

HIGHER SECONDARY COURSE



ENGLISH LITERATURE
(OPTIONAL)
PART III



Government of Kerala
Department of General Education

State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) Kerala

2026

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Jana-gana-mana adhinayaka, jaya he
Bharatha-bhagya-vidhata
Punjab-Sindh-Gujarat-Maratha
Dravida-Utkala-Banga
Vindhya-Himachala-Yamuna-Ganga
Uchchala-Jaladhi-taranga
Tava subha name jage,
Tava subha asisa mage,
Gahe tava jaya gatha.
Jana-gana-mangala-dayaka jaya he
Bharatha-bhagya-vidhata
Jaya he, jaya he, jaya he,
Jaya jaya jaya, jaya he

PLEDGE

India is my country. All Indians are my brothers and sisters.

I love my country, and I am proud of its rich and varied heritage. I shall always strive to be worthy of it.

I shall give my parents, teachers, and all elders, respect and treat everyone with courtesy.

To my country and my people, I pledge my devotion. In their well-being and prosperity alone lies my happiness.

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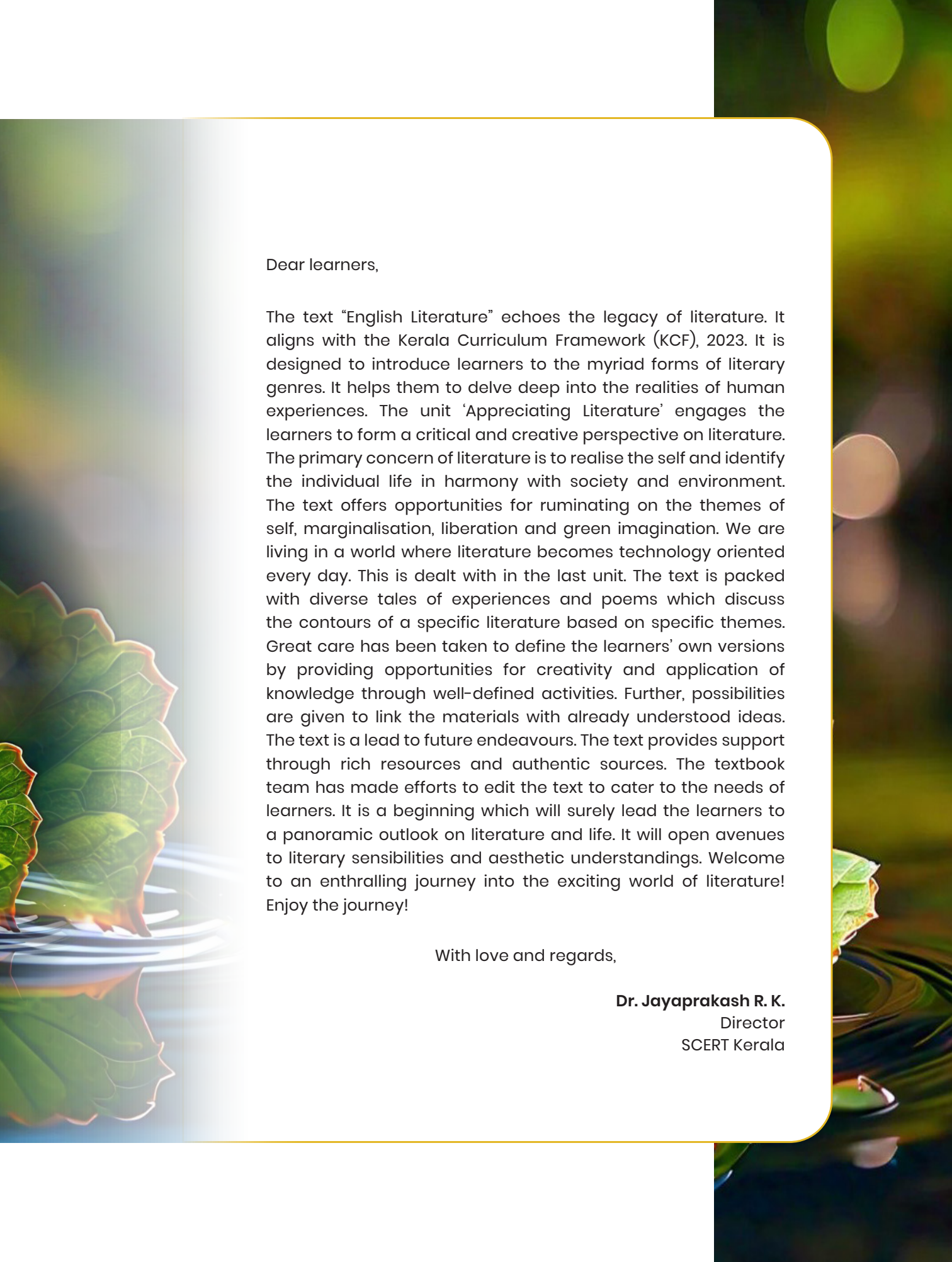
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Dear learners,

The text “English Literature” echoes the legacy of literature. It aligns with the Kerala Curriculum Framework (KCF), 2023. It is designed to introduce learners to the myriad forms of literary genres. It helps them to delve deep into the realities of human experiences. The unit ‘Appreciating Literature’ engages the learners to form a critical and creative perspective on literature. The primary concern of literature is to realise the self and identify the individual life in harmony with society and environment. The text offers opportunities for ruminating on the themes of self, marginalisation, liberation and green imagination. We are living in a world where literature becomes technology oriented every day. This is dealt with in the last unit. The text is packed with diverse tales of experiences and poems which discuss the contours of a specific literature based on specific themes. Great care has been taken to define the learners’ own versions by providing opportunities for creativity and application of knowledge through well-defined activities. Further, possibilities are given to link the materials with already understood ideas. The text is a lead to future endeavours. The text provides support through rich resources and authentic sources. The textbook team has made efforts to edit the text to cater to the needs of learners. It is a beginning which will surely lead the learners to a panoramic outlook on literature and life. It will open avenues to literary sensibilities and aesthetic understandings. Welcome to an enthralling journey into the exciting world of literature! Enjoy the journey!

With love and regards,

Dr. Jayaprakash R. K.
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Let us harmonise the text...

Learner/ Student	Higher Secondary learners are citizens of a rapidly changing world, emotionally aware, socially conscious and keen to recognise their rights and responsibilities. Demographically classified as 'Gen Z' they require sensitive guidance and effective learning tools to channelise their energy, emotions and ideas in positive and constructive ways. Literature plays a role in nurturing empathy, critical thinking and a sense of collective consciousness and helps learners tackle real life challenges and promotes cooperation, democratic values and mutual understanding. Effectively channelised, the potential of the learners can be transformed into a positive force to construct a progressive society.
Facilitator/ Teacher	At the Higher Secondary level, the teacher is a facilitator rather than a traditional instructor. Here he/she is more a mentor or supporter encouraging group activities, cooperation and active participation to enable learners - to develop their abilities and skills through guided interaction. In lieu of regimented instruction, learners are gently motivated and oriented through discussion, reflection and collaborative activities. The primary role of a facilitator is to support learners in their intellectual and emotional growth, offering guidance, encouragement and timely assistance. By fostering a supportive and inclusive environment, learners are empowered to express their ideas freely, and to develop confidence, empathy and a sense of belonging.
Support System/ Family and society	Education is a collective responsibility beyond the learner and the facilitator. An effective social system including school, home and society should work together to strengthen the learning process. When all these work together in harmony, they create a nurturing environment and support academic growth, physical vigour and emotional well-being. Guiding the learner and facilitator alike, the support system is instrumental in offering encouragement, stability and direction to the constructive approach. Through collective efforts and shared responsibilities, essential values can be promoted thereby shaping the learners into responsible citizens with strong civic sense.
Examiner/ External Agencies	This text is designed to be viewed not merely as an assessment material, but as a tool to cultivate thoughtful and sensitive learning. Evaluation methods may be framed to encourage reflection, interpretation and individual responses instead of mechanical reproduction of content. Assessments, both internal and external, should promote social awareness, emotional involvement and critical thinking. Learners' responses may be viewed as reflections of their understanding and engagement with literature. The text is not a closed document, rather it is an open window to the world of literature, arts and aesthetics, since art and literature serve as a mirror of society where human values, struggles and aspirations are delicately portrayed. Evaluators are encouraged to adopt a flexible and open approach to instil democratic values, secular thinking and responsible citizenship.

A guide to the textbook



Let us begin



Before we begin



Let us know the author



Let us read and contemplate



Let us enrich



Let us discuss



Let us apply our thoughts



Let us express ourselves



Let us go ahead



Let us remember



An introductory activity that aims at invoking a thought to trigger the unit's activities. The introduction also provides ways of looking into the text and discusses the ways that the learner can develop the topics discussed.



An introduction to the texts. The background, the setting, and the literary form are introduced.



A section that reflects on the author's contribution to the field, with biographical details.



The literary text. Loud reading and silent reading may be done individually or in groups. After the preliminary reading, a secondary reading may be done, focusing on the questions by the side of each paragraph. They are intended to evoke creative discussion.



A list of difficult terms and their meanings in context. The phonetic script is given if needed. Phonetic symbols are given in the last page of the text.



A set of serious questions for analysis of the ideas thrown open by the text. The discussion should be a collective activity, connecting the individual to the class and ultimately to society.



A set of serious questions where the learner analyses and synthesises in detail. The section will focus on the individual learner and the class and aims at developing a deeper understanding of the ideas.



A set of questions which requires creativity to be applied. This section will be most rewarding as the learner's original, creative ideas are invited.



A reference list for further reading.



A quick look at the key points.

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THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a ¹**[SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC]** and to secure to all its citizens :

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the ²[unity and integrity of the Nation];

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949 do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**

1. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
2. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)

1

Appreciating Literature



Let us explore the unit

The unit provides us a clear, comprehensive and engaging foundation for understanding and appreciating literature. Designed as a bridge between basic literary terms and advanced critical study, this unit equips us with the essential tools to read, interpret and respond to a wide range of literary texts.

The unit begins by introducing various narrative techniques and styles to help us recognise how literature is shaped through points of view, plot structure, characterisation and so on. By understanding these techniques, we become more sensitive to the craft of storytelling and the ways authors guide readers' emotions, expectations and interpretations.

A basic knowledge of literary figures of speech enriches the reading experience. Through literary devices like metaphor, simile, personification, alliteration and other tropes and rhymes, writers add depth, beauty and nuance to simple everyday language. These elements not only enhance comprehension but also help spark an interest in the aesthetics of literature.

The unit also outlines the major genres of literature, enabling us to classify texts and understand their distinctive features. Poetry, drama, fiction or nonfiction; each genre offers a unique mode of expression that shapes meaning.

The various ages in English Literature are introduced. This should equip us to locate literary works within broader historical contexts. Understanding these periods helps us to see how literature evolves in response to cultural, social and intellectual changes both local and global.

In addition, the unit also explores various critical approaches to literature, such as the formalist, feminist/gender, psychological, cultural, historical and mythological readings. These approaches prompt us to think analytically, to evaluate texts from multiple perspectives and to develop independent, well-informed interpretations. The unit also provides a systematic guide to the appreciation of a literary work, outlining the key elements—theme, tone, imagery, structure and meaning—at the denotative and connotative levels.

Finally, an introduction to multiple forms of creative writing, including journalistic, critical and imaginative. This section aims to nurture expressive abilities, encouraging learners to understand literature and to experiment with crafting their own texts with clarity, coherence and creativity. The unit aims to strengthen literary competence, broaden their intellectual horizons and instil a genuine love for reading and writing. It is a foundation for advanced academic study and engagement with literature.



Let us begin

The Zen Master's Moon

A young monk once asked his master, "Master, what is the meaning of the sacred scriptures?"

The master pointed to the full moon shining over the monastery and said nothing.

The monk looked up and frowned. "I asked about the scriptures — why show me the moon?"

The master replied, "The scriptures are like a finger pointing to the moon. Do not mistake the finger for the moon."

(Ryokan, a Zen monk-poet of Japan)

Points to ponder:

- The text is only a pointer to meaning.
- Reading analytically means looking beyond the words to understand what they signify.
- One must not take words too literally, without analysis and interpretation.
- True understanding comes from grasping the ideas that shape a literary piece.



Narrative Devices

Hello learners, let us begin with a story. Do you remember the story “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” by Gabriel Garcia Marquez? It was the story of an old angel who fell from the sky, wasn't it?

Do you remember the narrative technique of the story? It is magical realism. We also learned the major features of magical realism. Let us recollect them.



Magical realism is a narrative technique which blends realistic and magical elements in writing. Gabriel Garcia Marquez was one of the prominent writers who employed this technique.

The beginning of the story “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” is an instance of magical realism. Read the following passage.

“The light was weak, even at noon. When Pelayo was coming back to the house, it was hard for him to see what was moving and groaning in the rear of the courtyard.

He had to go very close to see that it was an old man, a very old man. The man was lying face down in the mud. In spite of his tremendous efforts, the man couldn't get up, impeded by his enormous wings.”



Here, instead of just adding fantasy to the text the writer skilfully blends reality with magic producing a story which tells about an old man who falls from the sky, and grows strong enough to fly back.

We must also keep in mind that **magical realism** is not just a narrative technique to entertain the reader. It has other purposes too. It becomes a tool to express truths that cannot be shown through ordinary realism. Sometimes it is used to criticise socio-political situations. This technique is also used to expose psychological truths.



"It always amuses me that the biggest praise for my work comes for the imagination, while the truth is that there's not a single line in all my work that does not have a basis in reality. The problem is that Caribbean reality resembles the wildest imagination."

-Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Let us discuss one of the stories which uses this technique.

Read the excerpt from the story "The World Renowned Nose", (Vishwavyakhyathamaya Mookku) by the Malayalam writer Vaikom Muhammed Basheer.

"The hero of our story was a cook, a kitchen worker if you like. He was not particularly intelligent. He could not read and write. His world was confined to the kitchen. He was totally indifferent to happenings outside the kitchen. Why should he pay attention to them? He could eat to his satisfaction; take as much snuff as he wanted, sleep, work. His daily routine was confined to these activities.

He did not know the names of the months of the year. When it was time for him to receive his salary his mother would come and collect it. If he wanted snuff the old woman herself would buy it for him. He lived a contented life till he reached his twenty-fourth year. Then an amazing thing happened!

His nose grew slightly in length. It passed his mouth and reached the level of his chin."

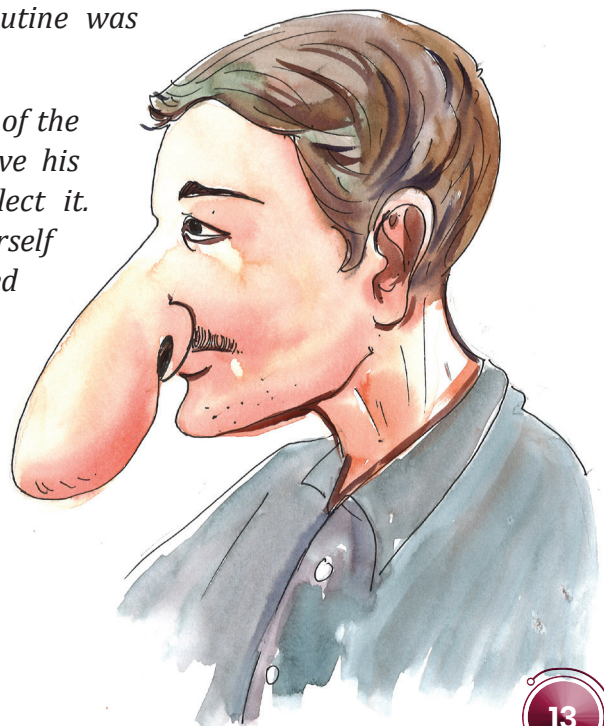
This story is a satire which also uses the technique of magical realism.



Read the story "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" and discuss how magical realism works in the story.

What are the purposes of magical realism in literature?

Try to read the full story and discuss it in class.





Now, let us have a look into realism.



Realism is a narrative technique used in fiction to represent life as it is. It focuses on accurate depictions of ordinary life, with believable characters and a focus on social issues.

Read the following passage from *Great Expectations*, a novel by Charles Dickens:

"My father's family name being Pirrip and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip and came to be called Pip."

I give Pirrip as my father's family name, on the authority of his tombstone and my sister Mrs. Joe Gargery, who married the blacksmith. As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them (for their days were long before the days of photographs), my first fancies regarding what they were like, were unreasonably derived from their tombstones. The shape of the letters on my father's, gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man, with curly black hair. From the character and turn of the inscription, "Also Georgiana Wife of the Above," I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly. To five little stone lozenges, each about a foot and a half long, which were arranged in a neat row beside their grave, and were sacred to the memory of five little brothers of mine - who gave up trying to get a living, exceedingly early in that universal struggle - I am indebted for a belief I religiously entertained that they had all been born on their backs with their hands in their trousers-pockets and had never taken them out in this state of existence."

Read the passage carefully and discuss how the child in the passage creates an impression about his family and his social identity.

Differentiate between realism and magical realism.

When we discussed realism and magical realism, we read some excerpts from the works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Vaikom Muhammad Basheer and Charles Dickens. You might have noticed that the first two excerpts are narrated by a person outside the story. But the third one is narrated by a character in the story. The perspective through which the story is narrated is called the **point of view**.





Point of view signifies the way a story is told – the mode (or modes) by which the reader is presented with the characters, dialogues, action, settings and the events of the narrative.

There are three main points of view in literary texts:

I

First person narrative - In a first person narrative, the narrator speaks as 'I' and is a participant, or the protagonist of the story. For instance, look at the opening lines of the novel *Moby Dick*.

"Call me Ishmael. Some years ago -never mind how long precisely - having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world."

Moby Dick - Herman Melville

you

Second person narrative - In second person narrative, the story is an address by the narrator to someone he calls by the second person pronoun 'you'. Italian novelist Italo Calvino used this technique in his novel:

"You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, If on a Winter's Night a Traveller. Relax. Concentrate. Dispel every other thought. Let the world around you fade. Best to close the door; the TV is always on in the next room. Tell the others right away, "No, I don't want to watch TV!" Raise your voice - they won't hear you otherwise - "I'm reading! I don't want to be disturbed!"

If on a Winter's Night a Traveller - Italo Calvino

he
she
they

Third person narrative - In third person narrative, the narrator is someone outside the story, who refers to all the characters in the story by name, or as 'he', 'she', 'they', etc. Here the narrator is an all knowing person who has access to the thoughts, feelings and motives of the characters.

Read this passage from the novella *The Metamorphosis*.

"One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin. He lay on his armour-like back, and if he lifted his head a little he could see his brown belly, slightly domed and divided by arches into stiff sections..."

The Metamorphosis - Franz Kafka



First Person Narrative

- In a first person narrative, the story is told using the pronoun, 'I'.
- The narrator can tell only what he or she knows, feels, experiences, or learns from others.
- This may seem like a limitation, but it actually helps the writer express feelings and emotions quite clearly and strongly.

Third Person Narrative

- In a third person narrative, the narrator is outside the story and knows everything about all the characters and events.
- This allows the writer to describe many characters and situations in great detail.

Second Person Narrative

- Second person narrative uses the pronoun of address 'you' and is not very common in literature.
- However, some writers, like Italo Calvino, have used it to create interesting and complex stories.



Try to think about some of the literary works you have read and analyse the point of view.

Now, let us read the poem below:

She Walks in Beauty

Lord Byron



She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens over her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and over that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

“She Walks in Beauty,” is a widely admired lyrical poem by Lord Byron, in 1814. The poet celebrates a woman whose beauty is serene, balanced and spiritually uplifting. Rather than focusing on outward appearance, he blends descriptions of physical charm with indications of inner goodness, showing how true beauty arises from harmony of body and the soul. The poem stands out for its musical rhythm, imagery of light and darkness, and the poet’s open admiration of the subject. As we read the poem, we may explore how Byron uses **contrast**, **metaphor**, **simile** and **sound rhythm** to create a portrait of beauty that is tender and near- perfect.

Now, let us go through the various **figures of speech** in the poem.

Take the first two lines:

"She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;"

The lady is compared to a cloudless, starry night. The comparison makes use of the word 'like'. Which figure of speech is used here? Simile, isn't it? How will we define a simile?



Simile is a comparison between two unlike things using the words 'like' or 'as'. It is used to make the description vivid and to mark the imagination.

Examples:

- "I wandered lonely as a cloud."
"Daffodils" - William Wordsworth
(The poet compares himself to a cloud.)
- "O my love is like a red, red rose."
"A Red, Red Rose" - Robert Burns
(The poet compares his lady love to a red rose.)

What are the other figures of speech in the poem?

- Metaphor

In the poem 'shade' and 'light' function as metaphors. They represent the harmony between the external beauty of the subject and her inner goodness. Darkness suggests mystery and depth; light suggests purity and elegance.



Metaphor is a direct equalization of two unlike things. Its purpose is to suggest that one thing is the same as another.

Example:

- "All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players;"
As You Like It - William Shakespeare
(Here, the world is equalized to a stage and men and women to the players.)



How does simile differ from metaphor?

- Alliteration

Repeated consonant sounds are used for rhythm, to evoke mood and for the sake of memorability.

'cloudless climes' and 'starry skies' – repetition of initial sounds.

'serenely sweet' – repetition of the 's' sound.

In Byron's poem, alliteration adds melody and provides a flow that matches gentle beauty of the subject.



The repetition of the initial consonant sound in a series of words is called **alliteration**. It is used for rhythm, emphasis, and impact.

Example:

- “The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,”
“The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” - Samuel Taylor Coleridge

- Symbolism

‘Light’ in the poem represents purity, innocence and goodness.

‘Darkness/shade’ represents depth, mystery and elegance.

Byron blends these to suggest inner and outer harmony.



Symbol - In literature and art, a symbol is an object or event that signifies something, or suggests a range of reference, beyond itself. For example, the figures of the goddess of justice, the statue of the blindfolded woman holding a point of scales is a universal symbol of justice.

In the history of art and literature, there is the Symbolist Movement. It refers to a group of writers who used symbols extensively in their works. French writers like Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud and Stephen Mallarme and English writers like W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, Edgar Allan Poe and William Faulkner are prominent writers who used symbols in their works.

- Paradox

A paradox is a statement that uses contradiction to create a new idea.

“Best of dark and bright / Meet in her aspect”

Opposites (dark and light) are combined harmoniously in her beauty.



A **paradox** is a statement that seems contradictory but expresses a deeper truth. Paradoxes make the readers think and find the hidden meaning in the text.

Example:

- “Child is father of the Man.”

“The Rainbow” - William Wordsworth

(Child can never be the father of men, here child is represented as the source of knowledge.)

Now, let us get familiarise with some other figures of speech in literature. It enhance the beauty of the literary text and help us understand it better.



Personification

Personification gives human qualities to non-human objects or ideas. It brings inanimate objects to life.

Example:

- “The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon.”
“The World is too Much With us” - William Wordsworth
(Here the sea is personified.)

Assonance

The repetition of vowel sounds within nearby words is called assonance. It adds to the musical quality of the poem.

Example:

- “A host, of golden daffodils;”
“Daffodils” - William Wordsworth
(The vowel sound ‘o’ is repeated continuously.)

Onomatopoeia

Here, words echo their sense / meaning. It appeals to the sense of hearing and helps to make the description realistic.

Example:

- “And the murmuring of innumerable bees.”
“The Princess” - Alfred Lord Tennyson
(The sound ‘murmur’ is an example.)

Hyperbole

It is deliberate exaggeration/over - statement for emphasis or effect. It can create humour or a strong emotional impact.

Examples:

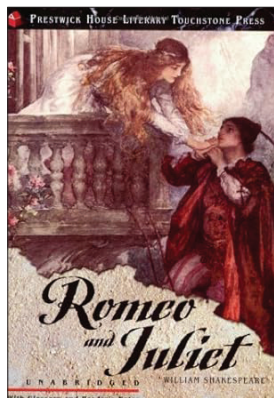
- “Ten thousand saw I at a glance,”
“Daffodils” - William Wordsworth
(The word ‘ten thousand’ is an exaggeration.)
- “And I will love thee still, my dear,
Till a’ the seas gang dry.”
“A Red, Red Rose” - Robert Burns
(Seas gang dry is quite impossible.)

Oxymoron

Here two opposing ideas are united to create an effect of complexity or contrast.

Do you know how to pronounce the word “hyperbole”?

Browse an online dictionary and find out the pronunciation of the new words you come across.



Examples:

- “Parting is such sweet sorrow,...”
Romeo and Juliet - William Shakespeare
(Sorrow and sweetness as opposition.)
- “O brawling love! O loving hate!”
Romeo and Juliet - William Shakespeare
(Brawling and hate as opposition.)

Irony

Irony is the contrast between what is expected and what actually happens (or what is said and what is meant).

Examples:

- In *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare, Romeo kills himself thinking Juliet is dead. But she wakes moments later. This is an example of dramatic irony.
- “Water, water, everywhere, Nor any drop to drink.”
“The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” - Samuel Taylor Coleridge

(Here, there is water everywhere, but not a single drop is available to drink.)

Imagery

Imagery is the use of vivid, descriptive language appealing to the senses. It helps the readers see, hear, feel, taste, or smell the scene of the text.

Example:

- “A host, of golden daffodils; Beside the lake, beneath the trees...”
“Daffodils” - Wordsworth
(The golden daffodils is the imagery used here.)

Pun

Pun is a play on words that can have more than one meaning. The purpose is usually to create humour through wordplay.

Example:

- “Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man.”
— Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* (The word ‘grave’ has two meanings- ‘serious’ and ‘burial place’. Both these meanings are relevant in the context.)

Allusion

Allusion is a reference to a famous person, event, story or work of art, in a text. It aims to connect the text to some cultural or literary idea or event.

Examples:

- “He met his Waterloo” — (In this expression, there is a reference to Napoleon’s final defeat.)
- “The forbidden fruit” — (This expression alludes to the biblical story of Adam and Eve.)



Let us refresh

How did we identify the various figures of speech in the poem? Was it the result of a peripheral reading? No. A thorough deep and thoughtful reading can help us identify these literary tools. Great works of literature have many layers of meaning, which the reader needs to perceive and enjoy through deep reading.

A literary text may have two levels of meaning. One is the peripheral meaning and the other is the inner, deeper meaning. The terms for these meanings are ‘denotation’ and ‘connotation’.



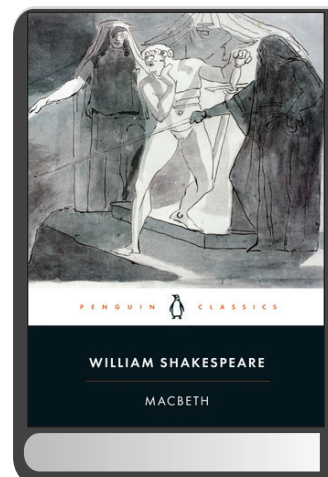
Denotation - The denotation of a word is the direct literal meaning.

Connotation - The connotation is the underlying feeling, idea or emotion which can have associated levels of meaning.

Now, let us read the line from William Shakespeare’s play *Macbeth*. It is a piece of advice given by Lady Macbeth to her husband, Macbeth.

“Look like the innocent flower, But be the serpent under it.”

The denotation is to look like an innocent flower and to act like a serpent. But on a deeper level, it reveals the true nature of the flower and the serpent. A flower is beautiful and attractive. It is a symbol of innocence. The serpent is deadly and venomous. So, Lady Macbeth advises her husband to appear as innocent and to act in a deceptive way hiding the real intentions. This is the connotative meaning of the line.



Let us refresh

A good work of art is rich in connotation.

“To define is to kill, To suggest is to create.”

Stephen Mallarme

“To define is to limit.”

The Picture of Dorian Gray - Oscar Wilde



Let us discuss

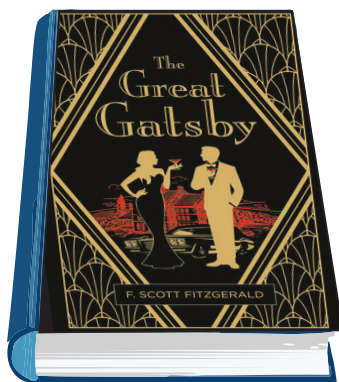
1. What is a symbol in literature? Why do writers use symbols?
2. What does the 'Symbolist Movement' refer to? Mention the major Symbolist writers.



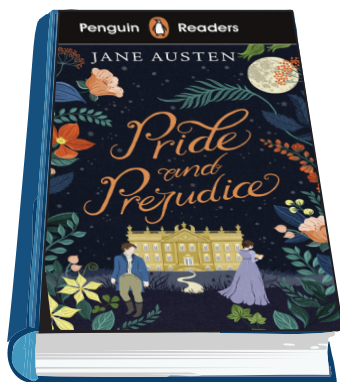
Let us apply our thoughts

1. We have come across some literary works that use magical realism. Try to find other works which use the same technique. Discuss with friends how the technique is used and its impact on the reader.
2. Some popular or 'universal' symbols are listed below. Note the ideas/emotions they evoke.

• White pigeon / Dove	• Red rose	• Serpent / Snake
• Lamb	• River / Flowing water	• Fire
• Mirror	• Crow	• Phoenix
3. Some literary passages are given below. Identify the **point of view** of each passage. Discuss the possibilities of the particular **point of view** with the help of your teacher.



- "If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born..." (*The Catcher in the Rye* – J. D. Salinger)
- "I resisted all the way: a new thing for me..." (*Jane Eyre* – Charlotte Bronte)
- "In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice..."
(*The Great Gatsby* – F. Scott Fitzgerald)



- "You are not the kind of guy who would be at a place like this at this time of the morning." (*Bright Lights, Big City* – Jay McInerney)
- "It is a truth universally acknowledged,..."
(*Pride and Prejudice* – Jane Austen)
- "The boy with fair hair lowered himself down the last few feet..."
(*Lord of the Flies* – William Golding)
- "Mr. Jones, of the Manor Farm, had locked the hen-houses for the night..." (*Animal Farm* – George Orwell)

4. Lines from some literary works are given here. Point out the figure of speech used in each passage.

- “My love is like a red, red rose.”
“A Red, Red Rose” by Robert Burns
- “And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain.”
“The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe
- “Life is but a walking shadow,...”
Macbeth (Act V, Scene V) by William Shakespeare
- “O my love’s like the melody that’s sweetly played in tune.”
“A Red, Red Rose” by Robert Burns
- “I must be cruel only to be kind,...”
Hamlet (Act III, Scene IV) by William Shakespeare
- “And every fair from fair sometime declines,...”
‘Sonnet 18’ by William Shakespeare



Let us go ahead

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The painter who draws merely by practice and by eye, without any reason, is like a mirror which copies everything placed in front of it without being conscious of their existence.

