Bruno's lack of awareness Elsa seems to be willfully ignorant during most of the movie. However, she does react quite vehemently once she realises that her husband is condoning and aiding in mass murder.

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas also illustrates how powerful words and images are. Bruno, only knows that his father is a soldier, but isn't very sure what he does. That is, until a propaganda film he sees calls the death camp—the "farm"—a wonderful place with "hearty, nutritious meals," and the camera shows seemingly happy Jews smiling and waving. After the film, Bruno proudly hugs his father. The striped pyjamas is a very strong symbol in the movie. They are symbols of death of self-expression and individual identity and ultimately death. But in the movie they are also symbolic of friendship. It is a turning point in the movie and also for Bruno when he puts on the striped pyjamas and sets out in search of Shmuel's father.

Set against the horror of the Holocaust, Bruno's naiveté and investigative spirit look that much more innocent. The boy's inability to comprehend prejudice and killing, and his instinctive, uncomplicated ability to see Jews as real human beings starkly contrast Nazi cruelty, brightly illuminating the viciousness and irrationality of the bloodshed.

Beyond this, Elsa's role may serve as sobering testament against complacency. After she blindly follows Ralf to his new post, she struggles with her own attitude toward Jews but does nothing significant to help them, even as she begins to recognize their unjust fate. Her conformity should remind us of our own apathy in other situations, and it challenges us to

question situations until we fully understand them, fight for what we believe in and stand up for those who cannot defend themselves.

It's often said that if history is forgotten, it's likely to be repeated. So perhaps the most profitable thing about the film is the fact that—without including any of the gore and explicit violence seen in similar films—it reminds us about our global history of brutality. We must recall and keep recalling the Holocaust and other atrocities like it. And never overlook the millions who have needlessly died at the hand of hatred and greed.

Heartbreaking and soul-rending, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* is, then, one more piece of the puzzle that ultimately forms the picture of who we were, who we are and who we don't want to become.

## **Review of a Science Fiction Movie**

### **Review of Avatar**

The story, set in the year 2154, involves a mission by U. S. Armed Forces to an earth-sized moon in orbit around a massive star. This new world, Pandora, is a rich source of a mineral Earth desperately needs. Pandora represents not even a remote threat to Earth, but we nevertheless send in ex-military mercenaries to attack and conquer them. Gung-ho warriors employ machine guns and pilot armored hover ships on bombing runs.

Pandora harbors a planetary forest inhabited peacefully by the Na'vi, a blue-skinned, golden-eyed race of slender giants, each one perhaps 12 feet tall. The atmosphere is not breathable by humans, and the landscape makes us pygmies. To venture out of our landing craft, we use avatars--Na'vi lookalikes grown organically and mind-controlled by humans who remain wired up in a trance-like state on the ship. While acting as avatars, they see, fear, taste and feel like Na'vi, and have all the same physical adeptness.

This last quality is liberating for the hero, Jake Sully (Sam Worthington), who is a paraplegic. He's been recruited because he's a genetic match for a dead identical twin, who an expensive avatar was created for. In avatar state he can walk again, and as his payment for this duty he will be given a very expensive operation to restore movement to his legs. In theory he's in no danger, because if his avatar is destroyed, his human form remains untouched.

On Pandora, Jake begins as a good soldier and then goes native after his life is saved by the lithe and brave Neytiri (Zoe Saldana). The Na'vi survive on this planet by knowing it well, living in harmony with nature, and being wise about the creatures they share with. In this and countless other ways they resemble Native Americans. Like them, they tame another species to carry them around--not horses, but graceful flying dragon-like creatures. The scene involving Jake capturing and taming one of these great beasts is one of the film's great sequences.

Like "Star Wars" and "LOTR," "Avatar" employs a new generation of special effects. Pandora is very largely CGI. The Na'vi are embodied through motion capture techniques, convincingly. They look like specific, persuasive individuals, yet sidestep the eerie Uncanny Valley effect. And Cameron and his artists succeed at the difficult challenge of making Neytiri a blue-skinned giantess with golden eyes and a long, supple tail, extremely stunning.

At 163 minutes, the film doesn't feel too long. It contains so much. The human stories. The Na'vi stories, for the Na'vi are also developed as individuals. The complexity of the planet, which harbours a global secret. The ultimate warfare, with Jake joining the resistance against his former comrades. Small graceful details like a floating creature that looks like a cross between a blowing dandelion seed and a drifting jellyfish, and embodies goodness. Or astonishing floating cloud-islands.

Avatar is indeed a complete cinematic experience, with cinematographer Mauro Fiore, music director James Horner and special effects maestro Joe Letteri joining hands with director/screenwriter James Cameron to create a strong and visually-stirring plea to save the world, before it is too late. And the only way the human species can do it is by abdicating its destructive tendencies.