- Leonardo Da Vinci



Elements of Literature

Understanding the elements of literature, such as setting, plot, character, style and various figures of speech is an important step in becoming a productive reader. These elements act like tools that help us explore a story or a poem more deeply. When you recognise how a writer builds a world, shapes characters, or uses language creatively, you begin to see literature not just as words on a page but as a meaningful and enjoyable experience. Learning these elements will help the reader to appreciate the beauty of language, understand ideas and concepts and interpret texts in a more critical and creative way. It also strengthens our communication and writing skills and the expression of our thoughts. As we proceed, we shall see how these elements play special roles in shaping a literary work and in enhancing our understanding and enjoyment of literature. Let us familiarise ourselves with some key concepts:



- Setting
- Plot
- Character
- Style
- Theme



List out the settings of the literary works you have read and enjoyed.

1. Setting

The setting of a story is the **time and place where the narrative occurs**, the physical location, the historical period and the social context. It includes details like the geographical environment, the time of day and the prevailing social and cultural milieu, which together help create the mood of the story and provide the background for the plot and characters.

2. Plot

The plot of a story is the **sequence of related events that moves the narrative forward** from the beginning to the conclusion. It is the 'what' and 'why' of a story, revealing how and why events unfold.



Let us refresh

There is a difference between story and plot. The story is a sequence of events. But the plot gives the causal relationship between the events. Here is an example of a simple way to distinguish a story from a plot.

Story : *"The king died and then the queen died."* This states a chronological sequence of events.

Plot : *"The king died and then the queen died of grief."* This implies a logical relationship, showing how one event leads to the next.

"Aspect of the novel"- E. M. Forster

3. Character

A character in a story is **a person, animal or object in the narrative that drives the plot** through their existence, actions, decisions and interactions. Characters are essential components of the story and can be categorised by their role (protagonist/hero or antagonist/villain), complexity ('flat' or 'round'), or development (static or dynamic).



Laurence Olivier as Hamlet
(character in the play *Hamlet*
by William Shakespeare)

4. Style

Style in literature refers to the **distinctive manner an author uses language** to express ideas. It encompasses word choice (diction), sentence structure (syntax), tone and figurative language. It is what makes the writer's work unique and is often described as the author's voice.

5. Theme

Theme is the **central idea, message or underlying meaning in a work** of literature that explores universal human experiences. It is not the plot, but rather what the story says about concepts like love, revenge, life or death. Themes may be broad, such as 'good versus evil', or more specific, like 'the pain of unrequited love'.

Now, let us familiarise ourselves with the various forms of literature. This will help us develop our ability to appreciate literature.



Forms of Poetry

Poetry is a literary form that expresses ideas, emotions and stories through rhythm, imagery and condensed language. It often uses figures of speech (tropes) and devices of sound (prosody).

Major Forms of Poetry

A. Lyric poetry

- Expresses personal emotions or thoughts.
- Usually short and musical.
(Often sung to the accompaniment of a musical instrument, lyre.)
Example: "Daffodils" by William Wordsworth

B. Sonnet

- A certain kind of fourteen line poem.
- There are two types of sonnets. Petrarchan (Italian) and Shakespearean (English).
Example: "Sonnets" by William Shakespeare

C. Ode

- A formal poem, addressed to a person or object.
- Celebrates a person, object or idea.
Example: "Ode to a Nightingale" by John Keats

D. Elegy

- A poem on the death of a person.
- Mourns the death of a person or a similar loss.
Examples: In the elegy "Lycidas", John Milton mourns the death of his friend Edward King.
"Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is an elegy by Thomas Gray.

E. Narrative Poetry

- Tells a story in verse.
- It has a plot, characters and often, dialogue.
Example: "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

F. Epic

- A long narrative poem.
- The gods, kings and emperors, and heroic people are characters.



Think of some literary works you have read. Note down details of setting, plot, characters, the style of presentation, the themes etc. Prepare a chart of these elements and present it in class.

A fourteen lined poem may be called a

What term describes a poem that mourns the death of a person or a similar loss?

- About heroic deeds of national / universal / religious importance.

Examples : “Paradise Lost” by John Milton, “The Iliad” of Homer.

G. Ballad

- A poem in the form of a folk song.
- Uses simple language, to tell a story of love, adventure or tragedy.

Examples : “La Belle Dame Sans Merci” by John Keats, The Robin Hood Ballads

H. Dramatic Poetry

- Written in verse but meant to be spoken by characters.
- Dramatic monologue is the most popular kind of dramatic poetry.

Examples:

“Prometheus Unbound” by Percy Bysshe Shelley

“My Last Duchess” by Robert Browning



Forms of Prose Fiction

NOVEL

A novel is an extended prose narrative with a complex plot, well-developed characters and a detailed exploration of themes.

Major Forms

A. Realistic Novel

- Presents life as it is.
 - Focuses on social conditions and ordinary people.
- Example : *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens

B. Historical Novel

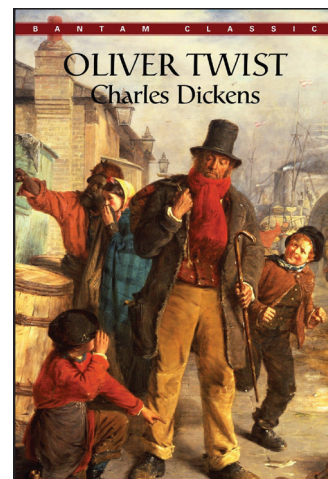
- Set in the past.
 - Based on history particularly on events/figures.
- Example: *Ivanhoe* by Walter Scott

C. Gothic Novel

- Emphasis on mystery, horror, and supernatural elements.
- Examples : *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
Castle of Otranto by Horace Walpole

D. Bildungsroman

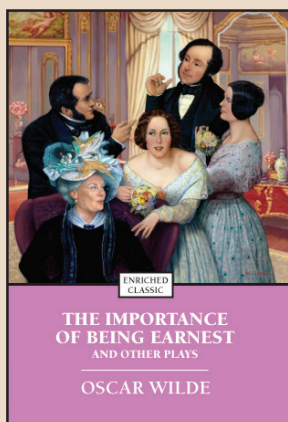
- Also known as a coming-of-age novel.
 - Follows the psychological and moral growth of a character from childhood to adulthood.
- Examples: *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens





What kind of novel is narrated through letters, diaries or similar documents?

Give an example of a psychological novel.



What kind of drama is essentially serious in theme?

What kind of drama presents exaggerated emotions?

List the differences between a tragedy and a comedy.

* Earnest - Here there is a word play between the name 'Earnest' and the quality 'Ernest'.

Likewise, if the novel follows the growth of a character as an artist, it is called *kunstlerroman*.

Example : *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce.

E. Picaresque Novel

- Follows the adventures of a roguish character, who uses wit and trickery to survive in society.
- Offers a realistic or satirical look at the hypocrisies in the society.

Example: *Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding

F. Epistolary Novel

- Narrated through letters, diaries, and such documents.

Example: *Pamela* by Samuel Richardson

G. Science Fiction / Fantasy Novel

- Based on futuristic science, alternate worlds, or magical systems.

Example: *The Time Machine* by H. G. Wells

H. Psychological Novel

- Focuses on the inner life, motivations and consciousness of characters.

Example: *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath

SHORT STORY

A short prose narrative focusing on a single incident, character, or mood, meant to be read in one sitting. It is concise and unified.



Drama

Drama is a literary genre usually performed through dialogue and action. It involves characters, conflict, and plot.

Major Forms

A. Tragedy

- Serious in theme.
- Ends with the downfall or suffering of the protagonist.

Example: *Othello* by William Shakespeare

B. Comedy

- Light-hearted, simple themes.
- Uses humour, mistakes and misunderstandings.
- Usually ends happily.

Example: *The Importance of Being Earnest** by Oscar Wilde

C. Tragicomedy

- Uses the elements of tragedy and comedy.
- Has serious themes but ends on a hopeful note.
Example: *The Winter's Tale* by William Shakespeare

D. Farce

- Highly exaggerated, improbable situations.
- Intended purely to evoke laughter.
Examples: *Charley's Aunt* by Brandon Thomas

E. Historical Drama

- Based on historical events or figures.
Example: *Henry V* by William Shakespeare



Give an example of a historical drama.



Let us discuss

1. How does E. M. Forster differentiate between a story and a plot?
2. What is 'style' in literature?
3. List the features of a lyric poem.
4. Discuss the features of a bildungsroman novel.



Let us apply our thoughts

1. Identify the themes of the various literary texts you have studied or read.
Discuss this with your friends.
2. Prepare a tree diagram to explain the subdivisions of poetry.



Let us express ourselves

Find more examples for different types of literature we discussed and prepare diagrams for presenting these in class.



Let us go ahead

Abrams, M. H. and Geoffrey Galt Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Cengage Learning India, 2009.

Da Vinci, Leonardo. *The Da Vinci Notebooks*. Profile Books, 2005.



Literature teaches us to empathise, to look beyond the obvious and beneath the surface, to bear in mind the smaller picture – of the ordinary human beings who are ultimately the objects of all public policy. And above all, to remember always that there is more than one side to a story and more than one answer to a question. Those are fairly useful prescriptions for public policy-makers in the era of globalisation.

- Shashi Tharoor



Approaches to Literature

Let us look at a set of approaches to literature. The Formalist Approach, the Psychological Approach, the Mythological Approach, and the approaches from Gender Studies, Cultural Studies and Historical Approach. These approaches are lenses which help us to read and understand literary texts. Each lens highlights something unique: the structure of the work, the inner life of characters, universal human patterns, gender perspectives or the influence of society and culture.

Understanding these approaches helps us to look beyond the surface of a text and to discover deeper meanings. It also encourages critical thinking, enabling us to analyse literature from multiple viewpoints rather than accept a single interpretation. Most importantly, these approaches help us understand human experiences, values and ideas more broadly, making our reading more thoughtful and creative. Let us familiarise ourselves with some of these approaches to literature.



What is the 'formalist' approach to literature?

Which literary approach considers the text an autonomous object?



1. Formalist Approach (Form based Approach)

Formalist approach in literature analyses **the inherent structure of a text** (form), focusing on formal elements like plot, character and language, to derive meaning.

This approach sets aside external factors such as the author's biography, the historical context or the social background. The focus is on the text as an autonomous object, examining how its internal components interact to create meaning, a practice often associated with techniques like "close reading".



Let us refresh

Close reading is a method of detailed analysis that involves the serious and careful reading of a text to uncover deeper meaning by focusing on specific details, such as word choice, narrative structure and imagery. It is a systematic approach to understand what a text says and how it says it, by paying attention to the function of individual words, the author's style and the way ideas are presented. The goal is to present precise arguments supported by textual evidence.



2. Psychological Approach (Psychology based Approach)

The psychological approach in literature **uses psychological theories to analyse and understand a text**, its author and its characters.

This method explores the motivations, desires and conflicts of characters, by applying concepts like psychoanalysis, which looks at the unconscious mind and the impact of early experiences in life. It seeks to uncover hidden motivations and the underlying psychological meaning of a literary work. The methods of the psychological approach are derived mainly from the theories proposed by Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, Jacques Lacan and others.



3. Mythological Approach (Mythology based Approach)

The mythological approach to literature involves analysing texts to find **universal patterns, symbols and themes that are found in myths across different cultures**.

This method uses concepts like archetypes — recurring characters, images and situations (Example: the hero, the villain, the quest) that represent fundamental human experiences — to uncover deeper, universal meanings in a work. This approach draws on knowledge from fields like anthropology and psychology and aims to explain a text by connecting it to shared human hopes, fears and expectations. The theories proposed by the psychologist Carl Gustav Jung and Northrop Frye have contributed much to this approach.



What is meant by “close reading”?

Which literary approach probes the unconscious mind of the characters?

Which literary approach tries to incorporate the ideas of anthropology and psychology to interpret a literary text?



What are the features of the gender based approach to literature?

What are the major concerns of the culture based approach to literature?



4. Gender studies (Gender based Approach)

Gender based approaches to literature analyse texts by focusing on how **gender, power and patriarchy are represented and perpetuated**.

These methods examine how gender stereotypes and inequality of role and status are portrayed. They attempt to criticise the traditional male-centered literary canon; and seek to recover and validate the voices of women writers and characters. This includes deconstructing language, analysing the experiences of marginalised characters to explore how gender intersects with other identity markers. A good example of this is feminist approach.



5. Culture Studies (Culture based Approach)

Cultural studies in literature is an interdisciplinary field that examines **how literature interacts with and is shaped by its social, historical and political contexts**.

It goes far beyond the traditional analysis of literary form. It analyses how texts reflect and influence culture by exploring issues of identity, power, race, gender, and class through a wide range of materials in high and popular culture.



6. Historical Approach (History based Approach)

The Historical approach (historical criticism) is a method of literary analysis that studies **a text by placing it within the historical, social, political and cultural context** in which it was produced.

We should keep in mind that literature is shaped by the time and conditions in which the author lived and understanding this background helps readers to interpret the text better.

These are the major historical periods of English literary history. Let us understand the periods for further study.

Just for understanding only

Old English Period / Anglo-Saxon Period (450-1066):-

This period begins with the arrival of Germanic tribes (the Angles, Saxons and Jutes) in England in the first half of the fifth century and ends with the Norman conquest of England in 1066. Some epic poems like "Beowulf" belong to the Old English (Anglo-Saxon) period. Caedmon, the Venerable Bede and Cynewulf were the major writers of the period.

Middle English Period (1066-1500):- This period begins with the Norman conquest in 1066 and ends by 1500, when the English language was standardised into modern English. During this period, English was very much influenced by the French language. This was the age of Geoffrey Chaucer, the author of *Canterbury Tales*, who is known as the father of English poetry. The Bible was translated to English during this period. The other major writers of the period are John Gower, William Langland and Thomas Malory.

The Elizabethan Age (1558-1603):- This was the age of Queen Elizabeth I. Rapid development in commerce, maritime power and nationalist feeling occurred in England during this period. England came to be known as "the nest of singing birds." Great writers like Sir Philip Sidney, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, Francis Bacon and Ben Jonson lived in this period.

Jacobean Age (1603-1625):- This was the age of King James I. Francis Bacon, Robert Burton; and Metaphysical poets like John Donne and Andrew Marvell were the major writers of this period.

Caroline Age (1625-1649):- King Charles I ruled England during this period. This was the time of the English civil war, which was



What was the major literary genre of the Anglo Saxon period?

Who were the major writers of the Old English period?

In which age did the standardisation of the English language occur?

Who is known as the 'Father of English poetry'?

During which period did England come to be known as "the nest of singing birds"?

Who were the 'Cavalier Poets'?



How did the title
"Neo-classical Period"
originate?

What were the major
priorities of the
Neo-classical writers?

Which were the popular
literary genres of the
Neo-classical period?

Who were the major
writers of the
Neo-classical period?

Comment on the special
features of the English
Language popularised
by the Romantic poets.

What were the social
features of the Victorian
age and how are
they reflected in the
literature of the Age?

What were the
prominent literary
forms of the Victorian
period?

What prompted the
beginning of the Modern
period in English
literature?

What were the features
that marked the Modern
period?

fought between the supporters of the king and the supporters of Parliament. Thomas Sackville, Robert Burton and Thomas Browne were the major writers of this period. The group of poets who supported King Charles are known as 'Cavalier Poets'.

The Neo-classical Age (1660-1785):- The writers of this period show a great respect for the traditional, classical writers of Greece and Rome. That is the reason for the name 'neo-classicism'. They emphasized reason, order and structure. They tried to imitate the classical models in literature. The popular literary genres of this period were satire, essay, mock epic, burlesque and parody. The major writers were John Dryden, Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift and Samuel Johnson. The novel was in its infancy then. Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Joseph Addison and Richard Steele were the major prose writers of the period. This age was also known for journalistic writings.

The Romantic Age (1798-1832):- Romanticism was a literary and artistic movement that emphasized emotion, imagination, nature, subjectivity and individualism over reason. The Romantic writers used the layman's language as the vehicle for literature. William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats were the major writers of this period.

The Victorian Age (1832-1901):- This is the age of Queen Victoria. It was a time of significant social, industrial and technological change. The literature of this era reflects these transformations, exploring themes like industrialisation, urbanisation, the conflict between scientific advancement and religious faith, etc. The novel and poetry were the prominent literary forms of the age. Major writers of this period were Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy and the Bronte sisters.

Modern Era (1901-1945):- The modern era begins with the outbreak of World War I. This period is marked by



persistent and multi-dimensional experiments in subject matter, form and style. Notable writers of this period were W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Wilfred Owen, W. H. Auden, Dylan Thomas, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, George Orwell, George Bernard Shaw, among others.

Postmodern Age (after 1945):- The age after the second world war is known as the postmodern age. Postmodernism was a reaction against modernist literature. A scepticism of grand truths, a sense of fragmentation and a playful attitude to reality are some of the key features of the postmodern period.

Source : A Glossary of Literary Terms, compiled by M. H. Abrams.

What were the features of the Postmodern Period?



Let us discuss

1. What features of a literary work are to be considered in the formalist approach to literature?
2. Discuss the major archetypes in popular movies.



Let us apply our thoughts

1. Find atleast one prominent figure belonging to each age and write an excerpt on them highlighting their achievements, themes in their works and the literary honours received if any.
2. Attempt a comparison of the Neo-classical period and the Romantic period.



Let us go ahead

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory (An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory)*. Viva Books, 2010.

Guerin, Wilfred L., et al. *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*. Oxford University Press, 2005.

Tharoor, Shashi. *Bookless in Baghdad and Other Writings About Reading*. Penguin, 2012.

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“

There are absolute masterpieces which move us intensely; Mozart's 'Requiem'; Homer's 'Odyssey'; 'The Sistine Chapel'; 'King Lear'. To fully appreciate their brilliance may require a long apprenticeship, but the reward is sheer beauty- and not only this, but the opening of our eyes to a new perspective upon the world. Einstein's jewel, the general theory of relativity, is a masterpiece of this order.

- Carlo Rovelli

”

Appreciating a Literary Work

Let us practice writing an appreciation of the poem.

Here is a poem and a model of appreciation is given. Let us follow this model for appreciating other poems.

Now read the poem and understand how it is appreciated using different approaches, that we know.

Because I Could Not Stop For Death

Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop for Death –
He kindly stopped for me –
The Carriage held but just Ourselves –
And Immortality.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For His Civility –

We passed the School, where Children strove
At Recess – in the Ring –
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –
We passed the Setting Sun –
Or rather – He passed Us –
The Dews drew quivering and chill –
For only Gossamer, my Gown –
My Tippet – only Tulle –



We paused before a House that seemed
A Swelling of the Ground –
The Roof was scarcely visible –
The Cornice – in the Ground –

Since then – 'tis Centuries – but each
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity –



Let us enrich

recess /rɪ'ses/	- interval (between study time)
gazing grain /geɪzɪŋ greɪn/	- ripening grain/ mature, ready to harvest
gossamer /'ɡɒs.ə.mə/	- thin fabric (like a spider's newly made web)
tippet /'tɪp.ɪt/	- shoulder scarf
tulle /tjuːl/	- a light material (of which the scarfs are made)
cornice /'kɔː.nɪs/	- top edge, decoration over the roof
surmise /sə'maɪz/	- guess

Because I Could Not Stop For Death – An overview

“Because I Could Not Stop For Death” by Emily Dickinson **depicts the speaker's perception of death, the afterlife and the journey there.**

In the first stanza of the poem, **the speaker personifies death as a coachman or even a 'gentleman caller' or suitor who drives the carriage.** (“Because I could not stop for Death / He kindly stopped for me”). This expression is repeated to describe the **experience of entering the afterlife.** Death stopped for the speaker and helped her into the carriage that held “just Ourselves/ And Immortality.”

They drive along a lane and the speaker takes note of what she sees around her. She experiences the process of putting away the life she knew and allowing this next stage of existence to take over. They pass a school, fields and the setting sun (symbolizing death/end). The poem concludes with the speaker's words that it has been centuries since all this occurred and she first realized the horse's heads were pointed toward eternity. The notion that **everyone confronts a hostile death is altered here.** Death waits for us gently, the narrator says.



Analysis

In the first stanza, **the narrator personifies death, as a close friend or perhaps even a gentleman suitor**. She welcomes death when she says, "He kindly stopped for me." The **pleasant tone** of the poem further suggests that the author is quite familiar with the reality of death.

In the second stanza, we see the narrator's ride in a carriage. **The carriage ride is symbolic of the author's departure from life**. She is in the carriage with death and immortality. The narrator affirms her willingness to go with death when she says that she had "put away... labor and... leisure too, for his civility". This further reveals that **the narrator has come to terms with mortality**.

She has completed all she wanted to do in life and willingly entered the carriage. **She is aware of the meaning of her journey**. But this does not alter her perception of Death as kind, thoughtful and gentle.

In the third stanza, we see them passing a school. (There is a belief that we recollect our past immediately before death). This implies that the author is generously given a few moments to remember her childhood. They drive past the 'Gazing Grain' allowing the author to think back upon the prime days of her life. They pass the setting sun, which symbolises the end of the day. It is beautiful and gentle and the image portrays **the transition from mortality to immortality**.

There is a shift in tone in the fourth stanza. Now that the sun has set, the author realizes that she is quite cold and she shivers. Then, she becomes aware that she is not fully prepared to face the sudden journey. Prior to this moment of realization, **the narrator felt quite comfortable with Death and Immortality** who were travelling alongside. After all, she was riding along with them in only her 'gossamer' and her 'Tippet' or in other words, in only a gown made of light fabric (which indicates that she was not prepared).

The fifth stanza gives her **the realization that she has been escorted by Death**. They pause before a new 'house', which appeared as a "Swelling of the Ground." She claims that "The Roof was scarcely visible" and the "Cornice – in the Ground." Now, the sun has set on her life and she is standing before her new home. **Death was kind and gentle, like a gentleman suitor**. He took her in with the promise of eternity. She gains eternity, leaving her physical body in the strange house.

In the last stanza, the poet feels that it has been centuries since she had identified the destination as eternity. Here, the poet regains her calm and **hopeful mood** because **she has found eternity and is quite comfortable with it**.



Consider these elements while appreciating a poem.



Key information

About the Poet

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Nationality : American

Emily Dickinson redefined American poetry with unique line breaks and unexpected rhymes. She penned around 1,800 poems. Most of these were published after her death.

Period of Composition

The poem is believed to have been written between 1855 and 1863. It was published in 1890.

- Central Idea** : Death is inevitable. But one doesn't have to be scared.
- Speaker** : A woman confronting death.
- Poetic Form** : Quatrain (four lined stanza). The poem comprises six stanzas.
- Theme** : Death, Immortality, Religion
- Tone and Mood** : Calm and measured, not emotional.
- Genre** : This is a lyric poem, a form of poetry that expresses personal feelings and emotions. The poem is characterized by its introspective nature, reflecting Dickinson's interest in exploring human nature. The use of vivid imagery and figurative language also contributes to the emotional impact of the poem, creating a compelling and memorable experience for the reader.



Figures of speech

- Personification** : "Because I Could Not Stop For Death – He kindly stopped for me–". Here death is personified as a courteous suitor, making the theme less grim.
- Images / Symbols** : Carriage, Setting Sun, House- Represent life's journey, the end of life and the grave respectively.
- Alliteration** : "Gossamer, my Gown – My Tippet – only Tulle –". The use of alliteration adds melody and softness, mirroring the tone.
- Metaphor** : "The House that seemed / A Swelling of the Ground". The grave is metaphorically described as a house.
- Irony** : The speaker is calm about death. Contrasts with the typical fear associated with death.
- Paradox** : "Since then – 'tis Centuries – but each / Feels shorter than the Day". Suggests that time loses meaning in eternity.
- Run-on Line/Enjambment** : These are lines that continue their sense and grammatical structure into the next line without a pause. In this poem,

enjambment is reinforced with typographical symbols like the dash (-).

Example :- • “Because I could not stop for Death –
He kindly stopped for me –”

Here, the sentence flows across the line, mirroring the movement of the carriage. Run-on lines contribute to the essential mood of journey in the poem.



Analysis of the poem by various approaches to literature

An appreciation may comprise the following elements -

- A small write-up on the author
- A summary of the work
- Critical comments
- An introduction to the work
- An analysis of the work
- Individual response

Reflections on the poem

Emily Dickinson’s “Because I Could Not Stop For Death” transforms the terrifying concept of death into an experience of serenity and gentleness. Through simple, yet profound imagery, measured rhythm and the fusion of domestic and other metaphors, she creates a vision where death is not an end but a gentle escort into immortality. The poem’s multilayered meanings, explored through various critical approaches, unveil Dickinson’s genius in blending form, psychology, mythology and cultural consciousness into a timeless meditation on life and eternity.

Written in the 19th century, this poem transforms the usually fearful subject of death into a calm, quiet and courteous experience. Through symbolism, personification and rhythm, Dickinson presents death not as the end but as a gentle passage to eternity.

Formalist Reading (An approach where the elements of form are given priority)

Key Points

- From a formalist view, the poem’s structure, diction and imagery construct its meaning.
- Form: Six quatrains, written in hymn-like style.
- Tone: Calm, reflective and paradoxically serene though speaking of death.
- Imagery: The carriage ride symbolises the journey from life to death and to eternity.
- Run-on lines: Run-on lines contribute to the mood of the poem.
- Symbolism : Carriage- the vehicle of transition between life and afterlife.
Setting Sun- the end of life or the approach of death.
House- grave.
- Theme: Acceptance of death as the natural end of life. Here, death is a courteous companion rather than a fearful terminator.

From a formalist perspective, the poem is a carefully structured lyric composed of six quatrains. The tone remains calm and reflective with a sense of quiet acceptance.

Imagery plays a vital role in shaping meaning: ‘the Carriage’ represents the journey of life and death, the ‘Setting Sun’ marks the end of life and the ‘House’ symbolises the grave. The use of personification—turning Death into a kind suitor—softens the theme and introduces a paradoxical sense of comfort. Structurally, the poem moves from life to eternity, mirroring the journey it describes.

Psychological Reading (An approach giving priority to the mind.)

Key Points

- From a psychological view, the poem can be read as an exploration of the unconscious acceptance of mortality.
- Death is personified as a kind gentleman, reflecting Dickinson’s subconscious acceptance of the inevitability of death.
- The calm tone suggests an absence of repression or denial.
- The children, the grain and setting sun represent stages of life — childhood, maturity and decline — mirroring the development of the self.

Psychologically, the poem reflects the poet’s calm acceptance of death. Instead of fear or resistance, there is a deep unconscious readiness. The speaker’s decision to “put away / My labor and my leisure too” implies the surrender of worldly attachments.

The carriage ride can be seen as the soul’s journey from consciousness (life) through unconscious transformation (death) toward the collective unconscious, which is a set of universal beliefs, ideas and moral attitudes. The stages of passing the school, the fields and the setting sun symbolize stages of human life—childhood, maturity and decline—making the poem an allegory of the journey toward peace.

Mythological and Archetypal Reading (An approach which takes into consideration the lores and legends in mythology and literature.)

Key Points

- Seen from a mythic/archetypal perspective, the poem connects to universal patterns of journey, death and rebirth.
- The carriage ride echoes the ‘journey to the underworld’, a motif in many myths.
- Death as a civilized companion recalls mythic soul-guides who guide souls gently to the afterlife.

- The final image of 'Eternity' represents transcendence, a common archetype of spiritual rebirth beyond physical death.
- The ride with death is an archetype of passage.

From the mythological and archetypal perspective, the poem echoes the universal motif of the soul's journey to the afterlife. The image of Death as a guide recalls the mythical leader, who leads the dead toward the afterlife. The 'Carriage' becomes a symbolic vessel of transition between the earthly and eternal realms. The destination—eternity—represents spiritual rebirth and transcendence. In this way, Dickinson universalises her personal vision of death, aligning it with humanity's oldest myths of passage and renewal.

Cultural Reading (An approach giving priority to aspects of culture.)

Key Points

- Culturally, the poem reflects 19th century American Puritan values and the Transcendentalist spirit.
- Death was a common theme in Dickinson's time due to high mortality rates and the rigid religious beliefs of the period.
- Yet Dickinson's view is unorthodox. She humanises Death, making it gentle and familiar.
- The poem suggests a cultural shift from fear of divine judgment to a personal, introspective understanding of death.
- The poem challenges the notion of death, which was constructed and reinforced by established religion, society, and culture.

Culturally, the poem reflects the religious and social influences of Dickinson's time. In 19th century America, death was a grim reality, viewed through the lens of Christian salvation and divine judgment. However, Dickinson moves away from conventional religious attitudes by portraying death as a natural and even a civil companion. Through her calm tone and familiar imagery, Dickinson redefines cultural perceptions of mortality—turning fear into acceptance and separation into continuity.

Gender Reading (An approach from the perspective of gender constraints and reality.)

Key Points

- The speaker is a woman who narrates her own encounter with Death — a bold statement in the 19th century when women's voices were often silenced or confined to domestic spaces.
- By speaking calmly and intelligently about death, Dickinson asserts female authority over subjects traditionally dominated by male voices (philosophy, theology, mortality).

- The carriage ride can be seen as an allegory of marriage — a journey from life to another realm, echoing how women in Dickinson's era 'left' their own identities upon marriage.
- The poem demonstrates intellectual independence and challenges the notion that women's poetry should be domestic or emotional.
- Death, dressed in civility, might symbolise patriarchal control cloaked in gentility — the polite systems that guide women toward their own erasure.

A gender-based reading of "Because I Could Not Stop For Death" highlights Dickinson's subtle resistance to patriarchal norms and her assertion of female agency in a restrictive cultural context.

19th century American women were expected to be passive, obedient and confined to domestic roles. Dickinson, however, crafts a female speaker who takes part in an extraordinary spiritual journey. Although Death is personified as a male suitor, the speaker's calm acceptance and narrative control subvert the typical power dynamics between man and woman. Rather than being a helpless victim, she becomes an equal participant in the journey toward immortality.

The imagery of the Carriage—a private, enclosed space—suggests both confinement and companionship. Symbolically, the woman transcends the boundaries of domestic space and ventures into the unknown, claiming her spiritual independence. By redefining the relationship between Death (male) and the Soul (female), Dickinson quietly challenges the 19th century ideal of feminine passivity. Her choice to portray death as 'kind' and 'civil' reflects not submission but a form of self-possession and inner strength.

Moreover, the poet's reimagining of the afterlife as a serene and personal realm, free from outside authority, can be read as a feminist assertion of a woman's right to her own spiritual experience. In this sense, Dickinson's voice transcends gender constraints, expressing autonomy even in death.

Conclusion

In "Because I Could Not Stop For Death," Emily Dickinson achieves a rare synthesis of the intellect, emotions and spirituality. Through precise diction, controlled form and evocative symbolism, she transforms death from a frightening event into a serene and inevitable passage toward eternity. Examined through various critical approaches—formal, psychological, mythological, gender and cultural—the poem reveals multiple layers of meaning, each reinforcing Dickinson's vision of death as both universal and deeply personal. Her mastery of poetic form and philosophical depth ensures that the poem remains a timeless reflection on the mystery of human existence.

Comparative Analysis

Sometimes we may compare or contrast a literary work with another. For example, the poem “Because I Could Not Stop For Death” can be compared to the Malayalam poem “Ente Veli” (My Wedding) by G. Sankara Kurup. You may read the poem and compare and contrast it with the poem by Dickinson.



Let us refresh

We should keep in mind that we cannot always apply all approaches to a single work of art. After reading the work closely, choose a suitable approach to analyse the literary work. We should also bear in mind that both appreciation and fair criticism of a literary work comprise a judicial approach to the poem as a work of art. We need not come to a one-sided (positive/negative) judgement. The Judicious criticism of a work of art is a creative and constructive process which suggests multiple ways of appreciating it.



Let us express ourselves

Attempt a critical appreciation of the following poems :

- 1 My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

(William Shakespeare, 'Sonnet 130')

- 2 Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd.
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd.

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

(William Shakespeare, 'Sonnet 18')

3 Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

(Robert Frost, 'The Road Not Taken')



Let us go ahead

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*If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others:
read a lot and write a lot.*

- Stephen King

*The job of a writer is perhaps the only one that becomes
more difficult the more you do it.*

- Gabriel Garcia Marquez



Creative Writing

Creative writing is an expressive form of writing that goes beyond the boundaries of academics. It allows writers to use imagination, emotion and stylistic freedom to create original works. Whether it is storytelling, personal expression, analysis, or reporting, creative writing encourages the writer to explore new ways of using language to engage the reader.

Creative writing generally includes three major branches: creative literary writing, journalistic writing and critical writing. Each of these forms serves a distinct purpose, yet they share a common foundation of clarity, originality and effective communication.



1. Creative Literary Writing

Creative writing in the literary sense **focuses on imagination, artistic expression and emotional depth**. It aims to entertain, evoke feelings, provoke thought and to present new perspectives. This category includes:

- Poetry
- Short stories
- Novels and novellas
- Plays and screenplays

There is also another form of creative writing. It is known as Creative Non-fiction. It presents real events, real people and factual experiences using the techniques of creative writing. Unlike traditional nonfiction, which focuses mainly on information and explanation, creative nonfiction aims to engage the reader emotionally and imaginatively while remaining faithful to truth. It includes:

- Personal essays
- Memoirs
- Reflective writing

Creative writing generally makes use of figurative language (metaphor, imagery, symbolism). It focuses on character, plot, setting, tone and mood. Experimenting with style, voice, structure and narrative technique is also one of the features of creative writing. Creative writing lets the writer explore human experiences and emotions artistically.



2. Journalistic Writing

Journalistic writing deals with the **collection, verification and presentation of information**. While its primary purpose is factual communication, modern journalism incorporates elements of creativity, to make the content engaging.

Types of journalistic writing :

- News reports
- Interviews
- Columns and opinion pieces
- Features and human-interest stories
- Profiles

Major characteristics of journalistic writing :

- Accuracy and factual correctness
- Objectivity (in news reporting) and credibility
- Clarity
- Strong, engaging leads and crisp, catchy headlines

Journalistic writing blends information and creativity, ensuring the stories are accurate and compelling.



3. Critical Writing

Critical writing involves **analysis, interpretation and evaluation of a text, event, idea, or a work of art**. It requires the writer to form and present judgments supported by evidence.

Forms of critical writing include:

- Literary criticism
- Academic essays
- Book and film reviews
- Cultural analysis

Features of effective critical writing:

- Clear thesis and argument
- Use of textual or factual evidence
- Objective tone and critical insight
- Logical structure and coherence
- Balanced analysis (not personal opinion)

Critical writing trains the writer to think deeply, question assumptions and articulate reasoned interpretations.

Conclusion

Creative writing—whether expressive, analytical, or journalistic—depends on a writer's ability to observe the world, understand human experience and communicate ideas to create an impact. While creative literary writing prioritises imagination, journalistic writing focuses on clarity and truth, and critical writing emphasises analysis and evaluation. Together, these forms of writing develop versatility, creativity and intellectual depth.

Successful writers have their own notion about the craft of writing. Nicanor Parra, the Latin American poet in his poem “Young Poets” advises young writers to take bold action and to follow a flexible style in writing. He never insisted to adopt traditional style used by famous writers or any literary movement. The classic writer of *The Old man and the Sea*, Ernest Hemingway in an article titled “Monologue to the Maestro” (1935) suggests the tips of writing as : observe a situation with empathy, retell it through words and continuously practice writing. Also refer Hemingway’s ‘Iceberg Theory’.

To read the full article, browse <https://classic.esquire.com/article/1935/10/1/monologue-to-the-maestro>.



Let us express ourselves

Try to create short fiction, journalistic writing and literary analyses on the subjects given in the table. You can choose your own subjects also.

Fiction	Journalistic Writing	Creative Literary Analysis
• Love • Oppression	• Contemporary social issues • Socio-political concerns like gender, poverty, happiness	• Book reviews • Film reviews • Literary articles

Sometimes a picture or a scene from nature inspires the writer to create a literary work. Look at the picture given below. What impression does it create in your mind? Does it invoke a theme for a poem or a short story or a personal memoir? The given image may be the beginning of a story. It may be the end of a story, too. It may also be the setting of a poem. If it connects with your personal experiences, it could trigger a personal essay. Try to create a literary work based on the image.



VOICES OF LIBERATION

"Slavery does not merely mean a legalised form of subjection. It means a state of society in which some men are forced to accept from others the purposes which control their conduct."

- Dr. B. R. Ambedkar



Let us explore the unit

The unit familiarises us with the literature, culture and ideas of those who have been marginalised. The goal of these texts is to sensitise us to issues and problems facing people worldwide.

Marginalisation is a process, whereas marginality refers to the relegation of individuals or groups to the edges of social systems, giving them limited access to resources and services, diminished freedom and ultimately, pushing them into extreme poverty and alienation.

Marginality is the condition of being insignificant in society, in all possible ways. It manifests socially as exclusion from mainstream society because of poverty, social class, race, gender or religion, and / or deviations from the popular culture (as in the case of immigrants).

This unit includes two short stories, "The Barber's Trade Union" by Mulk Raj Anand, a renowned Indian English writer and "The Other Family" by Himani Bannerji, a Canadian immigrant writer; three poems - "I am an African child" by Eku McGred, "Exile House" by Tenzin Tsundue and "The Passport" by Mahmoud Darwish; and a memoir, "Roots in the Sky", by the Sindhi writer and artist Nina Sabnani.



Let us begin

Now, let us recognise the personalities in the following pictures. They are well-known humanists and social reformers from all around the globe. Try to gather as much information as possible about their contributions to humanity and create a brief biography of each individual.



When we write the life sketches of the individuals, focus on their contributions as social reformers and humanists. Research their accomplishments, their philosophies and their influence on society. Highlight their services to mankind, including the significant movements or initiatives they led or were a part of, and provide insights into aspects of their personal lives that shaped their work.

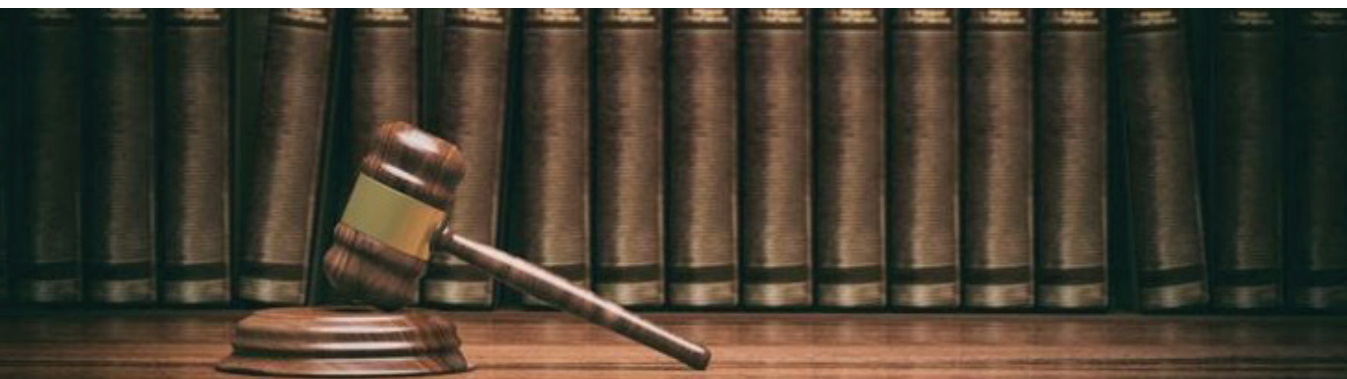


Before we begin

The subaltern

The term “subaltern” refers to marginalised individuals and groups that are systemically excluded from political power and representation. This exclusion arises from hierarchies rooted in factors such as gender, class, caste and religion. Intersecting identities too may contribute to their lack of access to power structures, leaving them voiceless.

Dalits represent a significant subaltern group in Indian society due to their entrenched marginalisation within the caste hierarchy. Their subalternity is characterised by systemic exclusion, where they occupy the lowest position in the social structure, often denied fundamental rights to public spaces, education, and other resources. Moreover, Dalits experience multiple kinds of oppression, facing economic hardships and the stigma of untouchability, which may persist regardless of economic advancement. Their narratives have been largely ignored in conventional historical accounts, further reinforcing their status as marginalised voices in Indian history.



What the Republic says:

India's Constitution safeguards the rights of Scheduled Castes by promoting equality and forbidding discrimination on religion, race, caste or birth. Key provisions include the prohibition on untouchability and legislative measures that penalise the discriminatory practices associated with it. The Constitution criminalises the forced performance of degraded jobs and ensures accountability of public servants who neglect their duty on such issues. Furthermore, Governments are empowered to impose collective fines on communities where untouchability persists.

(Ref: Article 14, 15(1) and Article 17 of the Indian Constitution)

Dalit Experiences and Literary Aesthetics

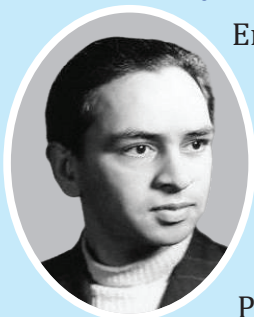
Dalit Literature emerges from the socio-political context of the marginalised. Dalit communities in India, challenging the dominant literary aesthetics shaped by the 'upper-caste' narratives of the past. This literary genre serves both as a testimony to the lived experiences of Dalits and as a medium for social critique. The narratives highlight issues of caste discrimination, oppression and the pursuit of dignity and justice. Dalit Literature incorporates a unique voice that contrasts with that of traditional literary forms, reflecting a distinct cultural identity and advocates for social change. Through its rich content and innovative expression, it aims to renegotiate societal power dynamics and contribute to the broader discourse on equality and human rights.

Dalit writing can be classified into three distinct categories: literature by authors addressing the issues of the marginalised, works by those raised in marginalised environments, and writings by Dalit individuals with first-hand experience of community struggles. The first category aims to highlight the issues but face concerns relating to authenticity because of the absence of lived experience. The second group, influenced by movements like the Dalit Panthers, exhibits a rebellious tone in their writings, focusing on social transformation instead of just representation. The third category features writings by Dalits who use their authentic voices to share aspirations and their firsthand experience of community struggles, representing the lived realities of their time.





Let us know the author



Mulk Raj Anand (1905 – 2004) was one of the pioneers of Indian English writing. His stories are remarkable for the deep insight into the lives of the oppressed and the depiction of the exploitation of people on the basis of caste or profession. He is well known for novels of resistance such as *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936) and *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937). He is among the first writers to incorporate Punjabi and Hindustani idioms into English. He received the Padma Bhushan, in the late 1960s.

The Barber's Trade Union : An overview

"The Barber's Trade Union" is a short story by Mulk Raj Anand that critiques the Indian caste system and highlights the power of collective labour. The protagonist, Chandu, is a young barber who inherits his father's profession after his death from the plague. Inspired by modern city life, he dresses in ways that challenge traditional village norms, attracting the disapproval of the local elite such as the landlord and the moneylender. In retaliation, Chandu organises a strike, refusing to serve 'upper-caste' customers and seeking better opportunities in the nearby town. This strike disrupts the village hierarchy, leading Chandu to unite his fellow barbers under the banner of the "Rajkot District Barber Brothers' Hairdressing and Shaving Saloon." The narrative explores themes of caste and class struggle, the clash of tradition and modernity, and the enduring dignity of all forms of labour. Chandu's fight for dignity and his establishment of a trade union reflect the collective strength to challenge exploitation. The story culminates in the villagers conceding to Chandu's demands as they confronted with their grooming needs, yield to the united resistance to oppression.

“

“So long as you do not achieve social liberty, whatever freedom is provided by the law is of no avail to you.” - Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

”



Let us read and contemplate

The Barber's Trade Union

Mulk Raj Anand

Among the makers of modern India, Chandu, the barber boy of our village, has a place which will be denied him unless I press for the recognition of his contribution to history. Chandu's peculiar claim to recognition rested, to tell the truth, on an exploit of which he did not know the full significance. But then, unlike most great men of India today, he had no very exaggerated notion of his own importance, though he shared with them a certain naive egotism which was sometimes disconcerting and sometimes rather charming.

I knew Chandu ever since the days when he wore a piece of rag in the middle of his naked, distended-bellied body, and when we wallowed together in the mire of the village lanes, playing at soldiering, shopkeeping, or clerking and other little games which we invented for the delectation of our two selves and of our mothers, who alone of all the elders condescended to notice us.

Chandu was my senior by about six months, and he always took the lead in all matters. And I willingly followed, because truly he was a genius at catching wasps, and at pressing the poison out of their tails, at tying their tiny legs to cotton thread and flying them,



Why did the narrator follow Chandu?





What happened to the narrator whenever he went near the village well?

Why did the narrator consider Chandu the embodiment of perfection as they both grew up?

Why was Chandu not so good at doing sums at school?

What did the narrator's mother resent about Chandu?

Why did the narrator's mother dissuade him from playing with Chandu?

What was the narrator ashamed of?

What did the narrator long to wear?

Why was the narrator envious of Chandu?

while I always got stung on the cheeks if I dared to go anywhere near the platform of the village well where these insects settled on the puddles to drink water.

When we grew up he still seemed to me the embodiment of perfection, because he could make and fly paper kites of such delicate design and of such balance as I could never achieve.

To be sure, he was not so good at doing sums at school as I was, perhaps because his father apprenticed him early to the hereditary profession of the barber's caste and sent him out hair-cutting in the village, and he had no time for the home tasks which our school master gave us. But he was better than I at reciting poetry, any day, for not only did he remember by rote the verses in the text-book, but he could repeat the endless pages of prose in that book so that they seemed like poetry.

My mother resented the fact that Chandu won a scholarship at school while I had to pay fees to be taught. And she constantly dissuaded me from playing with him, saying that Chandu was a low-caste barber's son and that I ought to keep up the status of my caste and class. But whatever innate ideas I had inherited from my forefathers, I certainly hadn't inherited any sense of superiority. Indeed, I was always rather ashamed of the red caste mark which my mother put on my forehead every morning, and of the formalized pattern of the *uchkin*, the tight cotton trousers, the gold-worked shoes and the silk turban in which I dressed; and I longed for the right to wear all the spectacular conglomeration of clothes which Chandu wore—a pair of khaki shorts which the retired Subedar had given him, a frayed black velvet waistcoat, decorated all over with shell buttons, and a round felt cap which had once belonged to Lalla Hukam Chand, the lawyer of our village.

And I envied Chandu the freedom of movement which he enjoyed after his father died of plague. For then he would do the round of shaving and hair-cutting at the houses of the high-caste notables in the morning, bathe and dress, and then steal a ride to town, six miles away, on the foot-rest of the closed carriage in which Lalla Hukam Chand travelled to town.

But Chandu was kind to me. He knew that I was seldom taken to town, and that I had to trudge three weary miles to a secondary



school in the big village of Joadiala with the fear of God in my heart, while he had been completely absolved from the ordeal of being flogged by cruel masters as he had left school after his father's death. So he always brought me some gift or other from the town—a paint brush, or gold ink, or white chalk, or a double-edged penknife to sharpen pencils with; and he would entertain me with long merry descriptions of the variety of things he saw in the bazaars of civilization.

He was particularly detailed in his description of the wonderful English styles in clothes which he saw the Sahibs and the lawyers, the chaprasis and the policemen wearing at the District Court, where he had to wait for the journey home at the back of Lalla Hukam Chand's phaeton. And, once or twice, he expressed to me a secret wish he had to steal some money from the pitcher where his mother kept the emoluments of his professional skill, to buy himself a rig-out like that of Kalan Khan, the dentist, who, he said, performed miracles in the town, fitting people with rows of teeth and even new eyes. He described to me the appearance of Kalan Khan, a young man with hair parted on one side, and dressed in a starched shirt, with an ivory collar and bow tie, a black coat and striped trousers, and a wonderful rubber overcoat and pumps. And he recounted to me the skill with which this magician unpacked an Angrezi leather hand-bag and flourished his shining steel instruments.

Then he asked my advice on the question of whether, as a barber educated to the fifth primary class, he would not look more dignified if he, too, wore a dress in the style of Dr. Kalan Khan, 'for though I am not a highly educated doctor,' he said, 'I learnt how to treat pimples, boils and cuts on people's bodies from my father, who learnt from his father before him.'

I agreed with his project and encouraged him with the enthusiasm I felt for everything that my hero thought or did.

One day I was thrilled to find Chandu at the door of my house in the morning. He was dressed up in a white turban, a white rubber coat (a little too big for him, but nevertheless very splendid), a pair of pumps in which I could see my face reflected in clear silhouette, and he had a leather bag in his hand. He was setting off on his round and had come to show how grand he looked in his new rig-out.

How does the narrator contrast his school days with Chandu's absence from school?

What were the gifts Chandu brought for the narrator from town?

What was Chandu's secret wish?

Describe the appearance of Kalan Khan.

What was the advice that Chandu sought from the narrator?

How did Chandu defend his right to wear the attire of a doctor?



‘Marvellous!’ I said, ‘Marvellous!’

And he rushed off towards the house of the landlord, whom he shaved every morning, myself following admiringly behind.

There were not many people in the street at this time, so I alone witnessed the glory of Chandu, dressed up as a doctor, except, of course, that he himself seemed rather self-conscious as he strutted up the street, carefully avoiding the taint of cow-dung cakes which the village women stuck to walls, and the dirty water which flowed through the drains. But as we entered the home of the landlord we met Devi, the landlord’s little son, who clapped his hands with joy and shouted to announce the coming of Chandu, the barber, in a beautiful heroic dress like that of the Padre sahib of the Mission School.



Why was Devi, the landlord’s son, overjoyed on seeing Chandu?

How did Bijay Chand, the landlord, react to the sight of Chandu’s dress and leather bag?

‘Ram! Ram! Ram!’ said Bijay Chand, the burly landlord, touching the sacred thread which hung over his ear since he had just been to the lavatory. ‘The son of a pig!’ He is bringing a leather bag of cow-hide into our house and a coat of the marrow of, I don’t know, some other animal and those evil black Angrezi shoes. Get out! Get out! You son of a devil! You will defile my religion. I suppose you have no fear of anyone now that your father is dead.’

‘But I am wearing the clothes of a Doctor, Jagirdar Sahib.’ said Chandu.

‘Go away you, swine, go away and wear clothes befitting your low status as a barber, and don’t let me see you practising any of your new-fangled nations, or else I will have you flogged.’

‘But Raj Bijay Chand Sahib!’ Chandu appealed.

‘Get away! Get away! You useless one!’ the landlord shouted. ‘Don’t come any nearer, or we will have to treat the whole house with the sacred cow-dung to purify it.’

Chandu returned. His face was flushed. He was completely taken aback. He did not look at me because of the shame he felt at being insulted before me whose hero he knew he was. And he rushed towards the shop of Thanu Ram, the Sahukar of the village, who kept a grocer’s store at the corner of the lane.



Devi, the landlord's son had begun to cry at his father's harsh words, and I stopped to quieten him. When I got to the head of the lane I saw the Sahukar with one end of the scale in which he had been weighing grain lifted in one hand, abusing Chandu in the foulest way. 'You little swine, you go disguising yourself as a clown when you ought to be bearing your responsibilities and looking after your old mother. You go wearing the defiled clothes of the hospital folk! Go and come back in your own clothes! Then I shall let you cut my hair!' And as he said so he felt for the ritual tuft knot on top of his head.

Chandu looked very crestfallen, and ran in a wild rage past me, as if I had been responsible for these mishaps. And I nearly cried to think that he hated me now just because I belonged to a superior caste.

'Go to Pandit Parmanand!' I shouted after him, 'and tell him that these garments you are wearing are not unclean.'

'Ho, so you are in league with him,' said Pandit Parmanand, emerging from the landlord's home, where he had been apparently summoned to discuss this unholy emergency. 'You boys have been spoiled by the school education which you have got. It may be all right for you to wear those things because you are going to be a learned man, but what right has that low-caste boy to such apparel? He has got to touch our beards, our head and our hands. He is defiled enough by God. Why does he want to become more defiled? You are a high-caste boy. And he is a low-caste devil! He is a rogue!'

Chandu had heard this. He did not look back and ran in a flurry, as if he were set on some purpose which occupied him more than the abuse which had been the cause of his flight.

My mother called to me and said it was time for me to eat and go to school, or I should be late. And she could not resist the temptation to lecture me again about my association with the barber boy.

But I was very disturbed about Chandu's fate all day, and on my way back from school, I called in at the hovel where he lived with his mother.

His mother was well known for a cantankerous old woman, because she, a low-caste woman, dared to see the upper caste



Why did the Sahukar refuse to permit Chandu to cut his hair?



people as they never dared to see themselves. She was always very kind to me, though she spoke to me too in a bantering manner, which she had acquired through the suffering and humiliations of sixty-odd years. Turning to me she said: 'Well, you have come, have you, to look for your friend. If your mother knew that you were here she would scratch my eyes out for casting my evil eye on your sweet face. And you, are you as innocent as you look or are you a sneaking little hypocrite like the rest of your lot?'

'Where is Chandu, then, mother?' I said.

'I don't know, son,' she said, now in a sincere simple manner. 'He went up town way and says he earned some money shaving people on the roadside. I don't know what he is up to. I don't think he ought to annoy the clients his father served. He is a child and gets funny notions into his head and they ought not to be angry with him. He is only a boy. You want to see him and go out playing, I suppose. Very well, I will tell him when he comes. He has just gone up the road, I think!'

'All right, mother,' I said, and went home.

Chandu whistled for me that afternoon in the usual code whistle which we had arranged to evade the reproaches of interfering elders that our association often provoked.

'Come for a walk to the bazaar,' he said. 'I want to talk to you.' And hardly had I joined him when he began: 'Do you know, I earned a rupee shaving and hair-cutting near the court this morning!' If I hadn't had to come back on the back bar of Hukam Chand's carriage early in the afternoon, I should have earned more. But I am going to teach these orthodox idiots a lesson. I am going on strike. I shall not go to their houses to attend to them. I am going to buy a Japanese bicycle from the gambling son of Lalla Hukam Chand for five rupees, and I shall learn to ride it and I will go to town on it every day. Won't I look grand, riding on a bicycle, with my overcoat, my black leather shoes, and a white turban on my head, especially as there is a peg in front of the two-wheeled carriage for hanging my tool-bag?'

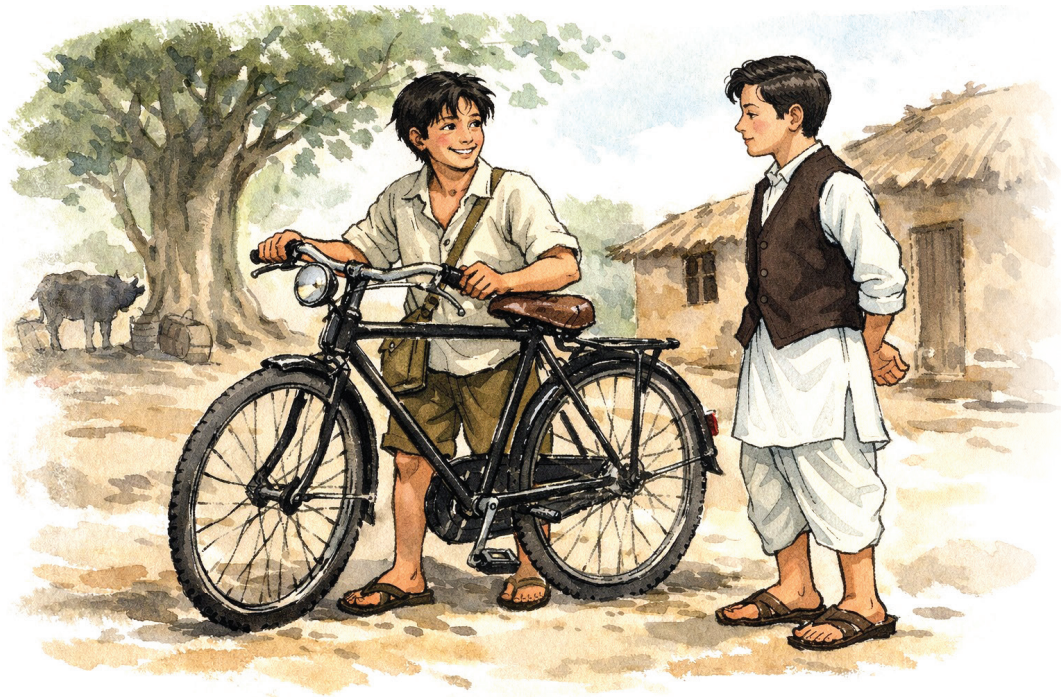
'Yes,' I agreed, greatly thrilled, not because I imagined the glory of Chandu seated on a bicycle, but because I felt myself nearer



Why did Chandu and the narrator arrange a code whistle to communicate among themselves?

Why did Chandu plan to teach the village elders a lesson?

Why did Chandu decide to buy the Japanese bicycle?



the goal of my own ambition; since I felt that if Chandu acquired a bicycle he would at least let me ride to town on the elongated bolt at the back wheel or on the front bar, if he didn't let me learn to ride myself and lend me the machine every now and then.

Chandu negotiated the deal about the bicycle with an assurance that seemed to me a revelation of his capacity for business such as I had never suspected in him, from the reckless way he spent his money. And then he said to me in a confidential voice: 'You wait for another day or two. I shall show you something which will make you laugh as you have never laughed before.'

'Tell me now,' I insisted, with an impatience sharpened by the rhythm of the excitement with which the spirit of his adventure filled my being.

'No, you wait,' he said. 'I can only give you a hint at the moment. It is a secret that only a barber can know. Now let me get on with the job of learning to handle this machine. You hold it while I get on it, and I think it will be all right.'

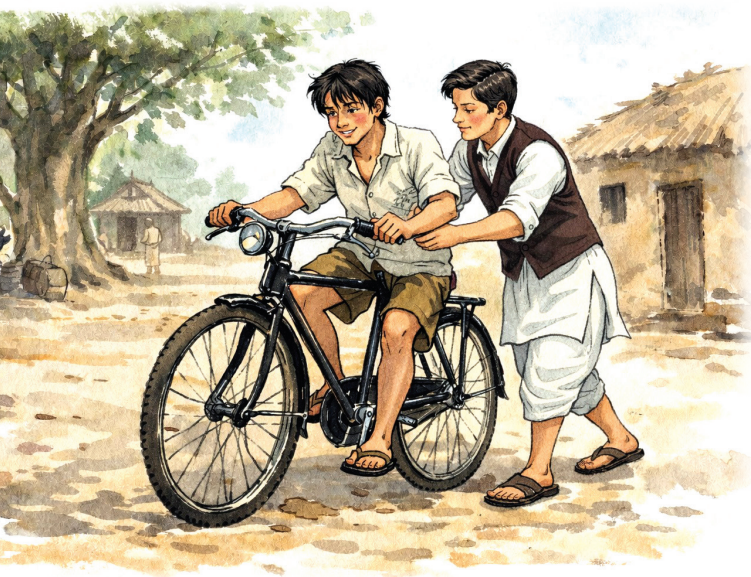
'But,' I said, 'this is not the way to learn to ride a bicycle. My father learned to ride from the peg at the back, and my brother learnt to ride by first trying to balance on the pedal.'



Why was the narrator thrilled on hearing of Chandu's plan to buy the bicycle?



‘Your father is a top-heavy baboon!’ said Chandu. ‘And your brother is a long-legged spider.’ ‘I,’ he continued, ‘was born, my mother tells me, upside down.’