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B - 1564

Reg. No. : 1204129049

Name : Suresh Kumar

Fifth Semester B.A. Degree Examination, November 2016  
Career Related First Degree Programme under CBCSS  
Group 2(a)

ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH

Open Course - I

CG 1551.1 : Creative Writing  
(2013 Admission Onwards)

Time : 3 Hours

Max. Marks : 80

I. Answer **all** questions, **each** in a word or sentence. (10x1=10 Marks)

- 1) Difference between Shakespearean sonnet and Petrarchan sonnet.
- 2) What are the major images in "A Hot Non in Malabar" ?
- 3) What is an Ode ?
- 4) What do you mean by 'local colour' ?
- 5) The major theme of Kushwanth Singh's short story.
- 6) What is the purpose of children's literature ? Mention the name of any major writer of children's literature.
- 7) What is the significance of the title "The Oral Portrait" ?
- 8) Who wrote *Alice in Wonderland* ?
- 9) Mention any one feature of the language used in children's literature.
- 10) Which are the main characteristics of science fiction ? Mention the name of any major writer of science fiction.

II. Answer **any 8**, **each** in 50 words.

(8x2=16 Marks)

- 11) Element of fantasy in children's literature.
- 12) Imagery in poetry.
- 13) Symbols used in Tagore's poem.

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B - 1564



14) What are the major features of an elegy?

15) H. G. Wells's science fiction.

16) Explain any four aspects of a film that a good reviewer must focus upon.

17) The use of imagination in creative writing.

18) The objectives of book and film reviews.

19) The psychological aspects of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

20) Mention the major elements of a film review?

21) Define 'satire'.

22) Highlight any two aspects of Kamala Das' poem.

III. Answer **any six each** in a paragraph **not exceeding 100 words**: (6×4=24 Marks)

23) Write a note on science fiction.

24) Characterisation in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

25) Different forms of fiction.

26) Chief elements of poetry.

27) Satirical elements in Kushwanth Singh's works.

28) The beginning of *Howzzat Butterfingers*.

29) Anxieties in H. G. Wells' science fiction.

30) Nationalism in "Where the Mind is Without Fear".

31) Mystery in Edgar Allan Poe's works.

IV. Answer **any two, each** in about **three hundred words**.

(2×15=30 Marks)

32) Write a poem on 'Memories'.

33) Write a review of any book in English you have read recently.

34) Attempt a short story on the theme 'Outsider'.

35) Write a review of any English film you have watched recently.

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Aditya Jaiswal  
conjugation  
can write no idea





(Pages : 3)

D – 2653

Reg. No. : .....

Name : Akshaya .....

**Fifth Semester B.A. Degree Examination, December 2017  
Career Related First Degree Programme under CBCSS  
ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH**

**Open Course – I  
CG 1551.1 : Creative Writing  
(2013 Admission Onwards)**

Time : 3 Hours

Max. Marks : 80

I. Answer **all** questions, **each** in a word or sentence.

- 1) What is the name of the verse that has neither rhyme nor rhythm ?
- 2) What is the rhythm of *I heard a fly buzz-when I died* ?
- 3) What according to Kamala Das do the Kurava girls do for a living ?
- 4) Which novel is set in 802, 701 CE ?
- 5) What was the name of the party formed by the tribes down the coast to save themselves in the story *The Voter* ?
- 6) Name the first science fiction novel.
- 7) Who is the author of *The Jungle Book* ?
- 8) What is the name of Sherlock Holmes' doctor friend ?
- 9) What was Helen Stoner's relationship to Grimesby Roylott ?
- 10) Which is the narrative poetic genre that was originally set to music ?

(1×10=10 Marks)

Answer **any eight**, **each** in a short paragraph **not** exceeding **50** words.

- 11) Define lyric poetry.
- 12) What is the difference between free verse and formal verse ?
- 13) What is the theme of *I heard a fly buzz-when I died* ?

P

D - 2653

-2-

- ✓ 14) Mention the major difference between short stories and novels.
- 15) What were the ways in which Kushwanth Singh's grandmother spend her time after he went to school ?
- ✓ 16) What is the theme of the story 'The Voter' ?
- ✓ 17) What are the primary features of children's literature ?
- ✓ 18) What is the impact of science fiction on films ?
- 19) What role does the garden play in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* ?
- ✓ 20) What is the aim of a book review ?
- 21) What is a blurb ?
- ✓ 22) Why is illustrations important in children's literature ?

(8×2=16 M)

III. Answer **any six, each** in a paragraph **not** exceeding **100** words.

- 23) What is the main idea of the poem *The Lamb*.
- 24) The significance of the 'fly' in Dickinson's poem.
- 25) Tagore as a patriot in the poem *Where the Mind is Without Fear*.
- 26) Character sketch of grandmother.
- 27) The setting of *The Oval Portrait*.
- 28) The features of children's literature as evident in *Howzzat Butterfingers*.
- 29) The alternative universe of Narnia.
- 30) Character sketch of Marcus Ibe.
- 31) Satire in *Telephone Conversation*.

(6×4=24)

IV. Answer **any two, each** in about **three hundred** words.

- 32) Write a review of a science fiction movie you have watched.
- 33) Make a review of a book by your favourite author.
- 34) Attempt a children's story on the theme based on fantasy.