‘All right,’ I said. And I held the bicycle for him. But while my gaze concentrated with admiration on the brilliant sheen of the polished bars, I lost my grip and Chandu fell on the other side with a thud, along with the machine.

There were peals of laughter from the shop of the Sahukar, where several peasants congregated round the figure of the landlord. And then the Sahukar could be heard shouting: ‘Serve you right, you rascally son of the iron age! Break your bones and die, you upstart! You won’t come to your senses otherwise!’

Chandu hung his head with shame, and muttered an oath at me, ‘You fool, you are no good!’ though I had thought that he would grip me by the neck and give me a good thrashing for being the cause of his discomfiture. Then he looked at me, smiled embarrassedly, and said: ‘We will see who has the last laugh, I or they.’

‘I will hold the machine tightly this time,’ I said earnestly, and I picked it up from where it lay.

‘Yes, break your bones, you swine,’ came the landlord’s call.

‘Don’t you care!’ Chandu said to me. ‘I will show them.’ And he mounted the bicycle as I exerted all my strength to hold it tight. Then he said: ‘Let go!’

I released my grip.

He had pressed the pedal with a downward pressure of his right foot, hard, and, as the wheels revolved, he swayed dangerously to one side. But he had pushed the other pedal now. The machine balanced, inclining to the right a little, so that I saw Chandu lift his rump from the saddle in the most frightening manner. He hung precariously for a moment. His handles wobbled dangerously. He



was tottering. At this juncture a mixed noise of laughter and sarcasm arose from the congregation at the shop and I thought that Chandu would come to grief with this confusion, if not on account of his utter incapacity. By a curious miracle, however, Chandu's feet had got into the right rhythm for pedalling and his handle had adjusted itself to his stiff hands, and he rode off with me running behind him, bursting myself with enthusiastic 'Shabashes'.

A half a mile run and he repeated the trick.

Though I was very eager to share the joy of his newly acquired skill, I didn't see Chandu the next day, as I was being taken to see my aunts in Verka, straight from school.

But on the third day he called for me and said that he would show me the joke he had talked of the other day. I followed quickly, asking the while: 'Tell me, what is it all about?'

'Look,' he said, hiding behind the oven of the village potter. 'Do you see the congregation of men in the Sahukar's shop? Try and see who's there.'

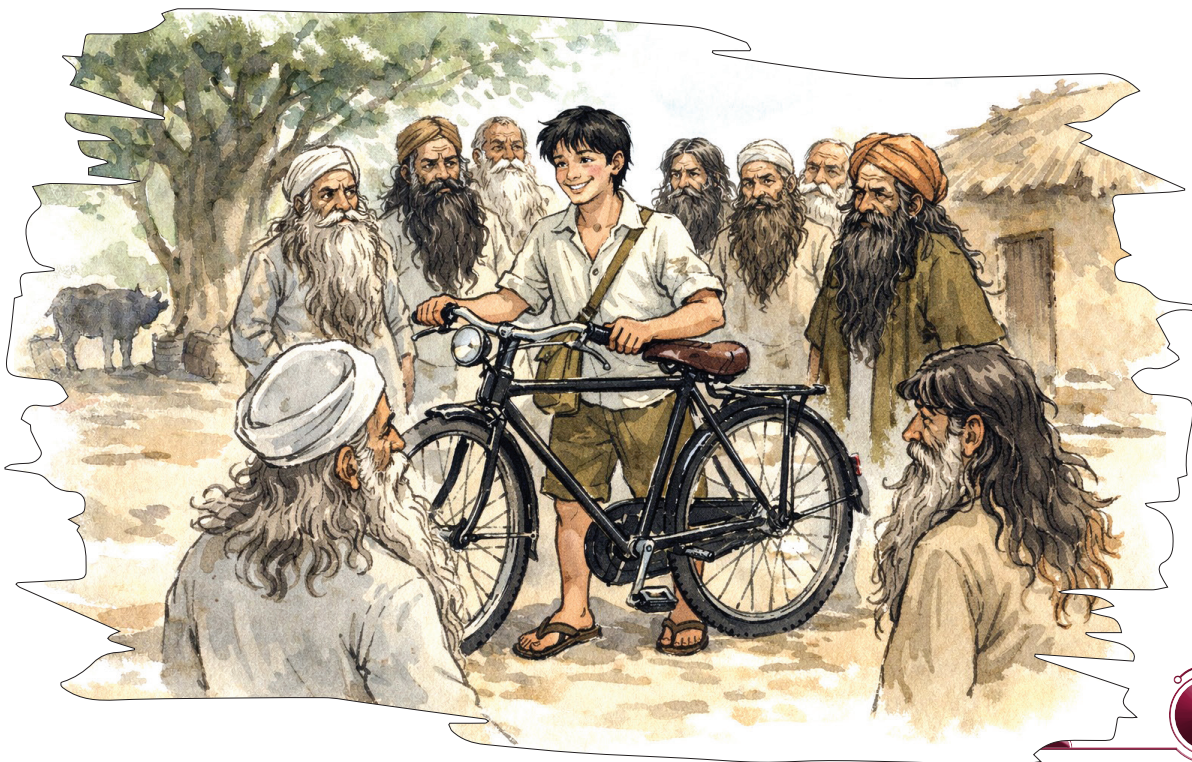
I explored the various faces and, for moment, I was quite baffled.

'Only the peasants sitting round waiting for the landlord,' I said.

'Look again, idiot,' he said, 'and see. The landlord is there, his long-jawed face dirtied by the white scum of his unshaved beard.'



What was the joke Chandu revealed to the narrator?





‘Ha! Ha!’ I shouted hilariously, struck by the contradiction of the big thick moustache (which I knew the landlord dyed) with the prickly white bush on his jowls. ‘Ha! Ha! I roared. ‘A sick lion! He looks seedy!’

‘Sh!’ warned Chandu. ‘Don’t make a row! But look at the Sahukar. He looks like a leper with the brown tinge of tobacco on his walrus moustache which I once used to trim. Now you run past the shop and call “Beavers, beavers”. They can’t say anything to you!’

I was too impetuous a disciple of the impish Chandu to wait to deliberate.

‘Beavers! Beavers! Beavers!’ I shouted as I ran past the shop to the edge of the platform by the banyan tree.

The peasants who were gathered round the shop burst out laughing, as they had apparently been itching to, for they had noticed the strong growths on the elders’ faces, though they had not dared to say anything.

‘Catch him, catch him, the little rogue!’ shouted the Sahukar.

‘He is in league with that barber boy, Chandu!’

But, of course I had climbed up the banyan tree, from which I jumped on to the wall of the temple and shouted my slogan at the priest.

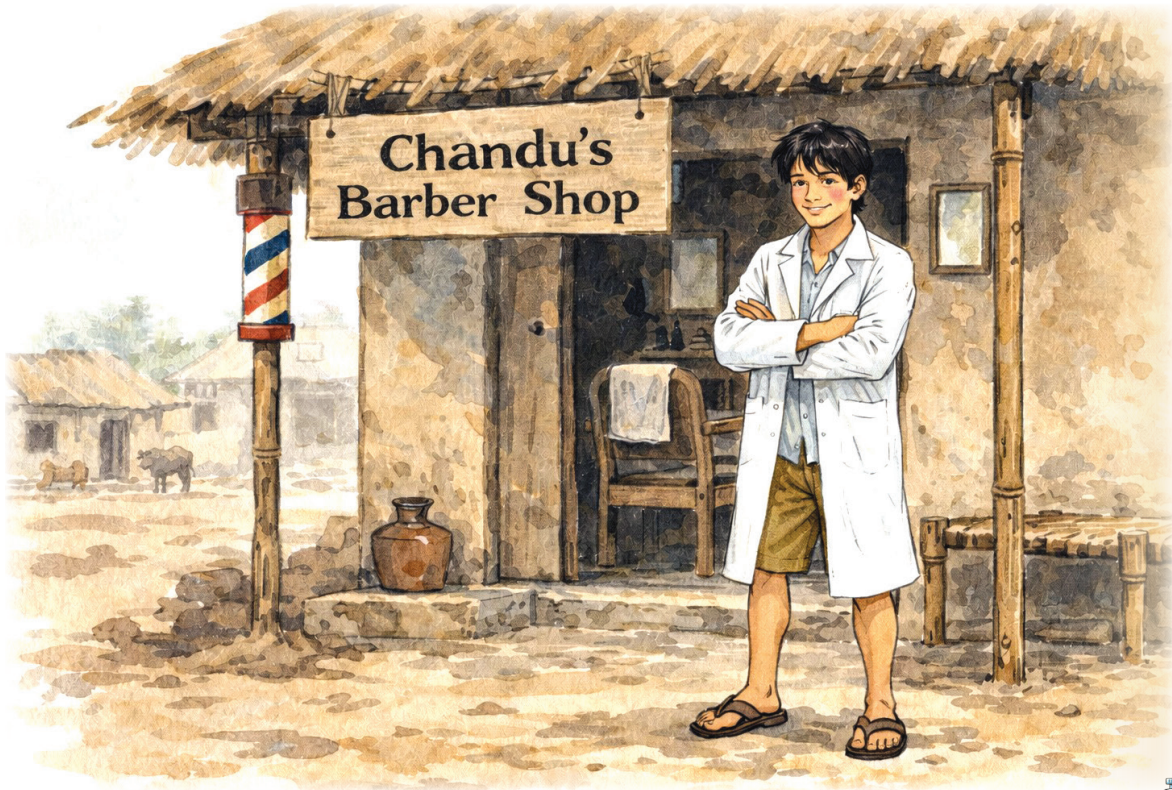
The rumour about the barber boy’s strike spread and jokes about the unkempt beards of the elders of the village became current in every home. Even those who were of high castes, even the members of the families of the elders, began to giggle with laughter at the shabby appearance of the great ones and made rude remarks about their persons. And it was said that the landlord’s wife threatened to run away with somebody, because, being younger than her husband by twenty years, she had borne with him as long as he kept himself in trim, but was now disgusted with him beyond the limits of reconciliation.



Why did the landlord’s wife threaten to run away?



Chandu did good business in town during these days and saved money, even though he bought new clothes and new tools for himself and gave me various presents.



The village elders threatened to have him sent to prison for his offences, and ordered his mother to force him to obey before they committed him to the police for a breach of the peace.

But Chandu's mother had for the first time in her life touched the edge of prosperity, and she told them all what she thought of them in a language even plainer than that in which she had always addressed them.

Then they thought of getting the barber of Verka to come and attend them, and offered him an anna instead of the two pice they had usually paid to Chandu.

Chandu, however, had conceived a new notion this time, newer than those he had ever thought of before. Having seen the shop of Nringan Das, the barber of the town, he had applied his brain to the scheme of opening a shop on the wayside at the head of the



On what charge did the village elders threaten to send Chandu to prison?

How did the village elders try to solve the problem?



How did Chandu spoil the plan of the village elders to bring another barber to their village?

bazaar, in partnership with his cousin, the barber of Verka, and with Dhunoo and the other barbers within a range of seven miles from our village. He proposed his new idea to his cousin and Dhunoo and all the other barbers at a special meeting of his craft, and by that gift of the gab which he had, besides his other qualities of Head and Heart, he convinced them all that it was time that the elders of the village came to them to be shaved rather than that they should dance attendance upon their lords and masters.

‘Rajkot District Barber Brothers’ Hairdressing and Shaving Saloon’ has been followed by many other active trade unions of working men in our parts.



Let us enrich

disconcert /ˌdɪskənˈsɜ:t/	: to make uncomfortable or worried
wallow /ˈwɒləʊ/	: to roll oneself in
mire /ˈmaɪər/	: deep mud
delectation /ˌdiːləkˈteɪʃən/	: enjoyment or entertainment
condescend /ˌkɒndrɪˈsend/	: come down from a superior position
dissuade /dɪˈswerd/	: to persuade someone not to do something
trudge /ˈtrʌdʒ/	: a long and tiring walk
flogg /ˈflɒg/	: to hit someone hard several times with a stick or a whip as a punishment
Chaprasis	: a junior office worker
phaeton /ˈfeɪ.tən/	: a light four-wheeled open carriage drawn by four horses (horse carriage)
emoluments /ɪˈmɒl.jə.mənts/	: salary
rig-out /ˈrɪɡaʊt/	: an outfit of clothes
silhouette /ˌsɪl.uːˈet/	: the dark outline or shape of a person or an object seen against a light background (not a shadow but an outline)
burly /ˈbɜːli/	: large, well-built, and muscular

defile /di'faɪl/	:	damage the purity or appearance of
Sahukar /'saʊkɑ:(r)/	:	a moneylender
tuft knot /tʌft nɒt/	:	a sacred knot of hair
crestfallen /'krɛst,fɔ:lən/	:	sad, disappointed
cantankerous /kæn'tæŋkərəs/	:	ill-tempered
bantering /'bæn.tə.rɪŋ/	:	funny or joking conversation
baboon /bə'bu:n/	:	(here) an uncivilized person
upstart /'ʌp.stɑ:t/	:	a person who has suddenly risen in rank
precariouly /prɪ'keəriəsli/	:	in a risky manner
jowls /'dʒaʊlz/	:	the loose skin under the jaw
beavers /'bi:vəz/	:	a hairy animal (here, the bearded elders)
unkempt /,ʌn'kempt/	:	not well cared for
gift of the gab /,ɡɪft əv ðə 'ɡæb/	:	able to talk on any subject



Let us discuss

1. What is the central theme of the story?
2. Why does Chandu's khaki shorts, black velvet waistcoat, and round felt cap provoke the anger of the village elders?
3. How does Chandu respond to the village elders' insults?
4. Comment on the significance of the bicycle in the story, "The Barber's Trade Union".
5. How does the story conclude?
6. How does the story "The Barber's Trade Union" depict the economic exploitation of 'lower-caste' workers?
7. The story "The Barber's Trade Union" is a critique of the socio-economic structures that perpetuated the exploitation of 'lower-caste' workers. Discuss.



Let us apply our thoughts

1. Examine how Chandu's occupation as a barber makes him an easy object of exploitation by the upper-caste villagers.
2. Discuss how modernisation, the use of the bicycle and the opening of a saloon in the city, empowered Chandu.

3. How does Chandu's modern clothes and behaviour challenge the traditionally subservient image of the village barber?
4. Chandu humorously handles the humiliation he has to face in his profession. Discuss the humour in the story "The Barber's Trade Union".



Let us express ourselves

1. Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech "I Have a Dream" envisions a future of racial harmony and equality, where individuals are assessed on character rather than skin colour. This vision parallels Chandu's fight for dignity in a society burdened by caste discrimination. Both narratives stress the desire for justice and underscore the significance of hope, resilience and collective action in overcoming oppression and achieving liberation. Listen to the speech "I Have a Dream" and write an essay comparing King's aspirations for liberation with those of Chandu in the story "The Barber's Trade Union".
2. Examine the trade union formed by Chandu as a symbol of unity, dignity, and resistance against the landlord and other 'upper-caste' villagers.
3. Examine the role of the first-person narrator, Chandu's young friend, in the story.
4. Examine the symbolic significance of the barber's equipment, the bicycle, and the new 'haircutting saloon' in the context of social mobility.
5. "The Barber's Trade Union" is a short story that explores the themes of social hierarchy, dignity, and collective resistance through the character of Chandu. Discuss
6. "The Barber's Trade Union" explores themes of caste and class struggle, the tension between tradition and modernity, the power of collective action, and the inherent dignity of all forms of labour. Substantiate



Let us go ahead

Anand, Mulk Raj. *The Barber's Trade Union and Other Stories*. J. Cape, London, 1944.

King, Martin Luther, Jr. "I Have a Dream." *I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches That Changed the World*. Ed. James M. Washington. Harper Collins, 1992, pp. 102–106.

*You tell yourself I'll be gone
To some other land. Some other sea,
To city lovelier far than this...*

*There's no new land, my friend, no
New sea; for the city will follow you,
In the same streets you'll wander endlessly...*

- C. P. Cavafy



Before we begin

Culture and Identity

Culture is usually understood as a harmonious co-existence grounded on shared values, and a knowledge of history, fostering a sense of belonging and close relationships. It emphasises mutual respect and participation in shared aspirations and social progress. In the context of India, it is our common responsibility to cultivate harmony and understanding.

Identity is the way a community perceives itself, which can unify it around shared ideals. However, this visualisation may lead to complications, such as a community distancing itself from others or viewing itself as superior. Such perspectives can hinder broad representation and unity, particularly between distinct socio-economic classes. A positive sense of identity should foster connections among marginalised groups across communities, ensuring strength and stability. Ultimately, identity defines individuals, outlining their societal roles and choices and emphasising their distinctiveness and relational positioning.

Diaspora and Diasporic Writing

'Diaspora' denotes populations that have migrated from their ancestral locales, frequently as a result of ethnic or religious influences. The term, originating from ancient Greek, initially referred to the Jewish experience during the Babylonian Exile. It attained broader significance in the 20th century, including other diaspora too. Academics categorise diasporas based on migration motives, such as victimisation, imperialism, commerce and labour. The fundamental characteristics of diasporas are their disconnection from a common origin, underscored by shared cultural experiences rather than geographical ties. Ethno-national diasporas generally sustain ties to their countries of origin and among their scattered members. By the early 21st century, approximately 10% of the global population was diasporic in nature, with an increasing number of individuals acquiring or aspiring for dual citizenship.

Countries are formulating initiatives to involve expatriates, leading to substantial economic remittances and contributions to technology and expertise. While host nations may articulate apprehensions about loyalty conflicts and the dangers associated with diaspora populations, they generally endorse their presence because of the advantages they offer. Obstacles persist, including xenophobia and insufficient assistance for migrants from less welcomed countries of origin.

Diasporic literature originates from the issues of migration and displacement of communities, reflecting diverse narratives shaped by both forced and voluntary movements. It has evolved from traditional themes of exile and loss of identity to include cultural intermingling, hybrid identities and navigating various influences in a globalised context. This genre encompasses works by authors who have moved from their homelands and explores cultural identity, displacement and the complexities of living abroad. It highlights the struggles and experiences of the diaspora, offering insights into migration, cultural hybridity and the quest for belonging. By analysing its characteristics and historical origins, we understand its impact on literature and society, revealing the dynamics of cultural assimilation and human experience.



Let us know the author



Himani Bannerji (1942-) is a prominent Canadian writer, sociologist, scholar and philosopher. Originally from Bangladesh, Bannerji completed her education in Calcutta and migrated to Canada in 1969. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Toronto in 1988. Bannerji is renowned for her non-fiction works that address themes of feminism, racism and multiculturalism. Presently, she is a faculty member at York University, where she combines her teaching with active engagement in activist efforts. She has an extensive portfolio of poems and short stories. Her novella *Coloured Pictures* is aimed at educating children about confronting racism. Her contributions to literature include articles for broader audiences, particularly in *Rungh Magazine*.

The Other Family : An overview

“The Other Family” by Himani Bannerji presents a touching narrative of a migrant family’s struggles in Canada, exploring themes of acceptance, self-identity and cultural diversity. Central to the story is a conflict between a mother and daughter that underscores broader issues of alienation and otherness within the migrant experience. The mother harbours guilt for uprooting her daughter, fearing her estrangement from their cultural roots. A pivotal moment occurs when the daughter presents a drawing of a white family, igniting the mother’s anxiety about societal norms and her child’s identity. This incident highlights the disconnection between dominant culture and the migrant experience, illustrated by the mother’s critique of the authority of educational institutions. Through introspection, the daughter comes to recognise her own identity, which is symbolised by a new depiction of her family embracing diversity alongside white individuals. Ultimately, Bannerji’s story uses symbolism to convey feelings of solitude and alienation while hinting at a hopeful future of multicultural acceptance and understanding.



Let us read and contemplate

The Other Family

Himani Bannerji

When the little girl came home it was already getting dark. The winter twilight had transformed the sheer blue sky of the day into the colour of steel, on which were etched a few stars, the bare winter trees, and the dark wedges of the housetops. A few lit windows cast a faint glow on the snow outside. The mother stood at her window and watched the little hooded figure walking toward the house. The child looked like a shadow, her blue coat blended into the shadows of the evening. This child, her own, how small and insubstantial she seemed and how alone, walking home through a pavement covered with ice and snow! It felt unreal. So different was this childhood from her own. So far away from the sun, the trees and the peopled streets of her own country! What did I do, she thought, I took her away from her own people and her own language, and now here she comes walking alone, through an alien street in a country named Canada.

As she contemplated the solitary, moving figure, her own solitude rushed over her like a tide. She had drifted away from a world that she had lived in and understood, and now she stood here at the same distance from her home as from the homes which she glimpsed while walking past the sparkling clean windows of the sandblasted houses. And now the door bell rang, and here was her daughter scraping the snow off her boots on the doormat.

Dinner time was a good time. A time of warmth, of putting hot, steaming food onto the table. A time to chat about the important things of the day, a time to show each other what they had acquired. Sometimes, however, the mother would be absent-minded, worried perhaps about work, unsettled perhaps by letters that had arrived from home, scraping her feelings into a state of rawness. This was such an evening. She had served herself and her child, started a conversation about their two cats and fallen into a silence after a few minutes.



Why did the child appear lonely?

What reminded the mother of her own solitude?

Why does the author say that dinner time was a good time?

What made the mother absent minded?



Why did the child complain that her mother wasn't listening to her?

"You aren't listening to me, Mother."

The complaining voice got through to her, and she looked at the indignant face demanding attention from the other side of the table. She gathered herself together.

"So what did he do, when you gave him dried food?"

"Oh, I don't quite remember, I think he scratched the ground near his bowl and left."

The child laughed.

"That was smart of him! So why don't we buy tinned food for them?"

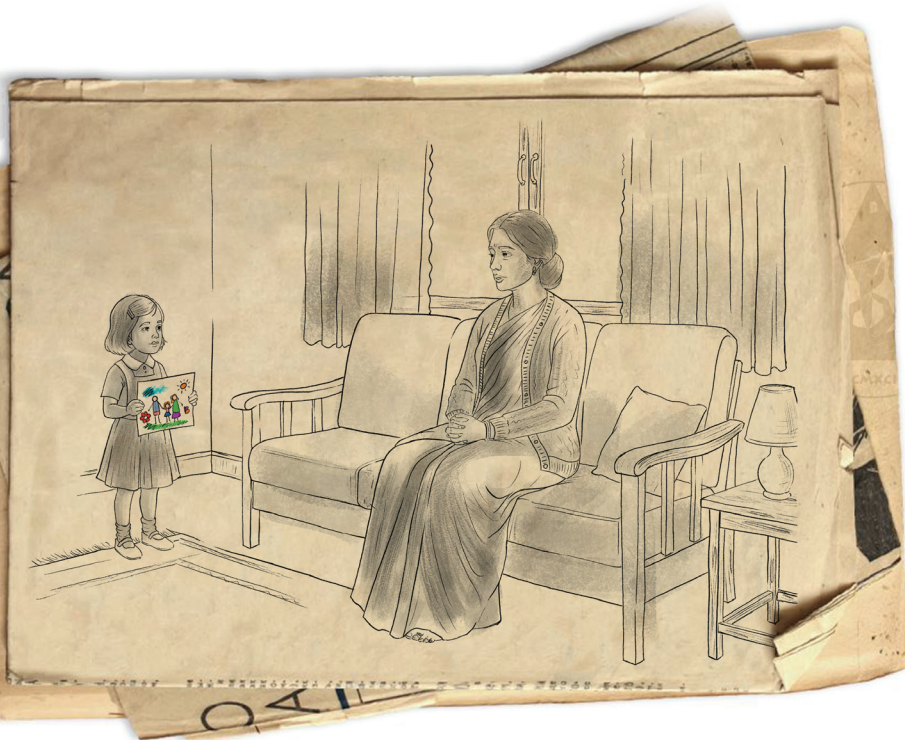
"Maybe we should," she said and tried to change the topic.

"So what did you do in your school today?"

"Oh, we drew pictures like we do every day. We never study anything--not like you said you did in your school. We drew a family--our family. Want to see it?"

"Sure and let us go to the living room, OK! This is messy." Scraping of chairs and the lighting of the lamps in the other room. They both made a rush for the most comfortable chair, both reached it at the same time and made a compromise.

"How about you sit in my lap? No? OK, sit next to me then and we will squeeze in somehow,"



There was a remarkable resemblance between the two faces, except that the face of the child had a greater intensity, given by the wide-open eyes. She was fine boned, and had black hair framing her face. Right now, she was struggling with the contents of her satchel, apparently trying to feel her way to the paintings.

"Here it is," she said, producing a piece of paper. "Here's the family!"

The mother looked at the picture for a long time. She was very still. Her face had set into an expression of anger and sadness. She was trying very hard not to cry. She didn't want to frighten the child and yet what she saw made her feel distant from her daughter, as though she was looking at her through the reverse end of a telescope. She couldn't speak at all. The little girl too sat very still, a little recoiled from the body of her mother, as though expecting a blow. Her hands were clenched into fists, but finally it was she who broke the silence.

"What happened?" she said. "Don't you like it?"

"Listen," said the mother, "this is not your family. I, you and your father are dark-skinned, dark-haired. I don't have a blond wig hidden in my closet, my eyes are black, not blue and your father's beard is black, not red, and you, do you have a white skin, a button nose with freckles, blue eyes and blond hair tied into a ponytail? You said you drew our family. This is not it, is it?"

The child was now feeling distinctly cornered. At first, she was startled and frightened by her mother's response, but now she was prepared to be defiant. She had the greatest authority behind her and she now summoned it to her help.

"I drew it from a book," she said, "all our books have this same picture of the family. You can go and see it for yourself. And everyone else drew it too. You can ask our teacher tomorrow. She liked it, so there!"

The little girl was clutching at her last straw.



How did the mother respond to the drawing when she first saw it?

Why did the girl move a little away from her mother?

What did the mother say to her daughter when she saw the blond family in the picture?

Describe the picture of the family that the girl drew in school.

How did the girl defend her drawing the family picture that bore no resemblance to her family?



Why did the mother feel regret?

What made the mother panic?

What does the term 'they' represent to the mother and the child?

Why did the mother bow her head at the image?

How did the girl respond to her mother's changed mood?

"But you? Where are you in this picture?" demanded her mother, by now thoroughly aroused. "Where are we? Is this the family you would like to have? Don't you want us anymore? You want to be a memsahib, a white girl?"

But even as she lashed out these questions the mother regretted them. She could see that she made no sense to the child. She could feel the unfairness of it all. She was sorry that she was putting such a heavy burden on such young shoulders.

"First I bring her here," she thought, "and then I try to make her feel guilty for wanting to be the same as the others." But something had taken hold of her this evening, panic at the thought of losing her child, despair and guilt galvanized her into speech she regretted, and she looked with anger at her only child, who it seemed wanted to be white, who had rejected her dark mother. Someday this child would be ashamed of her, she thought, someday would move out into the world of those others. Someday they would be enemies. Confusing thoughts ran through her head like images on an uncontrollable television screen, in the chaos of which she heard her ultimate justification flung at her by her daughter — they wanted me to draw the family, didn't they? "They" wanted "her" to draw "the family." The way her daughter pronounced the words "they" or "the family" indicated that she knew what she was talking about. The simple pronoun "they" definitely stood for authority, for that uncontrollable yet organized world immediately outside, of which the school was the ultimate expression. It surrounded their own private space. "They" had power, "they" could crush little people like her anytime "they" wanted to and in "their" world that was the picture of the family. Whether her mother liked it or not, whether she looked like the little girl in it or not, made not one jot of difference. That was, yes, that was the right picture. As these thoughts passed through her mind, her anger ebbed away. Abandoning her fury and distance, the mother bowed her head at the image of this family and burst into sobs.

"What will happen to you?" she said. "What did I do to you?"

She cried a great deal and said many incoherent things. The little girl was patient, quietly absorbing her mother's change of mood. She had a thoughtful look on her face and bit her nails from time to time. She did not protest any more, but nor did she cry. After



a while her mother took her to bed and tucked her in and sat in the kitchen with the fearful vision of her daughter always outside of the window of the blond family, never the centre of her own life, always rejecting herself and her life transformed into a gigantic peep show. She wept very bitterly because she had caused this destruction, and because she had hated her child in her own fear of rejection and because she had sowed guilt into her mind

When her mother went to bed and closed the door, the child, who had been waiting for long time, left the bed. She crossed the corridor on her tiptoes, past the row of shoes, the silent gathering of the overcoats and the mirror with the wavy surface and went into the washroom. Behind the door was another mirror, of full length, and clear. Deliberately and slowly the child took off the top of her Pyjamas and surveyed herself with grave scrutiny. She saw the brownness of her skin, the wide, staring, dark eyes, the black hair now tousled from the pillows, the scar on her nose and the brownish pink of her mouth. She stood a while lost in this act of contemplation, until the sound of soft padded feet neared the door and a whiskered face peeped in. She stooped and picked up the cat and walked back to her own room.

It was snowing again and little elves with bright coloured coats and snow in their boots had reappeared in the classroom. When finally the coats were hung under pegs with names and boots neatly stowed away, the little girl approached her teacher. She had her painting from the day before in her hand

“I have brought it back,” she said “Why?” asked her teacher, “don’t you like it anymore?”

The little girl was looking around very intently.

“It’s not finished yet,” she said. “The books I looked at didn’t have something. Can I finish it now?”

“Go ahead,” said the teacher, moving on to get the colours from the cupboard.

The little girl was looking at the classroom. It was full of children of all colours, of all kinds of shapes of noses and of different colours of hair. She sat on the floor, placed the incomplete picture on a big piece of newspaper and started to paint.



Why did the girl stand in front of the mirror?





Why did the girl scrutinise the class room?

What did the girl draw besides the blond family in the picture?

She worked long at it-and with great concentration. Finally, it was finished. She went back to her teacher.

"It's finished now," she said, "I drew the rest."

The teacher reached out for the picture and spread it neatly on a desk. There they were, the blond family arranged in a semicircle with a dip in the middle, but next to them, arranged alike, stood another group-a man, a woman and a child, but they were dark-skinned, dark-haired, the woman wore clothes from her own country, and the little girl in the middle had a scar on her nose. "Do you like it?"

"Who are they?" asked the teacher, though she should have known. But the little girl didn't mind answering this question one bit.

"It's the other family," she said.



Let us enrich

sandblast / sændblæst/ (v)	: to spray with fast-moving solid grains (The process is used for stripping dirt, rust, paint, etc. from the surface of objects.)
scrap //skræp/	: to discard; to get rid of
clench /klentʃ/ (v)	: to grip or hold fast (to close tightly)
recoil /ri:'kɔɪl/	: to pull back, especially in disgust, horror or astonishment
blond /blɒnd/	: a light yellowish hair colour
defiant /dɪ'faɪ.ənt/	: boldly resisting
bow /bəʊ/	: to bend one's head as a gesture of respect or deference



Let us discuss

1. How do the cultural identities of individuals shape their experiences in a new environment? Analyse this question with reference to the story "The Other Family".
2. Are the mother's thoughts about her daughter at the beginning of the story recollection of moments from her own past? Explain.
3. How does the presence of the pets serve as a source of comfort, influencing the moods of the mother and her daughter in the story?

4. What unspoken thoughts or feelings are the mother and daughter grappling with at the moment of silence at dinner?
5. Explore the mother's feelings upon discovering that the family in the picture bears no resemblance to their own.
6. The silence in the relationship between the mother and daughter is both a shield and a barrier. Evaluate the validity of this statement.
7. Consider the snowy landscape pictured in the story as a metaphor for the internal conflict in both the mother and daughter.
8. How does the diversity in the classroom influence the daughter's artistic choices and perspectives? Illustrate.
9. Reflect on the emotional journey of the daughter as she pours her feelings into her artwork.
10. Comment on the aptness of the title of the story "The Other Family".
11. Comment on the ending of the story.



Let us apply our thoughts

1. Why does the mother worry that the world outside will have a negative impact on her daughter?
2. Why does the mother fear that her daughter will nurture feelings of hatred and dislike for herself and her mother?
3. Is the mother afraid of losing her daughter in a white-dominated society?
4. Feelings of guilt, loneliness and insecurity mark the encounter between the mother and daughter, with their true emotions concealed beneath superficial conversation. At dinner, they fail to listen to one another, lost in their thoughts. Do you think a seemingly trivial discussion about cat food highlights their alienation and solitude within the family? Analyse.
5. It can be assumed that the drawing by the daughter triggered the mother's understanding of the barriers between the privileged white society and the migrant community. Do you think so? Substantiate your answer.
6. 'One could argue that in Bannerji's short story symbolism plays a unique role.' Substantiate the statement by bringing out the elements of symbolism in "The Other Family".
7. The daughter's drawing, in both its old and new forms, illustrates the contradictions in Canadian society, as well as the challenges of acceptance and self-identity. Illustrate.
8. Do you think the final episode of the story provides some hope for a future of tolerant multiculturalism? Substantiate your answer.
9. Do you think the weather in the story as the representation of the mother's inner feelings, while the dialogue between her and the daughter reflects solitude and alienation? Illustrate.

10. The mother in “The Other Family” exhibits the ‘insider and outsider’ syndrome commonly observed in diasporic individuals, struggling with a sense of belonging and cultural identity in a new environment. Illustrate.
11. In what ways does Himani Bannerji explore the marginalisation and ‘othering’ of immigrants in multicultural societies, taking into account the issues of gender, race and class?
12. In what ways does Bannerji challenge and reinterpret fundamental ideas of community and national identity in postcolonial Canada?
13. How does the daughter in the story find her voice in the conflict with her mother and society?
14. How does the daughter’s first drawing of a white family reflect her personal struggle with identity and the pressure to conform to the society she lives in?
15. To what extent does the mother’s reaction arise from a realistic worry of cultural erasure versus her own unresolved guilt and unease over migrating to Canada?
16. Examine the meaning of the daughter’s last picture, which shows both her family and the ‘other family.’ Does this decision show a fine balance of a hybrid identity or a constant fight for acceptance?



Let us express ourselves

1. Imagine the story from the perspective of the teacher. What are her thoughts when the girl brings the first picture and how do they change when she presents the second, ‘other family’ drawing the next day?
2. The other parent is a mute figure in the narrative. Compose a conversation between the mother and father about their daughter’s drawing, wherein they deliberate about the day’s events and the contrasting perspectives on assimilation.
3. The little girl resolves the issue by drawing her real family, proud of her identity. Write a descriptive paragraph from the girl’s perspective as she draws the second drawing, focusing on her emotions and thoughts during the process.
4. Imagine that the mother decides to write an open letter to the school explaining her concerns about the lack of diverse representation in the childrens’ study materials. Attempt the letter.
5. Translate the story “The Other Family” into your mother tongue.



Let us go ahead

Bannerji, Himani. “The Other Family.” *The Canadian Writer’s Workplace*, edited by Gary Lipschutz, Sandra Scarry and John Scarry, 9th ed., Nelson, 2020, pp. 35-46.

Israel, Milton. *The South Asian Diaspora in Canada*. Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1987.

“

“It is never too late to give up your prejudices.”
- Henry David Thoreau

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Before we begin

New concerns...

Postcolonial literature explores cultural, political and social consequences of colonialism, from the viewpoint of those who were colonised. Key themes include the identity crises faced by individuals as they navigate the tension between indigenous traditions and Western ideals. Additionally, postcolonial literature addresses significant issues such as the resistance to colonial rule and efforts for decolonisation, the persistent realities of racial inequality and the necessity to rewrite history through the lens of the marginalised. The notion of displacement deepens the narrative, exploring the feelings of alienation and loss experienced by the colonised.





Let us know the author



Eku McGred is a talented musician, poet and songwriter with expertise in training church singers and musicians. He was born in Sierra Leone and currently lives in the UK. He had his education in England. Eku is also an entrepreneur devoted to transforming people to their true potential. His first book, *Worship Through The Storm*, is recognised as a significant resource on Christian worship. His works include the poem 'I am an African child' and the music album *Seven Seasons*.

I am an African child : An overview

The poem "I am an African child", which was first published in 2010, seeks to debunk preconceived notions about Africans. It emphasises African optimism and the celebration of African identity, portraying it as a gift rather than a burden. It addresses the discrimination and bullying that Black individuals face. The poem offers a message of hope and resilience. The poet seeks to change perceptions of African youth, encouraging them to proudly embrace their heritage and identity. Central to the poem is the poet's personal reflection on his life and his pride in being black, as exemplified by the line, 'Bright, brilliant and articulate'. The poem celebrates the potential of African children and advocates for equal opportunity and education. Ultimately, the poem is an empowering declaration that Black individuals should not be denied opportunities or kindness due to their skin colour or the prejudices of others. The poem argues that Africans should not be constrained or defined by their historical struggles with hunger and poverty because they are highly skilled and capable of improving their lives. The poem promotes Africans as equal to all people whatever their race or colour.



Let us read and contemplate

I am an African child

Ekun McGred

I am an African child
Born with a skin the colour of chocolate
Bright, brilliant and articulate
Strong and bold; I'm gifted
Talented enough to be the best
I am an African child.

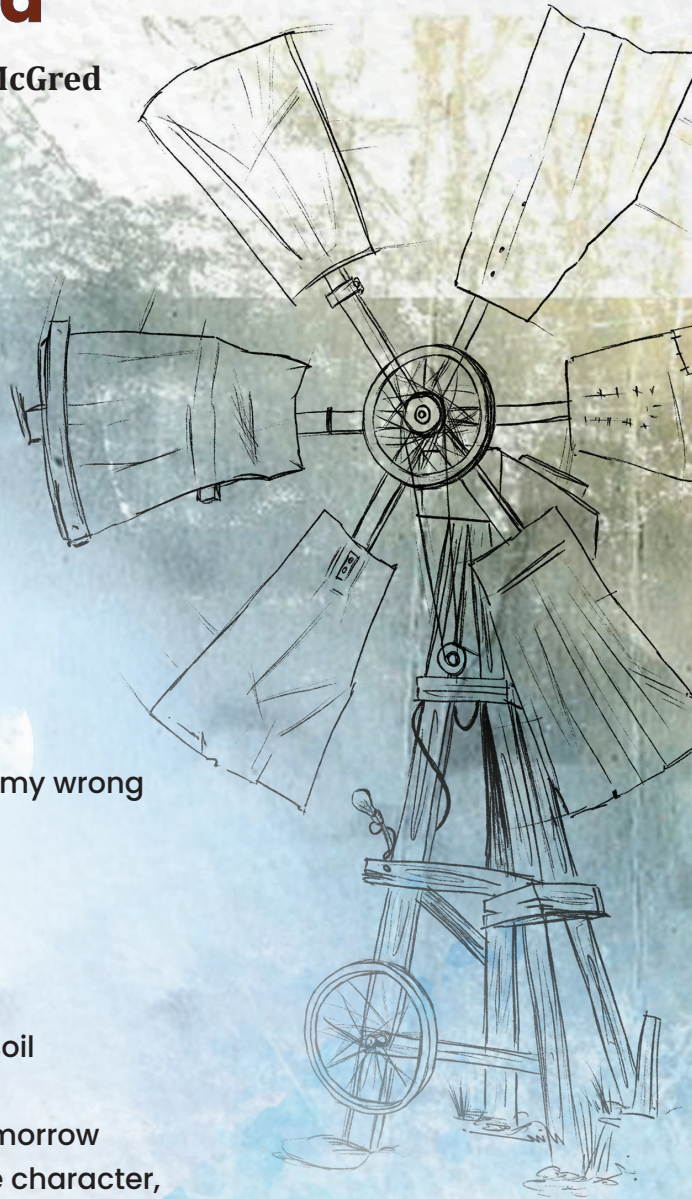
Often the target of pity
My future is not confined to charity
Give me the gift of a lifetime;
Give me a dream, a door of opportunity;
I will thrive
I am an African child.



Do not hide my fault show me my wrong
I am like any other;
Teach me to dream
And I will become
I am an African child.

I am the son, daughter of the soil
Rich in texture and content
Full of potential for a better tomorrow
Teach me discipline, teach me character,
teach me hard work
Teach me to think like the star within me
I am an African child.

I can be extra-ordinary
call me William Kamkwamba the Inventor;
Give me a library with books
Give me a scrapyard and discarded electronics





Give me a broken bicycle;
Plus the freedom to be me
And I will build you a windmill
I am an African child.

We are the new generation
Not afraid to be us
Uniquely gifted, black and talented
Shining like the stars we are
We are the children of Africa
Making the best of us
Yes! I am an African Child.

Let us familiarise:

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind

William Kamkwamba (1987-), born in Dowa, Malawi, is an author and inventor known for his contributions to improving the lives of his family and the residents of his rural community in Masitala. As a teenager, he creatively used leftover materials to construct a windmill to provide electricity to his family's home. His memoir, *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* (2009), illustrates this achievement. Kamkwamba also played a vital role in the construction of windmills aimed at providing energy for a crop irrigation system and ensuring access to clean drinking water for his community.



Let us discuss

1. Why does the child say that it is gifted?
2. What does the child need to thrive?
3. Why did the child say, "Do not hide my fault show me my wrong"?
4. What is the child's perception of himself?
5. What does the child want to prove?
6. Why does the child speak of 'the new generation'?
7. How does the 'African child' describe himself?
8. What is the message of the poem?



9. What is the central theme of the poem, "I am an African child"?
10. What does the repeated requests in the poem signify?
11. What are the speaker's feelings of the 'African child'?
12. Which lines or stanzas appeal to the senses of sight, sound, touch, smell, or taste and how do these sensory details contribute to the impact of the poem?
13. How does the repetition of the phrase 'I am an African child' enhance the message of the poem?
14. What according to you is the author's purpose in writing this poem?
15. What ideas should the reader derive from the poem?



Let us apply our thoughts

1. Why does the poet advocate for opportunities and resources rather than sympathy?
2. "The poem celebrates the importance of living for oneself rather than living in another's garments." Justify your answer.
3. "The poem 'I am an African child' represents African identity by highlighting the unique qualities, challenges and aspirations of African children". Discuss.
4. Compile a list of the problems that African children face, as you understand from the poem "I am an African child".
5. "The poem 'I am an African child' is the celebration of identity, rejecting discrimination and promoting a positive self-image". Discuss
6. What is the main theme of the poem and how does the speaker portray the African identity?
7. What preconceived ideas and stereotypes does the poem question?
8. How does the poem connect a person's identity to the identity of Africa and its people as a whole?
9. How does the speaker's call for education show a vision for the future? What is the role of education in the poem?
10. How does the poem address the legacy of colonialism?
11. Identify and analyse the use of literary devices such as metaphor, simile, repetition and personification in the poem.
12. How does the poem's theme of pride and empowerment connect to past history and the contemporary circumstances of Africa?

13. How does the poem juxtapose the adversities confronting Africa with its capacity for excellence, as illustrated by the inventor mentioned in the poem?



Let us express ourselves

1. Self-awareness plays a crucial role in empowering the underprivileged to transcend economic, cultural and social marginality. Maya Angelou's poem "Phenomenal Woman", celebrates the allure and strength of identity, of an African woman. Similarly, Eku McGred reflects on the sense of confidence in the African identity. Together, these works emphasise how recognising one's worth can inspire individuals to challenge and overcome societal constraints, fostering resilience and empowerment. In the light of reading these two poems, prepare an article on how self-awareness enables the underprivileged to overcome economic, cultural and social marginality.
2. In the poem, certain lines or stanzas vividly engage the senses of sight, sound, touch, smell and taste, significantly enhancing the poem's overall impact. The visual imagery invokes a sense of place and atmosphere, while the auditory elements create a rhythm to suit the mood. Tactile descriptions help the reader to physically connect with the text, making the experience more immersive. Additionally, references to smell and taste further evoke emotional responses, anchoring the reader's experience in sensory memory. Each sensory detail enhances the imagery and deepens the reader's engagement with the themes and emotions of the poem. Analyse the poem "I am an African child" and comment on the images in it.



Let us go ahead

<https://risingafrica.org/the-african-child-poem-by-eku-mcgreg/>
www.poetryverse.com/maya-angelou-poems/phenomenal-woman

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resistance_literature

Angelou, Maya. "Phenomenal Woman." *Phenomenal Woman: Four Poems Celebrating Women*, Random House, 1994, p. 4.

“

“I have lost my identity in exile and my memories have become my homeland. I live in an endless longing,”

- Ghassan Kanafani

”



Before we begin

Refugee literature

A refugee is someone forced to flee their country due to persecution, conflict, or violence. They are distinct from migrants, as their displacement is involuntary and they lack the protection of their government. Under the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol, refugees are entitled to international protection, including right to work, education and legal assistance and they cannot be returned to places where their safety is at risk (non-refoulement principle). Distinctions relating to other displaced persons clarify the legal definitions associated with various groups on the move. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are individuals who flee their homes but remain within their country's borders and lack international protection. Stateless persons are those individuals who do not possess recognised nationality and face discrimination. Migrants are individuals who move for other reasons, such as for economic opportunities and remain under their home country's protection.

Refugee literature encompasses a range of works that focus on the experience of refugees - exploring themes such as displacement, trauma, resilience and identity.

This genre, which gained recognition during post-World War

II, reflects social issues and critiques political structures. Key characteristics include the emotional turmoil of leaving home and the struggle to retain one's identity while adapting to a new culture. Refugee literature details the traumatic realities of refugee life, such as

violence, imprisonment and marginalisation. It also explores resilience and survival. The literature often features diverse genres, including memoirs, novels and poetry.





The Refugee Exodus – The Tibetan and Palestinian Experience

The journey of Tibetan refugees began with the Chinese occupation in the 1950s. The 1959 uprising against the Chinese occupation and the Chinese reaction to it led to the 14th Dalai Lama's escape to India. Subsequently, waves of Tibetan refugees continued to arrive in India. In exile, the Tibetan refugees established a vibrant community in India, supported by the Central Tibetan Administration located at Dharamshala. However, the absence of a nation restricts their social and economic mobility, thereby compelling many to seek better prospects in Western countries. Despite the various obstacles, the community actively preserves its unique language and culture through educational institutions, monasteries and community centres. Their journey is characterised not only by a physical escape from oppression but also by a persistent struggle to maintain their cultural identity while nurturing their hopes of returning to Tibet.

The Palestinians also have been facing same complex situation for decades due to war, displacement and numerous disasters. The conflicts in Gaza, escalating violence in the West Bank and unclear political prospects made them refugees for decades. The United Nations currently registers around 5.9 million Palestinians as refugees. Most of them are descendants of those who fled their homes or were forced to leave during the 1948 conflict. The right to return to homeland is a major part of the Palestinian story, yet Israel has always rejected it. The Tibetans and Palestinians are two peoples in exile sharing similar features. Almost every other country refuses to recognise their suzerainty over their homeland. The elder generation refugees of both peoples keep keys to their old homes, with no prospect of return.

Exile House and The Passport : An overview

The poems "Exile House" by Tenzing Tsundue and "The Passport" by Mahmoud Darwish explore the themes of identity, belonging and the effects of displacement. Tsundue's poem reflects a deteriorating home intertwined with nature, which symbolises emotional ties to the past while highlighting the complexities of explaining one's origins to posterity. In contrast, Darwish's poem addresses the alienation brought about by borders, where the speaker laments the loss of identity through bureaucratic definitions, asserting that true identity is rooted in personal connections with nature and community. Both works examine the limitations of material definitions of identity and emphasise the significance of relationships and cultural heritage in fostering a deeper sense of self-worth and belonging beyond societal constraints.



EXILE HOUSE

Tenzin Tsundue

Our tiled roof dripped
and the four walls threatened to fall apart
but we were to go home soon.

We grew papayas
in front of our house
chillies in our garden
and changmas* for our fences,
then pumpkins rolled down the cowshed thatch
calves trotted out of the manger.

Grass on the roof,
beans sprouted and
climbed the vines,
money plants crept in through the window,
our house seems to have grown roots.

The fences have grown into a jungle,
now how can I tell my children
where we came from?

*changmas - Tibetan word for willow trees



Let us know the author



Tenzin Tsundue (1975-) is a Tibetan writer and activist born in India. He is an award-winning author whose books are translated in over seventeen languages. He received the first Picador -Outlook Award for Non-Fiction in 2001 for "My Kind of Exile". His notable works include *Crossing the Border* (1999), *Kora* (2002), *Semshook* (2007) and *Tsen-gol* (2012). He currently lives in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, India. He frequently travels across the world to spread the message of Tibet.

The Passport

Mahmoud Darwish

They did not recognize me in the shadows
 That suck away my colour in this Passport
 And to them my wound was an exhibit
 For a tourist who loves to collect photographs
 They did not recognize me,
 Ah... Don't leave
 The palm of my hand without the sun
 Because the trees recognize me
 All the songs of the rain recognize me
 Don't leave me pale like the moon!

All the birds that followed my palm
 To the door of the distant airport
 All the wheat fields
 All the prisons
 All the white tombstones
 All the barbed boundaries
 All the waving handkerchiefs



All the eyes
 were with me,
 But they dropped them from my passport
 Stripped of my name and identity?
 On a soil I nourished with my own hands?
 Today Jacob cried out
 Filling the sky:
 Don't make an example of me again!
 Oh, gentlemen, Prophets,
 Don't ask the trees for their names
 Don't ask the valleys who their mother is
 From my forehead
 bursts the sword of light
 And from my hand springs the water of the river
 All the hearts of the people are my identity
 So take away my passport!

Source: *New Democracy*, Vol.21, June 2006. Transcribed by Zdravko Saveski



Let us know the author . . .



Mahmoud Darwish (1941–2008) is widely regarded as Palestine's national poet. His poetry gave voice to the Palestinians living as refugees under Israeli occupation. In his poems, Darwish explored Palestine as a metaphor for the lost Eden, birth, resurrection and the anguish of dispossession and exile.



Let us express ourselves

1. The poem "Exile House" talks about how the first generation of exiles remember Tibet and how succeeding generations see it as a 'story'. What problems could arise when people are removed from their country and wish to maintain their cultural identity to generations?

2. Tsundue says that the Tibetan people have a history of being 'brutal warriors', but they have chosen a non-violent path based on Buddhist teachings. How does this complicated history affect the 'warrior culture' of current Tibetan activism? Does it show in the tone of "Exile House"? Explain.
3. Darwish says, 'My nationality is in the hearts of all the people, so take away my passport!' What does he mean when he talks of the 'darkness of the passport'? Explain how a document that is supposed to prove who you are could hide or deny your identity.
4. Darwish repeatedly uses the imagery of nature ('trees', 'rain', 'wheatfields') that appears to 'recognize' him. What is the significance of nature bearing witness to his existence when human authorities fail to do so?
5. The speaker in the poem "The Passport" asserts, "They did not recognize me in the shadows / That suck away my colour in this Passport." What does the 'sucking away' of colour symbolise in the context of national identity and displacement?
6. The speaker in the poem "The Passport" says that his real self is more than just a piece of paper. Use sensory details instead of official data to write a short piece of prose or poetry about an 'identity card' for something that isn't just a poem, like a memory, a culture, or a common history.
7. Both poems implicitly question what truly constitutes a nation or a homeland: physical land, shared history, official recognition, or the collective spirit. Argue in favour of the one element you believe is essential.
8. Both poems highlight a deep connection to the land, separate from the political state. How do you differentiate between your physical home, your community and the broader concept of a 'homeland'?

“Hospitality is not just a matter of generosity; it is a moral duty.”
- Pope Francis



Before we begin

The Sindhis

“Sindhi” denotes an ethnic group from the Sindh province in undivided India. After the partition in 1947, the Sindhi population divided between India and Pakistan and established a substantial diaspora across the globe.

The Sindhi people primarily speak the Sindhi language, which is part of the Indo-European language family. Throughout its history, the Sindhi language had several scripts. In Pakistan, the Perso-Arabic script is used to write Sindhi, while in India, a mix of scripts is used, including Devanagari and Perso-Arabic. This script system reflects the diverse cultural and linguistic influences in the regions where Sindhi is spoken. They are also connected to the Zoroastrians in India. Nowadays most of the Sindhis live in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. They are known for the popularisation of asafoetida (hing). The Kapoors and the Heeranis of Bollywood have their roots in the Sindhis.



Let us know the author



Nina Sabnani (1956-) is an accomplished artist and storyteller who employs film illustrations and writings to express her narratives. Her notable films include *Mukand and Riaz* and *Tanko Bole Chhe'* (The Stitches Speak). Her film *Hum Chitra Banate Hain* won the National award (Rajat Kamal) for best animation film in 2016. The Tata Trust honoured her with a lifetime achievement award for illustration at the Tata Lit Live Festival in Mumbai in 2018. Currently, she serves as professor at the IDC School of Design, IIT Bombay.

Roots in the sky: An overview

Nina Sabnani's "Roots in the Sky" is a piece from the memoir that explores the concept of identity, memory and rare consequences of the partition of India. Growing up as a Sindhi, the author and her family faced fear and embarrassment due to negative stereotypes relating to the identity. Living in Bharuch, surrounded by diverse communities, they felt like outsiders without a true 'native' place. Despite teasing relating to their surname and language, the author began to embrace the identity in college, partly because of supportive friends and teachers. A significant experience in Kachchh awakened a deeper connection to Sindhi roots and enabled interactions with others speaking the dialect. After witnessing the effects of the 2001 earthquake, which unearthed hidden stories of migration, the author explored the Sindhi heritage through art, making animation films based on family memories. Over time, Sabnani recognised the freedom of being a "world citizen" while learning to appreciate the Sindhi identity and the unique expressions of their culture.



Let us read and contemplate

Roots in the sky

Nina Sabnani



Why was the narrator terrified of being a Sindhi?

Why was the narrator petrified at the thoughts of revealing her identity?

Why did she feel like the outsider most of the time?

What did the Gujaratis and Jains think the narrator was half Muslim?

How did the narrator's parents reply to her questions about her native place?

Growing up, I was terrified of being a Sindhi because I heard someone say that a Sindhi is more dangerous than a snake, so if anyone came across both, they should first deal with the Sindhi and only then the snake. I didn't particularly find myself to be a lethal entity, but I was petrified of revealing my identity as it would definitely confine me to the doghouse or worse make me disappear. So for many years I hid my identity, scared and embarrassed. For long I assumed this was the plight of all Sindhis till I met others and shared my fears.

Unlike many of the Sindhi friends that I have today, I did not grow up in a Sindhi neighbourhood, which kind of explains why my experience may seem different and why I felt like the outsider most times. I grew up in Bharuch, a small town on the river Narmada in Gujarat where my neighbours were Russians and Indians from everywhere in the country, all working for the ONGC, except my father who worked in the Bharuch textile mill. The Russians could not distinguish between Hindi and Sindhi, so they just accepted us in their own way, since we anyway communicated through sign language. There were also a fair number of Gujaratis and Jains who thought we were half Muslims because we ate meat, did not have a temple in the house, wrote in the Arabic script and said 'Alla!' at the drop of a hat. I went to school in a tonga and the driver Ibrahim Chacha constantly spoke of his village. There were many in my class who spoke about their 'native' place, usually a nearby village that they would go to for vacations.

I yearned for a 'native' place, which for some reason we never went to and I wondered if we even had one. Whenever I asked my parents about this native place, they would give different answers. Sometimes they would say, a native place is where you are born. But all my siblings were born in different places, so my classmates did not buy that. Other times my parents would explain that a native place is where one's grandparents live. One set of grandparents

were alive and lived in Jaipur where we did visit in our summer vacations. But my classmates were not convinced; I had to have a village, not a big city. Clearly, I was the odd one out, so I gave up trying to belong. I played with my brother and together we explored the train station and the bridge on the vast Narmada where each year it flooded and we watched animals, utensils, parts of roofs drift away in strong currents of the lashing waves. We spoke to each other in gibberish, pretending it was our own secret language, so no one could tell what we were saying to each other, not even ourselves. I buried myself in my books and became a bookworm who refused to go out and play, preferring to hide under the bed with the endless Enid Blyton novels, vicariously going on several adventures, finding my own playmates and creating my own space to belong.

College life in Baroda eased my fears but the sense of belonging was not quite the same that I saw within people from Bengal or Kerala or Gujarat where the moment they met they comfortably slid into speaking in their mother tongues. I found it peculiar that whenever two Sindhi students met, they would speak to each other in English or Hindi.

I was teased for my surname, for my language and clothes – but never for the food. At least there was something I did not need to dread. Friends showed interest in eating at my place. And I found this over the years that the moment I was introduced to someone new and ofcourse my surname told them I was a Sindhi, they would say, “Oh, I love Sindhi curry!” Accepting my identity started there and slowly I came to claim it with the help of friends and teachers. When my teacher Nasreen Mohamedi said her best friend was Sindhi and she considered herself half-Sindhi I was suddenly comfortable being one and not embarrassed speaking my language. I became interested in learning to read and write Sindhi, but what would I really do with it? I would probably communicate with my parents or grandparents. It was not like Gujarati, which was spoken all over the state of Gujarat. So there was another realisation now, we Sindhis did not have a state to which we belonged, which is why we did not have a native place! When I asked my father about this and whether it bothered him, he said, Gandhiji called us World Citizens. I guess if we could not have a piece of land it was overwhelming to have the whole earth!



Why did the author visit Jaipur in the summer vacations?

Why did the narrator give up trying to belong?

Why did the author and her brother communicate with each other in gibberish?

Why did the narrator prefer to be a bookworm and refuse to go outside?

Why was the author never teased in the name of Sindhi food?

When did the author begin to feel comfortable?

What was her father's response when she asked him about their native land?



What did the author do when she was in art school?

What made the author look for books about partition?

How did the author become conscious of her Sindhi identity?

What did she find in the Banni district of Kachchh?

Where did she experience the community camaraderie?

Why did the author consider visiting Kachchh as a pilgrimage?

Art education is as much about learning to make art as it is about introspection, which came easily to me as I had spent a good amount of my childhood doing that. It was the 70s and the preoccupations of youth in those times were quite different than they would be today. Like many of my classmates in art school, I began to brood over the purpose of life, the purpose of art, of finding my roots and learning to know myself. Part of which meant knowing something about my parents and their roots. All that my parents chose to tell me about the past was that they left their homes in the wake of the partition of India in 1947. Any further prodding only led to fragmented stories of food and horse carriages. This sent me looking for books about Partition, of which I found some, but none on Sindh. It was just a name on a map of a country we could never visit. I left it at that and found my own boundless territory in art making, as a world citizen.

A chance visit to Kachchh made me conscious again of my Sindhi identity, which I had sort of forgotten, or rather which only came into existence when I entered my home, disappearing as I came out of it. In the Banni district of Kachchh I found people speaking my language albeit with a different dialect. When I spoke back to them in my Sindhi, they immediately warmed up to me. It was for the first time in my life that I experienced the community camaraderie I had envied in others. I also met a few who had migrated from the Tharparkar region in Sindh. Excited by this, I made another trip with one of my siblings and my mother to Banni and it was as if the place triggered this gush of memories in her and she recalled many stories and places of her childhood. She told me it was the closest that we could ever get to being in Sindh. Kachchh became for me a place where I inherited memories of land. I visited it again and again, like a pilgrimage.

After the earthquake of 2001, Kachchh itself had new memories of land. The earthquake not only displaced people but also unearthed memories of migrants who had made it their home after fleeing Tharparkar in 1972. A year after the earthquake, women artists from Kala Raksha created embroidered narratives of the earthquake, of lost homes and lost homelands. This lost land and home was reclaimed in the territory of cloth. It was around the same time that my parents returned to India after spending two and half decades in Dubai. In a very different frame of mind, my father was eloquent in





sharing his memories of childhood spent in Karachi and missing his friend Riaz. Having made peace with being a world citizen he was also reclaiming his place in the memory space. By this time I had found my creative space in animation, so inspired by the art of the Kachchh artists, I told my father's story in an animated film, using fabric. It led to another film that I made with the Kachchh artists about their memories of land, embroidered and applied on cloth. These kinds of collaborations continued with other artists and soon it dawned on me that the pattern of my preoccupations was always working with communities that were under-recognized, invisible or marginalized. Whether it was empathy or my background in design and anthropology or that I was a stateless Sindhi, I cannot really say, but I am certain that each of these propelled me towards my choice of work. For long I had hidden my Sindhi identity out of fear and mortification and at the same time for long I had also struggled to belong; but one day it occurred to me that I was actually a lot freer than those who were tied down to land. I was a world citizen indeed. My land was the land of inherited memories and animation was the perfect space where 'a place' could be claimed, created or invented. Today, I have many Sindhi friends and we do break into Sindhi, especially when there are words which cannot be translated, no matter how good the translator. For example, 'halu bhalla' means far more than 'Let us go'. We use it to encourage, to console, to sigh or to say enough!

Source : Sabnani, Nina. "Roots in The Sky". *Sindhi Tapestry : An Anthology of Reflections on the Sindhi Identity*. Saaz Aggarwal(ed). Black -And -White Foundation. Pune, 2021. p. 81-85.

What did the women artists from Kala Raksha create a year after the earthquake in 2001?

What made the author think that she was indeed a world citizen?





Let us enrich

petrify /'pet.rə.fai/ (v)	: to make (someone) so frightened that they are unable to move
embarrassed / ɪm'bær.əst/	: to cause (someone) to feel awkward, self-conscious, or ashamed
gibberish /'dʒɪbəriʃ/ (n)	: unintelligible or meaningless speech or writing; nonsense
introspection/ ɪntrə'spekʃən/ (n)	: the examination or observation of one's own mental and emotional processes
prod /prɒd/ (v)	: to encourage, to prompt
mortification / mɔ:tɪfɪ'keɪʃən/	: a sensation of extreme shame or embarrassment
camaraderie / kəmə'rɑ:dəri/	: mutual trust and friendship among people who spend a lot of time together



Let us discuss

1. How do displaced communities pass on their history, traditions and connection to a specific landscape to younger generations who do not know the land?



Let us apply our thoughts

1. Discuss how displaced communities share their stories and traditions, such as by storytelling, music and art.
2. Examine the role of oral history in preserving identity and fostering a sense of belonging among the youth.
3. Investigate how community rituals and ceremonies are adapted to maintain connections to historical landscapes despite physical displacement.
4. Explore the psychological effects of displacement on youth and how maintaining ties to ancestral land influences sense of self.
5. Sabnani, an artist and storyteller, has shared her experiences of growing up as a Sindhi. She has expressed feelings of self-consciousness regarding her surname, language and clothing, which led her to hide her identity out of fear. Do you think her memoir connects this personal struggle to a broader, shared sense of displacement within the Sindhi community?

Let us now read the letter by the author of “Roots in the Sky” to learners of this Course book, in which she describes the events that led her to pen the memoir.

A letter to my young learners

अन्तर्देशीय पत्र कार्ड
INLAND LETTER CARD

Dear learners,

I wrote *Roots in the Sky* to share how I felt as a child. People often asked me, “What is your native place?” This was a hard question for me to answer.

My parents were teenagers when their families had to leave their home in Sindh during the Partition of India in 1947. Sindh became part of Pakistan and because of this, my parents and their families did not have one place they could call home. They adapted to their new lives and rarely spoke about what they had left behind. The idea of a homeland was never discussed at home, even though people around me kept asking about my “native” place.

Many people believe that who you are depends on where you come from and the language you speak. For example, if you speak Marathi, people assume you must be from Maharashtra. When you don't fit into these ideas, you can feel left out. As a child, I often felt like I did not belong anywhere.

As I grew older, I realised that many people feel this way. Some families move because of wars or natural disasters. Others move to find work. When people leave their homes, they can feel lost and unsure of where they belong.

The word “roots” usually means a place that keeps us steady and safe. But I learned a different idea from old Indian stories. They describe the universe like a tree growing upside down, with its roots in the sky and its branches on the earth. This idea suggests that what truly matters comes from something greater and that the world around us is always changing.

This helped me understand that roots do not have to be in one place. Roots in the sky mean that we can belong in many places.

Having roots in the sky is not a bad thing. It means we carry our stories and our sense of home with us, wherever we go.

With love,

Nina Sabnani

1. In the light of this letter, consider how the author uses her experience of not having a designated native place to create a semi-fictional memoir.
2. The author incorporates her longing and sense of displacement in the memoir through well-developed characters and settings. She forges a strong link between her experiences and the universal concepts of identity and belonging by referencing her journey. Examine the events she mentions in her letter which are included in the memoir.

9. “I wrote *Roots in the Sky* to share how I felt as a child,” Nina writes in the letter. It was difficult for her to respond when people asked, “Where are you from?” Examine the assertion in the context of the ‘militant nationalism’ that is currently a threat worldwide.



Let us express ourselves

1. Land is not only a means of livelihood; it is also a means of spiritual identification with ancestors. What occurs to a community’s soul when its physical connection to the land is cut off? This concern is expressed in “Roots in the Sky” and also in movies like *Tourist Family*. Substantiate your points by referring to the plight of Sindhis in India, as reflected in the memoir and the migration of Sri Lankan Tamil family to India as depicted in the movie.
2. The narrator in “Roots in the Sky” struggled with her Sindhi identity, fearing dangerous social perceptions that deemed Sindhis. This fear led to the prolonged concealment of her identity, particularly in Bharuch, where she felt out of place among diverse neighbours. Present your feelings as if you were a stranger in the very place your ancestors lived and died?
3. In “Roots in the Sky,” the narrator says that memory is the ‘place of anchor’ where one can return to find the ties to their heritage when there is no traceable physical origin. Explain how the author presents memory as a means to establish a connection with one’s ancestors and heritage.
4. Do you believe “Roots in the Sky” is about cultural identity and how displaced groups acquire a feeling of belonging via shared experience and narrative, rather than to a specific geographical location? Substantiate.
5. Highlight case studies of specific displaced communities that have successfully passed down their cultural practices and knowledge.



Let us go ahead

Aggarwal, Saaz (ed). *Sindhi Tapestry: An anthology of reflections on Sindhi identity*. Black-And -White Foundation. Pune, 2021.

Lari, Suhail Zaheer. *A History of Sindh*. Oxford University Press, 1994.

Ajwani, L H. *History of Sindhi Literature*. Sahitya Akademi. New Delhi, 1960.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourist_Family

3

REFLECTING THE SELF



"Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom."

- Aristotle





Let us explore the unit

The unit explores the various ways in which individuals express, understand and reflect themselves through various modes of literature. We discover how emotions, thoughts and experiences shape human expression through genres such as poetry, short story, autobiography and prose. The unit is designed to reflect deeply on one's own sense of self and to observe, understand and appreciate the multiple selves that exist in society.

The unit comprises an essay:
“Dream-Children : A Reverie” by Charles Lamb,
a short story “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe,
a poem “The Red Poppy” by Louise Glück
and an excerpt, “The Princess”, from Living Smile
Vidya’s autobiography *I Am Vidya*.

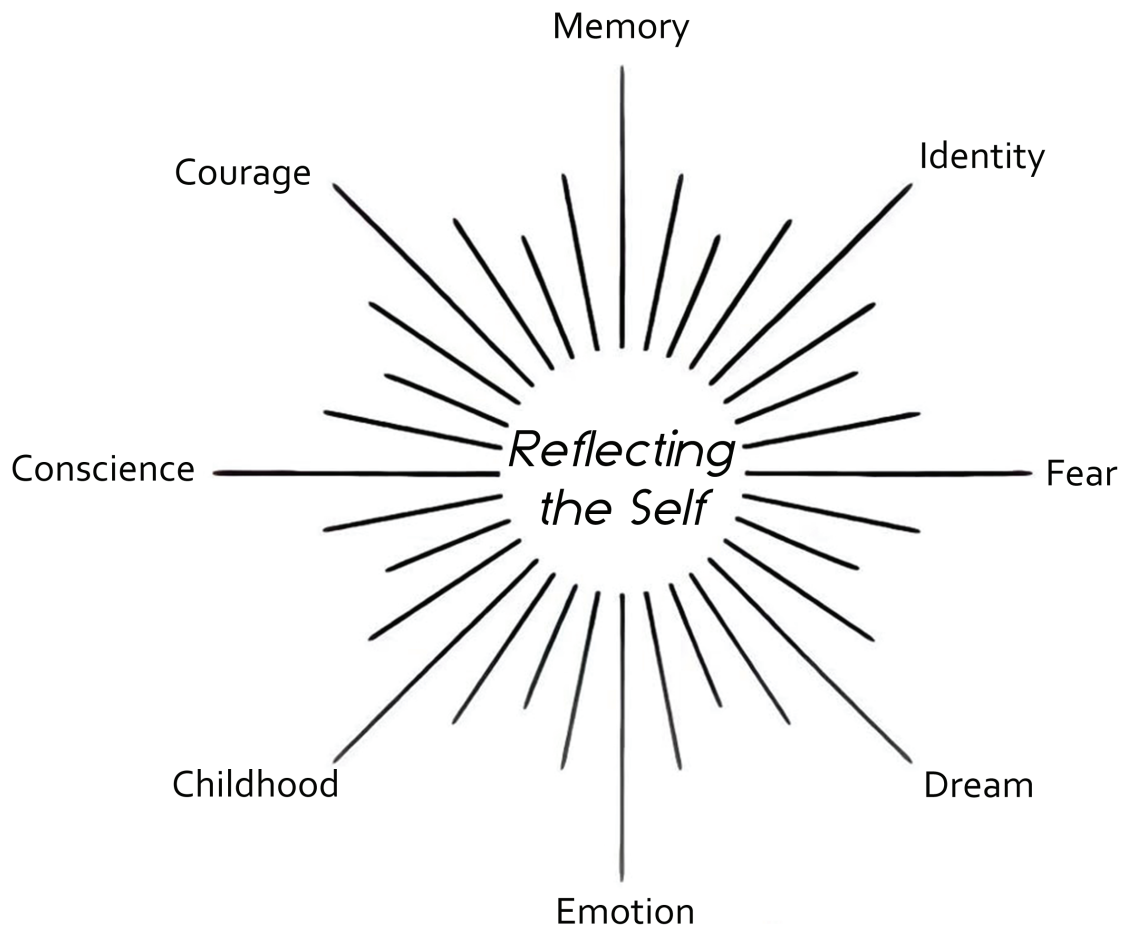
This unit also gives us the opportunity to express personal experience, emotion and identity. It nurtures creativity and communication skills which can lead to careers in Journalism, Creative writing, Script writing, Editing, Blogging, etc.





Let us begin

Now look at the image.



- Observe the individual rays. Read the individual words. Let us think about each of them.
- The terms reflect different aspects of our inner life. Attempt a brief note discussing how experiences, relationships and situations collectively shape an individual.

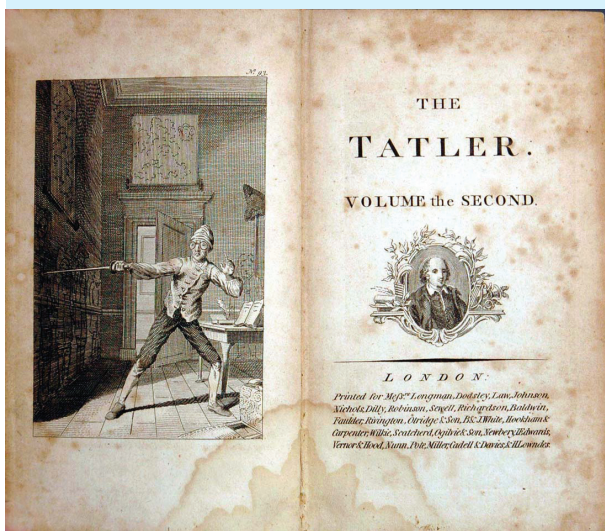


Before we begin

The genre, essay, originated in the late 16th century. The French writer Michel de Montaigne is regarded as the Father of the Modern Essays. His collection was titled as *Essais*. Montaigne's essays were influenced by classical writers especially Plutarch and Lucretius, whose works shaped his style of personal inquiry and observation.

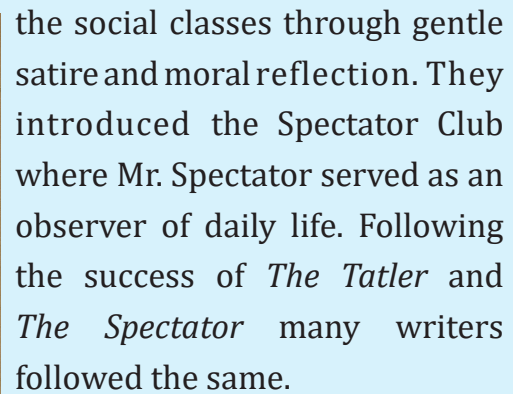
Francis Bacon is regarded as the Father of the English Essay. His essays introduced a new concise and intellectual style to English prose. One of the most notable features of Bacon's writings is his aphoristic style, where complex ideas are expressed through brief, memorable statements of truth. His essays present a structured, logical and didactic form of writing that aims at providing practical wisdom and moral guidance. Bacon rarely reveals his personal emotions or experiences in his writings. Through his style, Bacon set the foundation for the formal essay tradition in English literature.

The 18th century witnessed the rise of a new form of essay known as 'periodical essays' which focussed on the social, moral and cultural topics and appeared at regular intervals in journals and magazines. These essays were



written in simple conversational style making them highly popular among middle class readers. Richard Steele's *The Tatler* and the collaborative work of Steele and Joseph Addison in *The Spectator*, became the forerunners of this genre, setting the model for modern journalism. The periodical essays entertained and reformed public life and shaped the behaviour of





feelings about a particular subject. It often uses a personal story to illustrate deeper ideas. This type of essay is intimate and expressive. The tone is usually conversational, honest and emotionally engaging helping the reader connect to the writer.

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Let us know the author



Charles Lamb (1775–1834) was an English essayist and poet best known for *Essays of Elia* and the children's book *Tales from Shakespeare*, written with his sister, Mary Lamb. He was a clerk at the British East India Company for a long time. Mary had periods of mental illness and in a state of acute mania, she killed their mother. Declared a lunatic, she was spared imprisonment as Charles took full responsibility for her. The two had a great circle of friends including Coleridge and several others. Lamb's greatest legacy is his mastery of the English essay. Lamb's essays are known for their humour, simplicity and personal tone. His style is conversational and reflective which makes his writings appealing to readers.

Dream Children : A Reverie – An overview

"Dream Children : A Reverie" is a touching autobiographical essay that blends tender imagination and pathos with humour. In this piece, Lamb dreams of telling stories to his two children, Alice and John, who represent the family life he never had since he was in charge of his sister. Through gentle narration and subtle emotion, the essay explores memory, love and the power of dreams to comfort human longing. Lamb's conversational style, nostalgic tone and emotional depth make the essay a moving reflection of reality and imagination. The essay is written in a single paragraph because it is represented as a dream.

“

“Dreams are the touchstones of our characters.”
- Henry David Thoreau

”



Let us read and contemplate

Dream Children : A Reverie

Charles Lamb

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when they were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with' no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if someone were to carry away the old tombs they had



What do children love to listen to?

Where did the great-grandmother Field live?

Who are the two children the narrator speaks to ?



Why was great-grandmother Field admired and respected by everyone in the neighbourhood?

How does the narrator describe his great-grandmother's strength of mind and religious devotion?

What did Alice do when listening to the story of her great-grandmother's love of dance?

seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psalter by heart, aye, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm;" and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grand-children, having us to the great house in the holydays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I



had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavors of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grand-children, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L—, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterward



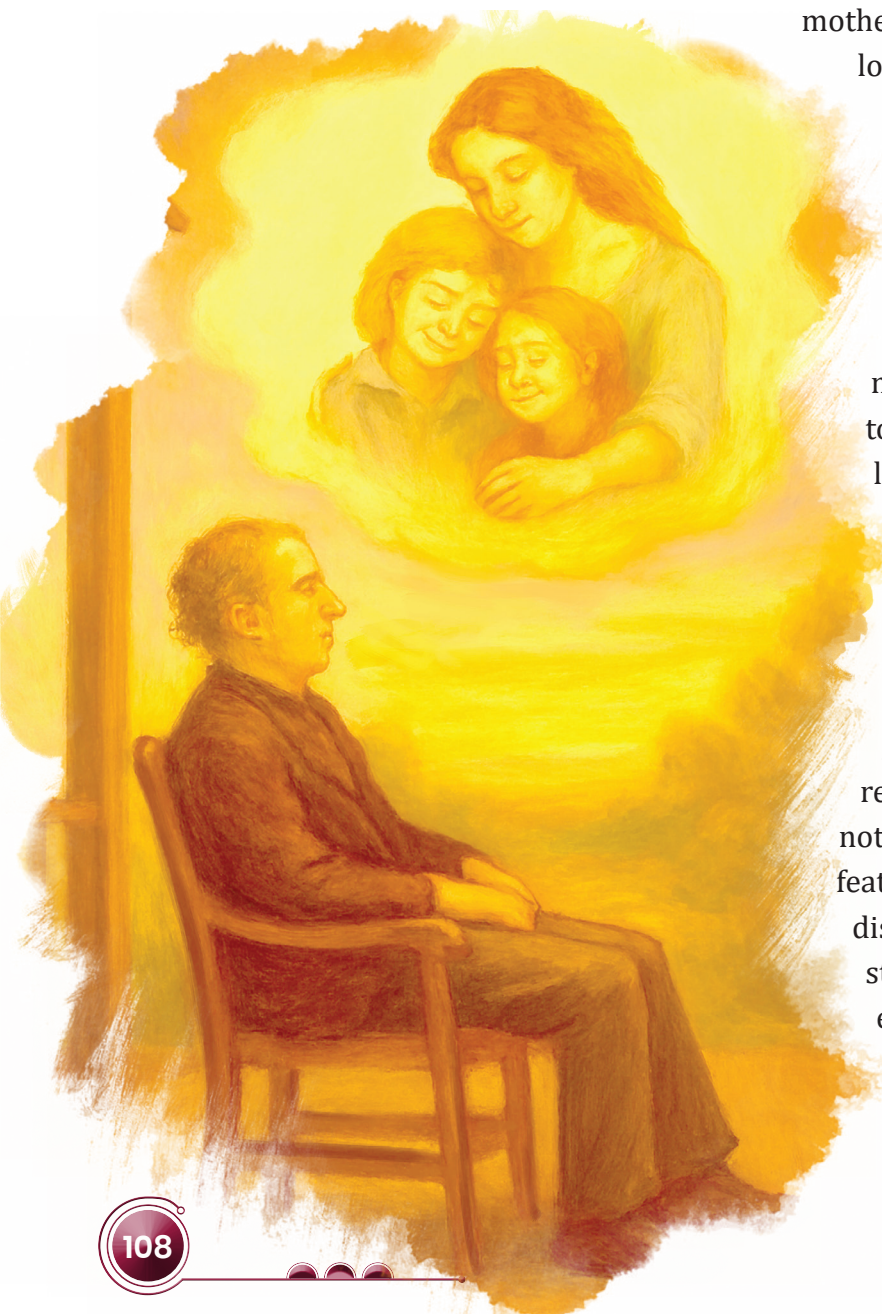
What memories do the narrator share about his own childhood and that of his brother, John L?

How do the children react to the stories of their elders' childhood?



it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarreling with him (for we quarreled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he, their poor uncle, must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty, dead

mother. Then I told them how for seven long years in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W——n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech; “We are not of



Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name"—and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone forever.

Source : *Essays of Elia* by Charles Lamb



What sudden change does the narrator notice in the appearance of the children at the end of his reverie?

How does the narrator respond when the children vanish from sight?

What does the narrator do on waking from his reverie?

How does the essay end?



Let us enrich

reverie /'revəri/	: a state of being pleasantly lost in one's thoughts; a daydream
grandame /'grændæm/	: archaic term for grandmother or an old woman or a female ancestor
ballad /'bæləd/	: a poem in the form of a folk song
upbraid /ʌp'breɪd/	: find fault with (someone); scold
abbey /'æbi/	: the building or buildings occupied by a community of monks or nuns.
psaltery /'sɔ:lt(ə)ri,'sɒlt(ə)ri/	: Book of Psalms in the Bible
apparition /,æpə'rɪʃn/	: a ghost or ghost like image
sulky /'sʌlki/	: bad-tempered on account of annoyance or resentment
impertinent /ɪm'pɜ:tɪnənt/	: not showing respect; rude
Lethe /'li:ði/	: a river in Hades whose waters cause drinkers to forget their past



Let us discuss

1. What does the narrator's admiration for grandmother Field suggest about his own values and character?
2. How does the description of the large old house contribute to the story's nostalgic and emotional tone?
3. How does the ending expose the narrator's deep-rooted loneliness and unfulfilled longing for a family?
4. To what extent does the story illustrate the human impulse to rewrite or idealise the past through memory?



Let us apply our thoughts

1. How are the central themes of unrealised love and lost family related to situations in contemporary life?
2. How is memory presented in the essay? How can we use memories to cope with loss or regret?
3. What would be your advice to the narrator to come to peace with his past?



Let us express ourselves

1. Discuss the role of nostalgia and memory in shaping the emotional tone of the narrative 'Dream-Children : A Reverie'.
2. 'Dream-Children : A Reverie' mixes real life and life of imagination. Discuss how the imaginary children reflect Lamb's personal feelings and desires.
3. Discuss how Charles Lamb blends humour and pathos in 'Dream-Children : A Reverie'.



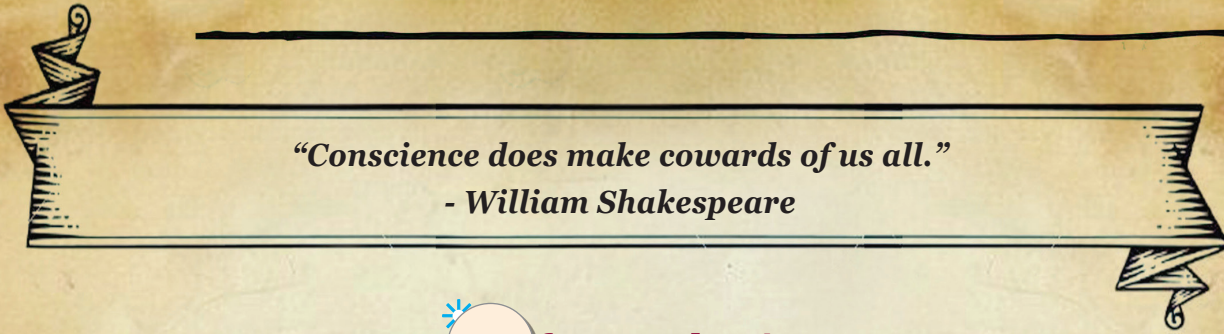
Let us go ahead

Hazlitt, William. "On Going on a Journey". *Table Talk*, London; John Warren, 1822.

Forster, E.M. "My Wood". *Two Cheers for Democracy*, London: Edward Arnold, 1951.

Narayan, R. K. "The Story-Teller". *Malgudi Days*, Chennai: Indian Thought Publications, 1943.





*"Conscience does make cowards of us all."
- William Shakespeare*



Before we begin

Gothic Fiction

Gothic fiction is a style of writing that presents dark dramatic settings and eerie sensational events to create an atmosphere of mystery, fear and suspense.

These stories involve melodramatic plots, strange occurrences and a sense of dread.

The genre emerged in the late 18th century.

***The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole is considered as the first of the kind.**

The term Gothic also refers to a style of architecture.





Let us know the author



Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) lost both his parents at a young age. He was adopted by John and Frances Allan, whose surname he took as his middle name. He wrote many well known poems and stories. His works include *Tamerlane and Other Poems* (1827), *Poems by Edgar A. Poe* (1831), *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1839), *The Raven and Other Poems* (1845). *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838) and *Eureka: A Prose Poem* (1848).

The Tell-Tale Heart : An Overview

The Tell-Tale Heart is one of Edgar Allan Poe's best-known short stories, first published in 1843. It is a chilling tale told by an unnamed narrator who insists on his sanity while describing how he murders an old man because of his 'vulture eye.' The plot focuses on the narrator's obsession with the old man's eyes, prompting a methodical murder plan over seven nights. He failed in his attempt seven times, as the old man's eyes remain closed. The narrator finally commits the murder by smothering the old man. He dismembers the body and conceals the pieces under the floorboards. A neighbour's report of a scream prompts the arrival of the police, thus escalating the situation. This incident leads to rising tension as the narrator, initially composed, invites the officers to sit above the concealed remains. As the narrative unfolds, the narrator's steady demeanour begins to unravel, tormented by the incessant auditory hallucination of the old man's heart. This sound serves as an unyielding reminder of the guilt that haunts him. Through suspense and with great psychological depth, Poe explores themes of guilt, madness and the dark side of human nature.



Let us read and contemplate

The Tell-Tale Heart

Edgar Allan Poe

TRUE!—nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed—not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in heaven and on the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily—how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

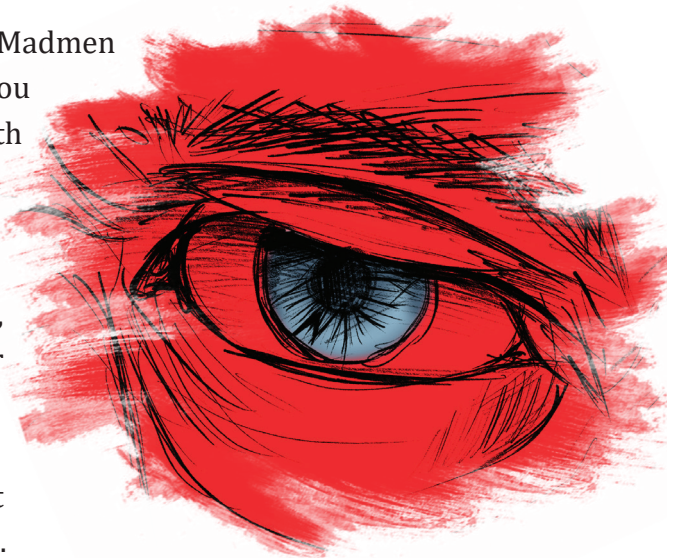
It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture—a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees—very gradually—I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye for ever.

Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded — with what caution — with what foresight — with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it — oh, so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head.



Why does the narrator want to kill the old man?

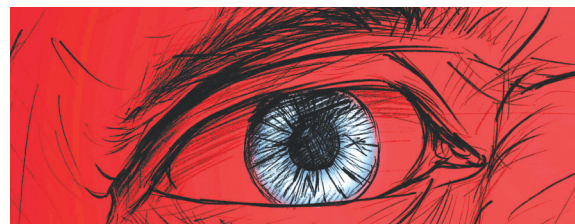
What is unusual about the old man's eye?





Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly—very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man’s sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Ha!—would a madman have been so wise as this? And then, when my head was well in the room, I undid the lantern cautiously—oh, so cautiously—cautiously (for the hinges creaked)—I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights—every night just at midnight—but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his Evil Eye. And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber, and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he had passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. A watch’s minute hand moves more quickly than did mine. Never before that night had I felt the extent of my own powers — of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. To think that there I was, opening the door, little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts. I fairly chuckled at the idea; and perhaps he heard me, for he moved on the bed suddenly, as if startled. Now you may think that I drew back — but no. His room was as black as pitch with the thick darkness (for the shutters were close fastened, through fear of robbers), and so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily.



At what time did the narrator enter the old man’s room each night?

What waked the old man on the eighth night?

I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in the bed, crying out—“Who’s there?”

I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime, I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed listening; just as I have done, night after night, hearkening to the death watches in the wall.



Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or of grief—oh, no!—it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound well. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted me. I say I knew it well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart. I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise, when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been ever since growing upon him. He had been trying to fancy them causeless, but could not. He had been saying to himself—“It is nothing but the wind in the chimney—it is only a mouse crossing the floor,” or “it is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp.” Yes, he has been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions; but he had found all in vain. All in vain; because Death, in approaching him, had stalked with his black shadow before him, and enveloped the victim. And it was the mournful influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel—although he neither saw nor heard—to feel the presence of my head within the room.



When I had waited a long time, very patiently, without hearing him lie down, I resolved to open a little—a very, very little crevice in the lantern. So I opened it—you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily—until, at length, a single dim ray, like the thread of the spider, shot from out the crevice and full upon the vulture eye.

It was open—wide, wide open—and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness—all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones; but I could see nothing else of the old man’s face or person: for I had directed the ray as if by instinct, precisely upon the damned spot.

And now have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the senses?—now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew that sound well too. It was the beating of the old man’s heart. It increased my fury, as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.



Why does the narrator open the lantern very slowly?

Which feature of the old man frightened the narrator the most?



Where does the narrator hide the old man's body?

What brought the police to the house?

But even yet I refrained and kept still. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless. I tried how steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eye. Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder every instant. The old man's terror must have been extreme! It grew louder, I say, louder every moment!—do you mark me well? I have told you that I am nervous; so I am. And now at the dead hour of the night, amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized me—the sound would be heard by a neighbor! The old man's hour had come! With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He shrieked once — once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done. But, for many minutes, the heart beat on with a muffled sound. This, however, did not vex me; it would not be heard through the wall. At length it ceased. The old man was dead. I removed the bed and examined the corpse. Yes, he was stone, stone dead. I placed my hand upon the heart and held it there many minutes. There was no pulsation. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more.

If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body. The night waned, and I worked hastily, but in silence. First of all, I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs.

I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye—not even his—could have detected any thing wrong. There was nothing to wash out—no stain of any kind—no blood-spot whatever. I had been too wary for that. A tub had caught all—ha! ha!

When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock—still dark as midnight. As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart,—for what had I now to fear? There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police.

A shriek had been heard by a neighbor during the night; suspicion of foul play had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises.

I smiled,—for what had I to fear? I bade the gentlemen welcome. The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I bade them search—search well. I led them, at length, to his chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.

The officers were satisfied. My manner had convinced them. I was singularly at ease. They sat, and while I answered cheerily, they chatted of familiar things. But, ere long, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears: but still they sat and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct:—it continued and became more distinct: I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling: but it continued and gained definitiveness—until, at length, I found that the noise was not within my ears.



Why do the officers fail to suspect the narrator at first?





What sound begins to disturb the narrator and how does it affect him?

What sound does the narrator believe he hears while talking to the police?

What finally makes the narrator confess?

No doubt I now grew very pale; — but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased—and what could I do? *It was a low, dull, quick sound—much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton.* I gasped for breath—and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly—more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations, but the noise steadily increased. Why would they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of the men—but the noise steadily increased. Oh God! what could I do? I foamed—I raved—I swore. I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder—louder—louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God!—no, no! They heard!—they suspected!—they knew!—they were making a mockery of my horror!—this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die!—and now—again!— hark! louder! louder! louder! louder!

“Villains!” I shrieked, “dissemble no more! I admit the deed!—tear up the planks!—here, here!—it is the beating of his hideous heart!

Source: <https://share.google/BrFvcxHlbcwJhQdXP>

Now let us browse and listen - https://youtu.be/M1GMvZelD_Y?si=0X9fmYrxaHaqDjtW



Let us enrich

- dissimulation /dɪˌsɪmjʊˈleɪʃn/ : concealment of one's thoughts, feelings or character
- vexed /vekst/ : (of a problem or issue) difficult and much debated
- sagacity /səˈgæsəti/ : having or showing good judgment, understanding and the ability to make sound decisions
- supposition /ˌsʌpəˈzɪʃn/ : a belief held without proof or certain knowledge; an assumption or hypothesis
- dismember /dɪsˈmembə(r)/ : (of a body) having the limbs cut off

suavity /'swɑ:vəti/ : the quality of being suave; graceful politeness
 dissemble /dr'sembl/ : conceal or disguise one's true feelings or beliefs



Let us discuss

1. Why does the narrator insist that he is not mad? What does this suggest about his mental health?
2. What does the 'vulture eye' symbolise?
3. Why does the narrator confess his crime, even when the police show no sign of suspicion?
4. How does the setting contribute to the mood of the story?



Let us apply our thoughts

1. Discuss the theme of guilt in "The Tell-Tale Heart".
2. 'The narrator is both a victim and a villain'. Discuss.
3. Discuss whether the narrator is insane or trying to justify his actions. Support your arguments with references from the text.
4. Discuss some of the psychological crimes you have come across in print and visual media.



Let us express ourselves

1. Describe the things that frighten you. How will you react to these? Write a short narrative.
2. Imagine the story from the perspective of the police officers. How would their version differ from the version of the narrator?



Let us go ahead

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *Young Goodman Brown*. Dover Publications, New York, 1992.

Bierce, Ambrose. *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*. Neale Publishing Company, New York, 1909.

“

*We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are.**- Anais Nin*

”



Before we begin

The Poppy

The poppy is a small plant known for its delicate vibrant silky flowers – commonly red and also in shades of orange, pink, white and purple. Despite its fragile appearance, the poppy grows in challenging environments, often blooming in disturbed or barren soil, symbolising resilience and renewal. Its striking colour and fleeting life span have made it an enduring image in literature and art. After World War I, it became a global emblem of remembrance, honouring soldiers who lost their lives in battle. In myth and folklore, the poppy is linked with sleep, dream and death.



Let us know the author



Louise^{*} Glück (1943-2023) was an influential American poet known for her precise language, emotional honesty, and exploration of themes such as family, loss, identity, and intimacy. Born in New York, she became widely acclaimed for her powerful yet restrained poetic voice, earning numerous awards including the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2020.

* The name of the poet is pronounced as Glick.

The Red Poppy : An Overview

Louise Glück's "The Red Poppy" is a contemplative and evocative poem that employs the voice of a poppy flower to articulate the themes of emotional vulnerability, consciousness and the tension between instinctive feeling and rational thought. Through the perspective of the flower, the poet invites readers to consider an existence guided by pure emotion rather than intellect.



Let us read and contemplate

The Red Poppy

Louise Glück

The great thing
is not having
a mind. Feelings:
oh, I have those; they
govern me. I have
a lord in heaven
called the sun, and open
for him, showing him
the fire of my own heart, fire
like his presence.
What could such glory be
if not a heart? Oh my brothers and sisters,
were you like me once, long ago,
before you were human? Did you
permit yourselves
to open once, who would never
open again? Because in truth
I am speaking now
the way you do. I speak
because I am shattered.



Source : <https://share.google/yriSL8lTHYA9IANuo>



Let us enrich

red poppy /ˌɛd 'pɒpi/ : the red poppy flower, also known as the *Papaver rhoeas*
 shattered /'ʃætəd/ : utterly upset, distraught



Let us discuss

1. What does the speaker claim as “the great thing”?
2. What governs the speaker more than the mind?
3. Who is the “lord in heaven”?
4. What does the speaker compare the “fire of my own heart” to?
5. Why does the speaker say, “I speak because I am shattered”?
6. What does the poem suggest about feelings and rational thoughts?
7. Why does the speaker refer to the sun as ‘lord in heaven’?
8. How does the poet use imagery to enhance emotional intensity?



Let us apply our thoughts

1. How might a person’s actions differ if they rely more on feelings than on reason?
2. If you were the Poppy addressing the sun, how would you express your inner emotions?
3. If you are asked to illustrate this poem, what images and colours would you select to capture the mood of the poem?



Let us express ourselves

Discuss how “The Red Poppy” explores the contrast between emotion and intellect through the voice of a flower.



Let us go ahead

Plath, Sylvia. “Tulips”. *Ariel*. Faber & Faber, London, 1965

Hughes, Ted. “Snowdrop”. *Wodwo*. Faber & Faber, London, 1967

“

*“Not everything that is faced can be changed;
but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”*

- James Baldwin

”



Before we begin

Social acceptance is essential in an inclusive and democratic society. A democratic society needs to recognise the rights, identity and dignity of every individual irrespective of gender, caste, religion or any background. In India, a significant milestone in this regard was the 2014 verdict of the Supreme Court of India in National Legal Services Authority versus Union of India (NALSA case) which legally recognised transgender persons as “a third gender” and affirmed their fundamental rights under the constitution. The verdict highlighted the principles of equality and non-discrimination while affirming the right of individuals to identify their gender thereby marking a significant stride towards social justice. However, legal recognition is not enough; true social acceptance requires changes in attitude, education, employment opportunities and everyday interaction. Constitutional ideals can be fully realised only when society embraces diversity with empathy and respect.



Let us know the author



Living Smile Vidya, popularly known as ‘Smiley’, a trans activist who is also an actress and writer born in India in 1982. Vidya is the first trans woman in the Tamil film industry. The autobiography *I am Vidya*, has been translated into six languages and has received wide appreciation. Smiley later moved to Switzerland and collaborated with various artists.

The Princess : An Overview

“The Princess” is the third part of her deeply moving autobiography *I am Vidya*. Here Vidya recounts the experiences as a young trans woman struggling to find dignity, identity and acceptance in a difficult world.



Let us read and contemplate

The Princess

Living Smile Vidya

I am the princess,
A fresh new rose.
Will my dream come true?

The radio was playing the popular film song and I was dancing to the tune, wearing Manju's Indian skirt. At six or seven, I didn't fully understand the meaning of the words, but I enjoyed their lilt and tenderness. I was at my grandmother's house on Attumanthai Street. My father's two younger brothers and two sisters lived there as well. I usually locked myself inside once all of them had gone out, put on girls' clothes and sang and danced. I loved it.

As thrilling as dancing was pirouetting at a rapid pace and sitting down with force so that the long skirt spread out like a lotus, on which I then seemed to be seated.

When I was spinning round and round one day with just such exhilarating abandon, my grandmother, who had gone out, came back into the house. 'Oh my God,' she blurted out.

'Look at this madness. Girls, come and see what this boy is up to.' Grandma probably thought I was doing some playful imitation. Hardly did she know the true story, did she?

In Bhupesh Gupta Nagar we had no television, because we had no electricity. Every home had a portable transistor radio, however, and we too had a Philips. Sometimes, when I had finished my homework, and thought he was in a rare good mood, I begged Appa for permission to go and watch TV at my Chitappa's house on Attumanthai Street.

'Okay, just for half an hour,' Appa would say. 'You must come back and study. You must show the same interest in studies that you have in watching TV. Understand?' Permission was always accompanied by bullying!



What was the six or seven year old narrator doing when the radio played a popular song?

To what does Vidya compare her spread out skirt when she sat down after a spin?

Where did Vidya go to watch television?

Instantly, Radha, Manju and I ran to Chitappa's* house. That was the pre-cable TV era. The treat that awaited us was the famous song and dance sequence programme, or sometimes the Sunday movie on Doordarshan.

Chitappa's house was not a thatched hut like ours: it was a tiled house, which had now grown into a two-storey building. It had electricity; it had fans; it had a TV. We often went there with Appa's half-hearted permission, or occasionally by giving him the slip, to sit in front of the idiot box in a trance, to watch 'Oliyum Oliyum' or 'Light and Sound' the film song sequence programme we were ready to die for.

I loved cinema. I loved the charisma of the heroes, their style, their majesty and their valour. However, what attracted me most and caused me painful yearning was the beauty of the leading ladies: I adored their sweet Tamil, and their gait. When watching, I floated in an imaginary world in which I blushed as they did, danced and wooed their heroes as they did, expressed anger as they did. Once I emerged from the dream and re-entered the real world, I masqueraded as the heroines, dressing and walking around like them.

In this, I was aided and abetted by my sister Manju's skirts and midis, her eyeshadow, bangles, bindis and costume jewels. Lipstick was easily replicated by applying coconut oil to my lips and rubbing it in repeatedly. Long, plaited hair was an altogether different issue, but I knew how to overcome that problem too: just spread a thin cotton towel-a large kerchief, really (the kind that is common among ordinary folk, and not like Turkish towels) on your head like a veil, not covering the forehead, and twirl the long rear portion as if it were covering a pigtail. Worn this way, you could easily pass as a girl drying her hair after a shower.

Though I indulged in my antics in careful secrecy, I got caught in the act sometimes. My family did not take it too seriously in the beginning. They put it down to the innocent pranks

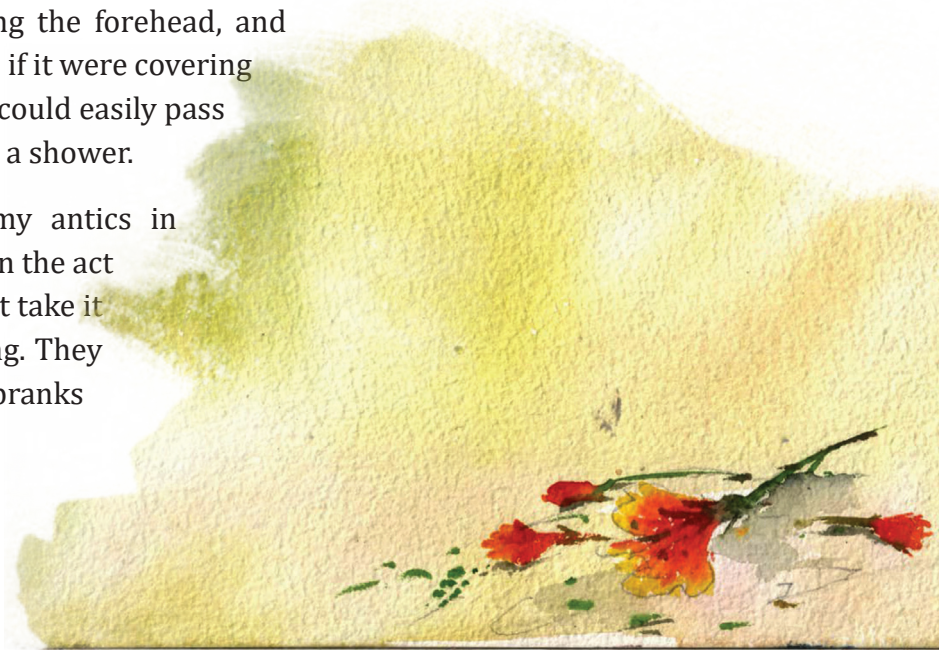


What conditions did Appa usually impose when giving permission to watch TV?

How was Chitappa's house different from Vidya's house?

What did Vidya admire about the leading women in cinema?

*Chitappa is pronounced in Tamil as /tʃiθappa:/





of a child and scolded me occasionally, but they saw no cause for alarm at the time.

Our hut in Bhupesh Nagar had two parts, like two dwellings. The first one had a small, doorless room—it was a kitchen-cum-bedroom with two mud-stoves and a cot. The store room had a rice barrel, a wooden almirah with vessels, water cans and a loft. The ‘second’ house was a single room in which we had a cupboard and a trunk containing our clothes. There was a central thatched portion, with a broad pyol or thinnai, with a bathroom next to it. The entrance to each portion faced the others to form a kind of circle, and in the middle was the main door. Between the middle and big portions was a footpath.

We children slept on the cot in the kitchen.

The three of us were reading our schoolbooks, still huddled under our blankets one cold morning, when a young man from our neighbourhood came running into our house. Obviously tense, he asked Appa and all of us to go with him. We didn’t know what it was all about, but it was obviously bad news.

Soon we were at the government hospital. Amma, when leaving for work, had met with an accident, and her condition was said to be serious. When the ambulance arrived, she appeared to be peacefully asleep.

It had been such a quiet morning at home. By noon, it was filled with relatives and our neighbours. In the midst of the wails and laments of the mourners, Amma was laid out on a cot in front of the house, where Radha and Manju sat at her feet. They were both weeping. Appa must have been crying in some corner— I couldn’t find him, but I knew he could not bear the loss of Amma. For all that he terrorized her, kicked her and beat her, she was the strong one in the family. She had great willpower. She might have looked like a fool to accept all the taunts and beatings, but she thought domestic problems should not be taken to the street. Her dignity was something everyone had come to recognize. People approached her with respect.

It was she who lay there. I was at an age when I did not fully comprehend the extent of our loss. I wanted to cry; I cried. People trying to comfort me seemed to cry even more. They hugged me more than they normally did and wept.



Who informed the family about Amma’s accident?

How did Appa treat Amma when she was alive?



'Poor boy, poor boy.' They were overflowing with sympathy for me.

I stayed there for a while, then got up quietly. I felt no one would take any notice of me whatever I did, so I went into the middle house, put on one of Manju's skirts, shut the door and started to dance.

I am the king's daughter,
A fresh new rose.
Will my dreams come true?

I danced for a long time-I cannot remember how long. Sensing the gaze of someone looking at me, I turned to find Fathima Akka peering through the window. She was about Manju's age, and lived on our street.

'Yuck! Look at Saravanan. He's dancing wearing a girl's clothes,' she cried.

Now the story was out in the open.

'What are you doing, dancing like a girl at such an unhappy time?' Appa slapped me.

In the evening, Amma was carried out into the street in the midst of all the chaos. Our next-door neighbour, Balammakka, carried me on her waist. All the mourners stopped at the end of the street while the pall bearers went ahead, carrying Amma. The crowd blocked my view, so Balammakka lifted me high enough to watch Amma wend away. I was in a panic, trembling, asking 'where's Amma going?' and realizing she would never come back.

A home without Amma-me without Amma: impossible; a terrible betrayal.

'Amma, Amma, I want you! Please leave me alone! I want Amma!' My screams pierced the neighbourhood.

I hadn't cried since the morning.

My father's second wife, our Chithi, joined us within a year of Amma's death. The year after that, my new sister, Prabha, was born.



Who noticed Vidya (Saravanan) dancing and how did she react ?

Who carried Vidya to the funeral of her Amma?

There was as yet no major change in my habits, but I started noticing a difference in the way people approached me—the way they looked at me. My old ways — the same habits which had been dismissed lightly as childish pranks—were now viewed with disfavour. Chithi and Radha scolded me for my acts, and Appa thrashed me regularly.

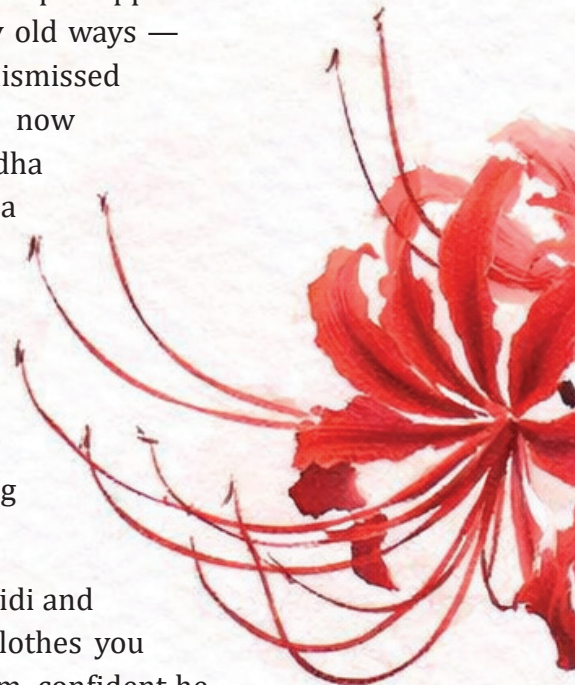
‘What’s wrong with my preferences? Why should a boy only wear shirts and trousers? I like skirts and blouses. Why can’t I wear them? Why do people find something odd in what comes to me naturally?’

Once I asked Appa to buy me a midi and a gown. ‘Please buy me the same clothes you buy for Radha and Manju, I asked him, confident he would oblige. He normally indulged my whims so long as I did my best in my studies, so I wasn’t prepared for the terrible beating that followed.

Deciding it was unsafe to wear a skirt and dance, I enjoyed other pleasures in private. One activity I liked was wrapping a towel all the way up my chest, just as film heroines did in bathing scenes-I started doing that regularly, preening myself in front of a mirror.

Gradually, both family and neighbours started noticing my unusual behaviour. My habits of wearing drag, bathing with the towel wrapped around my chest, tying a towel around my head to dry my imaginary long hair all this was now public knowledge. My voice was still soft and effeminate, and I tended to blush, gesture and walk like a woman, too. All this only added to my problems.

People were mostly sympathetic, as I was a motherless child and a good student. Some of them teased me regularly. Rasalu Akka, who lived nearby, repeatedly made fun of me, calling me a sissy, or ‘girly’. Actually, I didn’t mind being called ‘girly’-- it gave me a secret thrill. When I walked down the street, youngsters started teasing me: ‘Look at the nattamai’s son. He walks like a female!’



The teasing did not hurt me. On the contrary, it pleased me. It made me happy to know that at least some onlookers understood what I was feeling.

Other boys played the usual boys' games with marbles, tops and kites, but I preferred to join the girls at their games—generally board games like dayakattam (the Indian version of Chinese checkers) and pallanguzhi. I loved playing girls' games and being one of them.

I liked being with the girls from my class—Kanmani, Kavita, Amritavalli and Indumati—more than I enjoyed the company of the boys of my school—that of Chezhan, Vijay and Kumaresan. At school, I was known as a nerd, Appurani and a coward. All the girls I have mentioned here were good students. In particular, I had special respect for Amritavalli. She resembled the Tamil movie star of yesteryear, K. R. Vijaya. I liked her thick double plaits and her smile—though I cannot deny some envy of her. We once had a dance contest during lunch break, wherein we both danced on numbers we knew. The students who watched us thought mine was the better performance. Their appreciation gave me the perverse satisfaction of winning a point over Amritavalli.

On another occasion, my friends from our street and I staged a mock play, in which I performed a snake dance in imitation of Sripriya in the film *Neeya* (a box office hit of the time). I was already enamoured of a career as a film heroine.

When I was in the eighth grade, Radha got married. It was a shattering blow. She had been everything to me after Amma's death.

Chithi tried to comfort me: 'Don't cry,' she said, 'Akka still lives nearby.' She was right, of course. So why did I miss Akka so much? I had no answer.

I went to the Puttur Fathima Middle School earlier, and moved to Bishop Heber in ninth grade. Bishop Heber was a boys' school that went all the way to grade twelve.



What games did Vidya (Saravanan) prefer to play?

Why did Vidya admire Amritavalli?



My effeminate ways—hitherto an object of ridicule on my street—now became the target of my schoolmates’ taunts. Even kids from lower classes teased me at school: ‘Look at this lady,’ they shouted after me. It became quite common for the boys to trouble me. I was still a bright student, but I was lonely through high school. My studies began to suffer.

Adults were no better. My effeminate speech and behaviour, the fact that I preferred the company of girls, drew out the worst in them—they, like my schoolmates, started using my femininity as an excuse to insult me. It made me wary of the external world and increased my loneliness. I retreated to a world of my own creation. My sessions of dancing to the radio in drag continued, but extremely carefully—with great secrecy.

I passed my tenth grade exams with 84% marks. For eleventh, my father put me in a different school—another branch of Bishop Heber near Rock Fort, Tiruchi. It was another boys’ school.

The new school and new atmosphere were even more unfriendly than the old. I had no friends; no one to share my likes and dislikes; no one to understand me. On the contrary, there was no shortage of taunts and jibes.

Even though I was extra careful not to reveal myself, my irrepressible femininity exposed me. Once again, I became an object of ridicule, and inevitably my studies were affected. For example, we stood in a definite order for the prayer assembly, and my usual place was between seventh and tenth in my class. One day I happened to be in the ninth place, and a classmate immediately pounced on the coincidence (the number nine is the offensive epithet in Tamil for eunuchs or transgenders).

‘Saravana, You are Nine, isn’t that why you are standing ninth?’ he jeered.

Everyone laughed—I felt humiliated. After that, I was ever watchful not to stand in the ninth position at the assembly. I made sure every time that I was a different number, and only then did I breathe a sigh of relief.

Crude puns were invented by my classmates to scribble with my name on the blackboard—for instance, adding the suffix ‘ali’, a



colloquialism for eunuchs, to regular Tamil words to describe me. Some such were padippaali and uzhaippaali. The word padippaali in Tamil means a learned person, and the word uzhaippaali an industrious person. Often when we returned after lunch to the classroom, the blackboard would carry such graffiti as 'Saravanan the padippali' or 'Saravanan the uzhaippali'--the shortening of the vowel giving the word an offensive twist. The whole class would burst into laughter as soon as we entered the room. I cursed them all and wiped the blackboard clean with a duster. The class took this opportunity to chorus 'nalla ali,' punning on 'nalla azhi,' which meant, 'Wipe the board well.'

This type of torment was a regular occurrence. Once, while removing one insult or another, I flung the duster in sheer frustration and disgust, hitting the Natural Science teacher. He tweaked my ear and made me scrape my knees on the floor.

I had to grin and bear it. What else could I do, if this was my destiny?

The constant ridicule made school intolerable, and soon it became impossible to walk on the street as well. I was now completely alone. To make matters worse, Manju got married and moved out, pushing me deeper into solitude.

Me and my loneliness—all the company I had. Chithi's daughter, my sister Prabha, was my only consolation.

Since my childhood I had been cuddled and petted by everyone. My little sister was my first experience of petting a child. Playing with her, teasing her and mock-fights with her soon became my favourite pastimes.

When I was in the twelfth, we heard that someone had bought the poramboke land on which our house and the other dwellings of Bhupesh Gupta Nagar stood. The new buyer came to our street and staked his claim to our land. People who had been living there for twenty years were in no mood to vacate--they started an agitation.

As a consequence of the struggle, we were allotted land afresh in an area called Uyyakondan Tirumalai.



How did the graffiti by classmates insult Vidya?

What kind of ridicule did Vidya face regularly at school in Tiruchi?

What made Vidya feel completely alone?



While waiting for our new house to be constructed, we rented a house at Somarasampettai for a year.

My boyhood obsession with film heroines and my secret pleasure in cross-dressing to look like them intensified at this point rather than being reduced. I was seventeen—no amount of teasing could make me behave differently by then. On the contrary, I began to comfort myself that my detractors were only poking fun at my effeminate ways because I felt like a woman inside—because I wanted to be a woman.

I was growing up to be an intelligent young person. Approaching the issue in a smarter way than before, I realized that wearing obviously feminine clothes was a problem.

The solution lay in unisex clothes. Combinations like kurtas or other neutral tops and jeans were common to both sexes, so I started wearing such outfits. Watching film stars like Meena, Roja, Nagma and Rambha prattle away sweetly at TV interviews became a singular delight for me, and I mentally rehearsed play-acting as these stars.

A river ran close to our home at Somarasampettai, in which I regularly bathed and washed clothes at seven in the morning. It was actually no more than a canal, but it was sufficiently deep and clean. On the bank were steps where it was convenient to sit while washing. I enjoyed the quiet solitude of these rituals there on the river bank. The isolation gave me the freedom to indulge my fancies; it awakened my feminine sensibilities enough to make me want to dance. In my imagination, I danced every time I bathed or washed clothes on those steps. Wrapping my towel around me, I swam in the canal and visualized a hero grabbing me in the water.

This is how I met my friend Ilango.

I was generally reserved with men. My innate shyness, coupled with the fear that they might notice my difference and begin to harass me, kept me aloof for the most part.

Ilango owned a dairy business. Light skinned, he had a bushy moustache, a pleasant smile and dignified good looks. He washed his milk can and his clothes in the river at the same time I went there. I could see him approach the bank from my house.

Initially, I avoided him when he tried to strike up a conversation. I was irritated he was snatching my quiet peace and my freedom, yet Ilango continued to converse with me like a good friend. He mixed freely with me and never made fun of my naïve, effeminate speech; he talked to me about the girl he loved, and the beautiful girls he encountered at bus stops and in buses.

Every time he spoke to me of such things, I was thrilled at the thought of the many men who might enjoy looking at me so.

It made me blush, all right, but I cannot deny those thoughts of mine. As the days progressed, I started wishing Ilango would feast on me the way he enjoyed watching other girls. I became eager to win his love, and started staying at the river until he was ready to leave, bathing long enough to return home with him. On the rare occasions when he was late or did not come to the river at all, I was dejected.

I thought then that what I felt for Ilango was neither love nor lust—Ilango was the man who kindled in me the kind of changes that occur in a woman at different stages of her development.

Ilango was the man who made me feel whole as a woman.

Source: <https://share.google/QnDR8Q63Pb7x5CQ8k>



Why did Vidya avoid Ilango at first?

What business did Ilango own?

How did Ilango influence Vidya?





Let us enrich

pirouette /ˌpɪruˈet/	: an act of spinning on one foot (usually in ballet)
masquerade /ˌmæskəˈreɪd/	: pretend to be someone else
whim /wɪm/	: a sudden desire or change of mind, especially one that is unusual or unexplained
preen /priːn/	: groom or admire oneself
effeminate /ɪˈfemɪnət/	: having feminine qualities
taunt /tɔːnt/	: a remark made in order to anger, wound or provoke someone
graffiti /grəˈfiːti/	: writing or drawings scribbled, scratched or sprayed illicitly on a wall
prattle /ˈprætl/	: a lot of talk about unimportant things
cross-dress /ˌkrɒsˈdres/	: wear clothing typical of the other sex



Let us discuss

1. Describe how Vidya imitated the appearance of heroines in the films.
2. How did Amma's death affect Vidya?
3. How did Vidya cope with the constant ridicule and growing loneliness she faced both at school and at home?
4. What kind of emotional awakening did Ilango arouse in Vidya and how was this significant in her self-discovery?



Let us apply our thoughts

1. Vidya's fascination with cinema plays a major role in her self-discovery. Discuss various artifacts that shape the human self.
2. 'Society refuses to accept anything that does not fit its norms.' Substantiate the statement.



Let us express ourselves

Imagine you are a film director planning to make a film based on Vidya's autobiographical piece, "The Princess." Prepare a script for the same.



Let us go ahead

Revathi, A. *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*. Penguin, India. 2010.

Tripathi, Laxmi Narayan. *Me Hijra, Me Laxmi*. Oxford University Press, Oxford. 2015.

4

GREEN IMAGINATION

Let us explore the unit

Literature, which reflects human experiences, emotions and struggles, plays a powerful role in shaping our awareness of the natural world. Eco-literature explores the relationship between humans and nature.

It examines the impact of our actions on the environment and in turn, how nature affects our lives, cultures and imagination.

This unit introduces us to a range of texts — a poem “Trophic Cascade” by Camille T. Dungy and two short stories, “E is for E-waste” by Ellen Banda Aaku and “To Build a Fire” by Jack London.

Through these readings, we can understand how writers use imagery, emotions and storytelling to highlight environmental concerns and inspire a sense of responsibility towards the Earth. This unit strengthens interdisciplinary thinking. Eco-literature stands at the intersection of literature, ecology, psychology, ethics, sociology and politics and connect textual analysis with real world issues, developing the ability to blend scientific facts with human insight. This ability to think across disciplines will prove especially valuable in the future: in fields as diverse as environmental studies, journalism, education, communication and sustainable development.



Let us begin

The Calvaria Tree in Mauritius known as the Dodo Tree was on the brink of extinction due to the extinction of the Dodo bird, because the seeds were required to pass through the digestive tract of Dodos for their hard coats to be scarified for germination. Due to the bird's extinction the population of Calvaria declined and hence its imminent extinction. The endangered and vulnerable species of animals, plants and fungi are included in the Red Data Book.

Let us identify any five animals and plants listed in the Red Data Book.

Let us collect the details of plants and animals that were once seen everywhere but now are rarely seen.



“In nature nothing exists alone.” - Rachel Carson

Before we begin

- Coelacanth /'si:ləkænθ/, a prehistoric fish thought to have become extinct with the dinosaurs, was rediscovered alive in 1938 off the coast of South Africa. This became one of the most surprising discoveries in recent times.
- In India and Africa, community led conservation has proven quite effective. Villagers in Gir protect Asiatic Lions, Bishnois' save Blackbucks and Chinkaras and the Maasai tribe in Kenya guards their lions.
- In the early 70's the tiger population in India was declining at an alarming rate. Many Indian school children deeply affected by this information wrote heartfelt letters to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi pleading the cause of the tigers. Moved by the sincerity of these letters the PM felt that protecting the tiger was a moral responsibility. A movement titled Project Tiger was initiated.



Let us know the author



Camille T. Dungy (1972-) is a contemporary American poet whose works explore her deep connection with nature, history, and her sense of identity and motherhood. Her works merge personal experience with ecological awareness, showing how the human world is intertwined with the natural world and this led her to edit *Black Nature: Four Centuries of African American Nature Poetry*, the first anthology to bring African American environmental poetry to worldwide attention. Her notable works are *Smith Blue* (2011), *Trophic Cascade* (2017) and *Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden* (2023). Dungy is the author of four collections of poetry, and *Trophic Cascade* won the Colorado Book Award.

Trophic Cascade : An overview

Trophic Cascade vividly describes how natural harmony was restored when the wolves returned to the Yellowstone National Park in 1995. The poet's identity as a mother reshapes everything around her, just as wolves reshape the entire ecosystem at the Yellowstone National Park.

Gray Wolves are large carnivores that hunt in packs and have declined in numbers due to hunting and habitat loss.

Yellowstone National Park is the first national park in the world established in 1872. The park is famous for its geysers, hot springs, waterfalls, forests, and wild life.

Songbirds are birds that produce musical sounds or songs. They are mainly passerines or perching birds (nightingales, robins, canaries).

Trophic comes from the Greek word 'trophe' means food. In ecology trophic denotes the feeding relationship in an ecosystem.



Let us read and contemplate

TROPHIC CASCADE

Camille T. Dungy

After the reintroduction of gray wolves
To Yellowstone and, as anticipated, their culling
Of deers, trees grew beyond the deer stunt
Of the mid century. In their upreach
Song birds nested, who scattered
Seed for underbush, and in that cover
warrened snowshoe hare. Weasel and water shrew
returned, also vole, and came soon hawk
and falcon, bald eagle, kestrel, and with them
hawk shadow, falcon shadow. Eagle shade
and kestrel shade haunted newly-berried
runnels where mule deer no longer rummaged, cautious
as they where, now, of being surprised by wolves. Berries
brought bear, while undergrowth and willows, growing
now right down to the river, brought beaver,
who dam. Muskrats came to the dams, and tadpoles.



Came, too, the night song of the fathers
of tadpoles. With water striders, the dark
gray American dipper bobbed in fresh pools
of the river, and fish stayed, and the bear, who
fished, also culled deer fawns and to their kill scrapes
came vulture and coyote, long gone in the region
until now, and their scat scattered seed, and more
trees, bush, and berries grew up along the river
that had run straight and so flooded but this dammed,
compelled to meander, is less prone to overrun. Don't
you tell me this is not the same as my story. All this
life born from one hungry animal, this whole,
new landscape, the course of the river changed,
I know this. I reintroduced myself to myself, this time
a mother. After which, nothing was ever the same.

Source - <https://www.scribd.com/document/757925216/Eco-Scapes>



Let us enrich

cascade /kæ'skeɪd/	: a continuous flow of events like water in waterfall
weasel /'wiːzəl/	: a small thin carnivorous animal
kestrel /'kes.trəl/	: a small falcon - like bird
runnels /'rʌnəlz/	: small streams or tiny channels of water
rummaged /'rʌmɪdʒd/	: search in a hurried way
water striders /'wɔːtə ,straɪdəz/	: tiny insects that glide on water
American dipper /ə'merɪkən 'dɪpə(r)/	: a small bird that lives near mountain streams and rivers
coyote /kəɪ'əʊti/	: a wild member of the dog family
dammed /dæmd/	: blocked



Let us discuss

1. Which animal was reintroduced in the Yellowstone National Park?
2. Who culled deer fawns?
3. Name some birds that returned as a result of the 'Trophic Cascade'?
4. Who sang the night song?
5. Who is 'reintroduced' into the mother at the end of the poem?
6. Explain the change in the Yellowstone National Park with the reintroduction of Gray Wolves.
7. Comment on the significance of the title 'Trophic Cascade'.
8. Nature has an ability to restore itself when balance returns. Analyse this statement, from your understanding of the poem.
9. How does the poet compare the return of Gray Wolves to her own experience of becoming a mother?



Let us apply our thoughts

1. Apply the poet's idea of interconnectedness to explain an environmental issue in your locality.
2. Attempt a short note on how literature can influence environmental awareness using the poet's blend of scientific fact and personal emotion.
3. Can the ideas of the poem "Trophic Cascade" be applied to the effects of human intervention in nature today. Explain.



Let us express ourselves

1. Create a photo story or digital artwork titled 'The Chain of Renewal' showing the link between wildlife, water and human responsibility for the environment.
2. Attempt a short story inspired by the poem.
3. Make a collage inspired by the poem "Trophic Cascade".



Let us go ahead

1. <https://wildlife-biodiversity.com/index.php/jwb/index>
Vol. 9 No. 3 (2025): Journal of Wildlife and Biodiversity
2. <https://www.justwatch.com/in/movie/nilgiris-a-shared-wilderness>
3. Nilgiris A shared wilderness — Sandesh Kadur

Before we begin

- Basel Convention : regulates the international movement of hazardous waste. Many countries still illegally export e-waste to poorer nations.
- **Repair, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle** are the **four R mantra** which can significantly reduce waste. In the case of e-waste, **Refurbishment** is used instead of **Reuse**.
- Agbogbloshie* in Ghana is called a 'digital graveyard' – a dumping ground for the world's electronic trash.
- Repair Culture Box: In Japan broken objects are repaired with honour. In India, we often replace them. Which choice saves the planet?

In our rapidly changing world, technology is an inseparable part of our daily life and each device we use has a hidden story - that begins with brilliance and ends in a heap of discarded toxic waste. Writings that deal with environmental concerns and e-waste management have emerged as powerful themes that reflect the anxieties of our age.



Let us know the author



Ellen Banda-Aaku (1965-) is a Zambian author and producer, was born in the UK and grew up in Zambia. Her first children's book, *Wandi's Little Voice*, earned her the Macmillan Writer's Prize for Africa (2004). Banda won the Commonwealth Short Story Competition with her short story, "Sozi's Box". *Patchwork*, (2007) is her first adult novel. It won her the Penguin Prize for African writing (2010) and was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Book Prize (2012). Banda-Aaku conducts creative writing workshops across Africa and is a prominent voice in African Literature.

E is for E - Waste : An overview

E is for E-Waste highlights the growing menace of electronic waste and its hazardous effect on the environment. The story is viewed through the eyes of a young school boy, whose life is shaped not only by the toxic heaps, but also by the emotional tensions within his home. The lesson highlights the idea that, like nature, human emotions require care, attention and responsibility.

*Agbogbloshie is pronounced as egg-bo-BLOH-shee



“Technology is a useful servant but a dangerous master.”

- Christian Lous Lang



Let us read and contemplate

E is for E-Waste

Ellen Banda-Aaku

‘Saku, even you can write an assignment about the ways to save the planet’.

That’s what Mr North our class teacher said to me as he handed out the homework assignment to the class. Imagine that? He said, “Saku, even you,” which suggested that even a dimwit like me can write an assignment on ways to save our planet.

Now, the whole class knows Mr North and his smart mouth. We know he says things to provoke us to prove him wrong. So I really shouldn’t have minded what he said. But, I did.

You see, Mr North said it in front of Tasha. She’s a new girl in my class, with dimpled cheeks and bushy eyebrows. Ever since she walked into our classroom, and Mr North introduced her to us. Tasha’s face has stuck in my mind. Her face has stuck in my head like the pink bubble gum stick in the pocket of my school trousers.

Twice, I’ve tried to speak to Tasha but both times my words got lost somewhere between my head and my mouth, so I ended up gaping at her like a fish. And when I gaped at her, she looked at me as if I was indeed a dimwit. So that’s why I was determined to write the best assignment in my class. I had to show Tasha how clever I really was.

So when I got home from school, I sat in the shade of an avocado tree that stands right next to our house. It stands so close to our house that sometimes I can pick an avocado pear by stretching my arm out through the dining room window. Imagine that? Cool,



Who is Mr North?

Who is Tasha?

Why does Saku write the essay?

isn't it? Being able to pick a fruit from a tree whilst standing inside the house? Ma doesn't think it is cool. She says the tree is too close to the house and one day its big roots will lift our house out of the ground. Either that or the tree will fall and smash our house flat to the ground. Dad says Mom worries too much. He says it's such a harmless tree.

I know Ma and Dad are both right. Mum worries too much and Dad says the avocado tree is harmless because he doesn't want the hassle of having to cut the tree down, which is what Ma has been trying to get him to do for ten years now.

Anyway, I got home from school and sat under the tree with my book open on my lap and started thinking about the various ways to save our planet.

Mr North had said we could be as creative as possible in our essays.

I started by writing a title, 'Ways to Save our Planet Earth.' After the title I got a bit stuck. I know a lot about recycling and reusing to save the planet's natural resources but I struggled to put my thoughts into words. For example, I know that the water we use to wash food can be recycled by using it to water plants. Or, the water we use to rinse clothes can be used to wash a car. We can also save water by fixing leaking pipes. And we can save energy by switching off lights when not in use. Taking our old shopping bag to the grocery store instead of using new plastic bags also helps save the environment because plastic bags do not decompose naturally, so the less we use the better. And I know for certain that chopping down the avocado tree is not good for the planet because trees make the oxygen that we breathe. You see I do know a lot about saving the planet. As I pondered over how to write down the information in a way that made sense, was imaginative and showed how clever I was, the garage door rumbled off the ground and Ma appeared from behind it.

'Saku, which one of these boxes has my documents?' With her hands on her hips, Ma frowned at the boxes stacked high on one side



Where does he sit to write the essay?

What was the title of Saku's essay?



of the garage. Now our garage is not really a garage because Dad has never parked his car inside it. If he did, the car would probably get lost just like Ma's documents and all the other things we store in the garage and can never find.

Now that was my first mistake. What I should have done at that moment was to keep my head bowed over my book and Ma would have left me alone to do my homework. But I didn't. I got up and joined Ma in the garage. Across from the boxes, on the other side of the garage, stood our old fridge, beside it sat our even older freezer. On top of the freezer sat Dad's old computer. My first tricycle, still bright blue but with only two wheels left lay on a pile of old bicycles next to the lawnmower with a faulty motor.

'Never mind, I'll ask your father.' Ma did not wait for me to answer her question. She stormed past me to find Dad which was just as well, as I had no idea where her documents were.

It was five thirty so Dad was sitting in front of the TV in his vest and blue and white striped pyjama trousers' as he does every day when he comes home from work.

'I told you to label the boxes before you stored them. But you said you didn't need to.' Ma said, leading Dad to the garage. 'So come and show me which box has my documents'.

'Everything is somewhere in here.' Dad scratched his head, a sign he was irritated. 'Saku, where is your mother's box? He asked me; as if I would know.

'Leave the boy to do his homework,' Ma snapped, pointing back to the chair where I had abandoned my book and pen.

At that moment I realized from my Ma's tone that doing my homework outside was a big mistake. I sat back down and tried to look busy.

'I keep asking you to throw all this away.' Ma said poking at Dad's old computer with a broomstick she had picked off the floor. 'This place is full of rubbish.'



Name some of the things piled up in the garage.

What is Ma searching for?



I keep telling you, 'we can't just throw this electric stuff on to a rubbish heap,' Dad growled. He kept looking at his watch as he spoke as if to check how much of the news he was missing. 'Some of this equipment gives off toxins that pollute the air,' Dad said.

'Pollute the air, you drive a car that gives off black smoke,' Ma said. She has been trying to convince Dad to get rid of his car for years.

Ma gave me an idea for my homework. I quickly scribbled; reduce pollution to save the planet, on the cover of my book. I would write the essay neatly in my book later.

'This is not waste that goes into the usual waste bin. This is e-waste and needs to be disposed of at an e-waste processing and recycling plant,' said Dad.

I think he was going to say more but Ma didn't give him a chance, "e-waste or whatever you call it. I want it out of this garage!" She yelled.

e-waste? Another interesting point, if only Ma wouldn't interrupt Dad. I thought of how clever I would look if I wrote about e-waste in my assignment. While Dad's words were still fresh in my mind, I scribbled: e-waste is waste made up of equipment such as fridges, computers and bicycles

I wasn't sure about bicycles, so I crossed it out. And quickly wrote: e-waste should be disposed of in an e-waste processing or recycling system to stop it polluting the air.

Meanwhile, as I was scribbling all over the cover of my work, the argument between Ma and Dad was heating up.

Shaking his head Dad said, 'You wouldn't understand, e-waste-'

'Don't start your fancy terms. You should have labelled the boxes. Simple.' Ma interrupted Dad again.

I agreed with Ma. Dad has a way of complicating everything. Ma says it's because he reads too many books. That's why I didn't tell him about my assignments or ask him more about e-waste. I knew he'll bombard me with big words and give me the whole history of



Where should we dispose e-waste?



saving the environment. And I didn't need the whole Encyclopaedia. I just needed enough to impress Tasha and prove Mr North wrong.

So I crossed my fingers that Dad wouldn't give up on the argument so that I could learn more about e-waste. But before he could say anymore, pandemonium broke out.

Ma screamed. 'Eeeeeeh!'

'Aarhhhh.' Dad screamed even louder.

'ARHHHHHH.' I screamed the loudest and jumped onto my chair.

A big black rat was darting back and forth between Ma and Dad's feet. As I landed on the chair, my feet ploughed through the canvas seat and I toppled over onto the muddy edge. My legs got caught in the chair, so I kicked it free and jumped up just as the rat disappeared up Dad's pyjama trousers. He gripped the rat just above his knee and stamped his feet like a crazy gumboot dancer.

Ma jumped up and down beside Dad shouting, 'It's a rat! It's a rat!'

'I know what it is!' Dad shouted back and right at that moment he whipped his trousers down to his ankles and hopped out of them. He must have squeezed the rat real hard because it landed with a thud and zigzagged away from beneath the pyjama trousers. I

tore after it and whacked it with my book. Atleast I tried to whack the rat but I kept missing. Ma also tried to get it with the broomstick. We got into one another's way and the rat scurried under the hedge into the neighbour's garden.

'Is everything okay?' Mrs Moyo, our nosey neighbor from across the road, had walked up to the gate to see what the commotion was about. She found Ma, Dad and me standing breathlessly by the garage floor.

'Find your own documents.' Dad growled and stormed off. He held his vest down on either side to hide his under shorts.

'Everything is just fine,' Ma said shakily to Mrs Moyo and then she picked up Dad's trousers and slippers from where he had left them, and hurried into the house.

Mrs Moyo turned away with a smile on her face and I left on my own. It was then I remembered my homework. I looked at my book and gasped. It was muddy and torn.

'Where's your book?; Mr North asked when I stood before the class the next day to read my assignment.

'I was writing my assignment in a book when a big rat - '

'Just read us what you've got.' Mr North rolled his eyes and sighed heavily.

So I read out my essay. I had written it on a piece of paper with the title, E is for e-waste. I had written about re-cycling, re-using, reducing pollution, preserving our natural resources and e-waste. When I finished everyone clapped, including Tasha. Even Mr North smiled, an indication that I had proven him wrong by writing a very good essay about ways to save our environment. He was particularly impressed that I had written about E-waste, something he had not taught us about in the class.

'Saku has put more effort into his essay by raising subjects you have not learnt in the class.' Mr North said proudly.



What impression does North form about Saku after listening to the essay?



And just when I thought that I had proved that I wasn't a dimwit, someone in the class asked, "What does the 'e' in the e-waste stand for?"

The class went dead quiet as everyone waited for me to answer. I gulped as I had no idea. Then a voice came from the back of the class. It was Tasha's voice. She said, The E in e waste is for electronic waste.

Source : <https://www.scribd.com/document/757925216/Eco-Scapes>



Let us enrich

dimwit /'dɪm.wɪt/	: a stupid person
avocado /,æv.ə'kɑː.dəʊ/	: a tropical evergreen tree which bears a green fruit
stack/stæk/	: pile
tricycle /'traɪsɪkl/	: a bicycle like vehicle with three wheels
lawnmower /'lɔːn,məʊ.ər/	: a machine for cutting the grass on a lawn
toxins/'tɒk.sɪnz/	: poisonous substances
pandemonium /,pæn.də'məʊ.ni.əm/	: noisy disorder
commotion /kə'məʊ.fən/	: confusion



Let us discuss

1. Briefly describe the character of Mr. North as a teacher. Discuss your thoughts on whether you appreciate having a teacher like Mr. North.
2. Assess the significance of Tasha's role in conveying the key concept of the story.
3. What is Saku's parents' attitude towards e-waste disposal?
4. Express your suggestions for the effective disposal of e-waste.
5. Evaluate the impact of the environmental threats of e-waste.
6. The story mirrors society's careless attitude towards e-waste disposal. Write an article that emphasises the importance of awareness about e-waste disposal.



7. Present your views on the topic, "Tackling e-waste requires awareness and shared responsibility."



Let us apply our thoughts

1. Do you think the conflicts in Saku's family create mental strain on him as a student? Express your views on how the family atmosphere affects the studies of children.
2. Imagine you are a member of a Youth Eco-club. How would you use the story of Saku to raise awareness about environmental responsibility among students?
3. If you were in Saku's position, do you think you could deal with the emotional pressure of your parents' arguments while completing your school work?



Let us express ourselves

1. Create a comic strip showing the journey of a mobile phone from first use to becoming e-waste.
2. Based on your interview with a group of Haritha Karmasena volunteers in your area, write a newspaper article about the dangers of treating e-waste in an unscientific way and how it might harm people and the environment.
3. Write a monologue where Saku expresses his anxieties about his future life on the grounds of increasing threats posed by accumulating e-waste in the world.
4. Create a short skit in which children teach adults about the importance of responsible use of electronic gadgets.



Let us go ahead

1. Wall E movie – Andrew Stanton
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0910970/>
2. The E-Waste tragedy documentary – Cosima Dannoritzer
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0910970/>
3. Welcome to Sodom. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0910970/>

“

“Whatever befalls the Earth befalls the sons of the Earth.”

- Chief Seattle

”

Come, let us do together...

Each and every element of Nature has a language of its own. The language of the forest is the language of survival, protecting each essence of the forest, including colour, smell, sound, and the language itself.

Now let us read the poem “**Maricha Kiliyude Manam**” (“The Smell of the Dead Bird”).

എന്റെ കണ്ണുകളെ ഓരോ മരത്തിലും
നടുവെച്ചിട്ടായിരുന്നു
ഭാഷകൾ മറക്കുന്ന കാടിന്
ഞാനെന്റെ ഭാഷ പഠിപ്പിക്കുവാൻ
തുടങ്ങിയത്.

നാട്ടുപ്പൂക്കളുടെ പേര് പറഞ്ഞില്ല
നാട്ടുമരത്തിന്റെ വേഷം കാണിച്ചില്ല
നാട്ടുമരുന്നിന്റെ മണവുമൂതിയില്ല
നാട്ടുമനുഷ്യന്റെ സ്വഭാവം പറഞ്ഞില്ല
അവർക്കെല്ലാം അറിയാമായിരുന്നു
ആദ്യത്തെ അക്ഷരം ഇതായിരിക്കുമെന്ന്
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പ്ഡും.

അവർക്കെല്ലാം അറിയാമായിരുന്നു
തൊലിയിളക്കുന്നതിന്റെ ഒരു
കൊമ്പൊടിയുന്നതിന്റെ ഒരു
മരിച്ച കിളിയുടെ മണം.

ഞാനെന്റെ ഭാഷയിലെ കല്ലക്ഷരങ്ങളെ
കൂട്ടിവെക്കാൻ ശ്രമിച്ചു
കാടത് പറ്റക്കിയെടുത്ത്
വേരുകൾക്ക് മുകളിൽ പൊത്തിവെയ്ക്കു
എന്നോ ഒരൊരൊരൊ ഒരു ഒരു ഒരു

കാട്ടിയയുടെ കാട്ടിക്കൊടുക്കലിൽ
എത്തിപ്പെടാൻ ആഗ്രഹിക്കാത്ത
ഒരിടത്തേക്കാണ് ഞാൻ എത്തിയത്
അവിടെ ബലാവാന്റെ ബലങ്ങളെല്ലാം
ഭൂമിയോട് ചേർന്ന് ഒഴുകുന്നു.

ചരിഞ്ഞു, മരണം മരിച്ചു
ആന അനക്കം ഇല്ല ഇല്ല.

ഞാനെന്റെ ഭാഷയിലെ മണ്ണെല്ലാം
കുടഞ്ഞു നോക്കുകയായിരുന്നു
അപ്പോഴേക്കും കാടതെല്ലാം ചുമന്ന്
ആ മരണത്തെ മറച്ചു
അവിടെ വീണ്ടും പച്ചകൾ വളർന്നു
ഞാനതിലെ പലതവണ പോയിട്ടുണ്ട്.

എന്റെ ഭാഷയുടെ മുകളിലൂടെ
ഒരു പരുന്ത് വട്ടത്തിൽ പറക്കുന്നുണ്ട്
ഞാനും വട്ടത്തിൽ നോക്കിയപ്പോൾ
മരിച്ച കിളിയുടെ മണം
എന്റെ ഭാഷയിലേക്ക് കടക്കുന്നു.

ഞാനും കുറച്ച് മണ്ണിട്ടിട്ട് നടന്നു
മരിച്ച കിളിയുടെ മണം പച്ചയിലേക്കും.

മരിച്ച കിളിയുടെ മണം -
സുകുമാരൻ ചാലിഗല

Let us rephrase...

The poem “Maricha Kiliyude Manam” (“The Smell of the Dead Bird”) is written by Sukumaran Chaliyatha (Bethimaran), one of the prominent voices in modern Malayalam poetry. The poet laments the loss of his language ‘Ravula’ through the portrayal of the destruction of the forest. It explores themes relating to language, nature, and mortality. The speaker reflects on the environment, noting a disconnection from familiar figures, and portrays a deep bond between language and the natural world. The poem’s imagery of death and rebirth highlights transformation, contrasting decay with growing greenery. It asserts that experiences are linked to language and the earth’s essence. The text also critiques the disconnection from nature of contemporary society due to the influence of technology and materialism, reducing nature to mere resources and diminishing its inherent value.

Now let us browse and listen to the song “Earth Song” by Michael Joseph Jackson.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAi3VTSdTxU&list=RDXAi3VTSdTxU&start_radio=1





Let us rephrase...

Earth Song is a melody by the American singer song writer Michael Jackson that uses powerful images, strong emotions, and a pleading tone to make people feel the pain of the earth. He personifies the Earth and asks repeated rhetorical questions to highlight the pain in a dramatic way, urging people to protect nature before it is too late. It is a musical plea to save our planet. Through emotional questions and vivid imagery, the song highlights the pace of environmental destruction and compels the listener to rethink their role in protecting nature.

There are moments when we notice how much the world around us has changed. The fields we once played in have become construction sites, a clear stream turns muddy or familiar trees disappear without warning. These changes rarely happen overnight – they creep in slowly, almost silently. When we neglect nature, it loses its colour; its life.

Now we got an idea about the perspectives of the poet Sukumaran Chaligatha and the singer Michael Jackson about the need to preserve the environment. In the light of the understanding of the poem and the song, let us do these activities.

Quiz activity

1. Name any one environmental issue mentioned in “Earth Song”.
2. What is the central theme of the song?
3. Name any two natural elements referred to in the song.
4. What is the ‘language’ of the village as portrayed by the poet in “Maricha Kiliyude Manam”?
5. What question does the singer ask repeatedly?
6. What is the recurring theme of ‘death’ signified in the song?
7. What does the colour ‘green’ in the poem signify?
8. Which common human activity is shown as harmful both in the song and the poem?
9. Identify any one common emotion expressed in the song and the poem.

Peer work

1. The issues mentioned in the song and the poem can be related to environmental problems in your area. Do you agree? Explain.
2. Suggest simple measures youth can take to reduce / repair environmental damage.



3. Do you think emotional appeals are more effective than scientific facts in raising awareness? Give reasons.
4. Artistic works doesn't offer any direct solutions to environmental or social issues. Is it the right way of resistance? Do the artists need to offer a solution? Substantiate.
5. The questions in the song and the poem function as the collective conscience of humanity. Discuss.
6. The song shifts from the initial calm tone to an intense emotional climax. Does this shift reveal the urgency with which we need to address environmental issues?
7. Analyse how symbolism is exploited in the repeated refrain "What about us?"
8. Analyse how the music and visuals strengthen the impact of the song.

Project Work (can be done individually or in groups)

1. In the light of reading the poem 'Maricha Kiliyude Manam,' write an article suggesting ways to revive our love and concern for nature in a world focused on technology and materialism.
2. Create a reel on the theme "Students for the Environment".
3. Write a letter addressed to human beings from an endangered species, inspired by the themes of loss and hope in "Earth Song."
4. Attempt a haiku expressing what earth loses and what humans lose when nature suffers.
5. Design a storyboard for a new music video version of "Earth Song" (6 frames).
6. Read "Bhoomikkoru Charamageetham" or "Paka" or "Sahyante Makan," and express your thoughts about the need to protect Mother nature.



Let us go ahead

1. Our house is on fire.
<https://www.weforum.org/stories/2020/01/greta-speech-our-house-is-still-on-fire-davos-2020/>
2. We are the World
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3wNuru4U0I>
3. Man in the Mirror
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PivWY9wn5ps>
4. Erin Brockovich (movie) Director Steven Soderbergh
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0195685/>

“

“Nature never hurries, atom by atom, little by little, she achieves her work.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

”



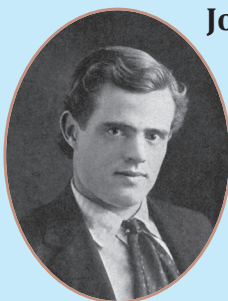
Before we begin

- Animals often detect natural disasters before humans do: Elephants can sense distant storms, dogs can sense approaching danger.
- Animals take only what they need and follow seasonal cycles, whereas humans disrupt ecosystems. Birds migrate to warmer regions and salmon swim upstream to spawn, in harmony with their natural rhythms.

‘Earth Song’ reflects on the damage humans have done to the planet and urges us to awaken our collective consciousness and recognize that ignoring the needs of the Earth has dire consequences. Similarly, Jack London’s, “To Build a Fire” explores the repercussions when a human underestimates the power of nature. Like the humans in Earth Song, the man in Yukon fails to respect the natural forces around him, and his lack of awareness and humility leads to tragedy. The story projects this thought: can human intellect overcome the forces of nature, or must we also take into account the wisdom of shared experience?



Let us know the author



John Griffith London (1876-1916) better known as Jack London was an American novelist, journalist, activist and passionate advocate of animal welfare, workers’ rights and social welfare. London’s works deal with these topics as in his dystopian novel *The Iron Heel*. His notable works include *The Call of the Wild*, *White Fang*, all set in Alaska and the Yukon during the Klondike Gold Rush and are noted for their deep psychological insight into humans and animals.

To Build a Fire : An overview

To Build a Fire explores the theme of Man versus Nature. Throughout the story London hints that dogs have a better instinct for survival than man and contrasts man’s sense of judgement with animal instinct.



Let us read and contemplate

To Build a Fire

Jack London

DAY HAD DAWNED COLD AND GRAY WHEN the man turned aside from the main Yukon trail. He climbed the high earth-bank where a little-traveled trail led east through the pine forest. It was a high bank, and he paused to breathe at the top. He excused the act to himself by looking at his watch. It was nine o'clock in the morning. There was no sun or promise of sun, although there was not a cloud in the sky. It was a clear day. However, there seemed to be an indescribable darkness over the face of things. That was because the sun was absent from the sky. This fact did not worry the man. He was not alarmed by the lack of sun. It had been days since he had seen the sun.



Describe the setting in which the story takes place?





The man looked along the way he had come. The Yukon lay a mile wide and hidden under three feet of ice. On top of this ice were as many feet of snow. It was all pure white. North and south, as far as his eye could see, it was unbroken white. The one thing that relieved the whiteness was a thin dark line that curved from the pine-covered island to the south. It curved into the north, where it disappeared behind another pine-covered island. This dark line was the trail—the main trail. It led south 500 miles to the Chilcoot Pass, and salt water. It led north 75 miles to Dawson, and still farther on to the north a thousand miles to Nulato, and finally to St. Michael, on Bering Sea, a thousand miles and half a thousand more.

But all this—the distant trail, no sun in the sky, the great cold, and the strangeness of it all—had no effect on the man. It was not because he was long familiar with it. He was a newcomer in the land, and this was his first winter.



What is the temperature at the beginning of the journey?

List the items the man carried with him on the journey.

The trouble with him was that he was not able to imagine. He was quick and ready in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in their meanings. Fifty degrees below zero meant 80 degrees of frost. Such facts told him that it was cold and uncomfortable, and that was all. It did not lead him to consider his weaknesses as a creature affected by temperature. Nor did he think about man's general weakness, able to live only within narrow limits of heat and cold. From there, it did not lead him to thoughts of heaven and the meaning of a man's life. 50 degrees below zero meant a bite of frost that hurt and that must be guarded against by the use of mittens, ear coverings, warm moccasins and thick socks. 50 degrees below zero was to him nothing more than 50 degrees below zero. That it should be more important than that was a thought that never entered his head.

As he turned to go, he forced some water from his mouth as an experiment. There was a sudden noise that surprised him. He tried it again. And again, in the air, before they could fall to the snow, the drops of water became ice that broke with a noise. He knew that at 50 below zero water from the mouth made a noise when it hit the snow. But this had done that in the air. Undoubtedly it was colder than 50 below. But exactly how much colder he did not know. But the temperature did not matter.



He was headed for the old camp on Henderson Creek, where the boys were already. They had come across the mountain from the Indian Creek country. He had taken the long trail to look at the possibility of floating logs from the islands in the Yukon down the river when the ice melted. He would be in camp by six o'clock that evening. It would be a little after dark, but the boys would be there, a fire would be burning and a hot supper would be ready. As he thought of lunch, he pressed his hand against the package under his jacket. It was also under his shirt, wrapped in a handkerchief, and lying for warmth against the naked skin. Otherwise, the bread would freeze. He smiled contentedly to himself as he thought of those pieces of bread, each of which enclosed a generous portion of cooked meat.

He plunged among the big pine trees. The trail was not well marked here. Several inches of snow had fallen since the last sled had passed. He was glad he was without a sled. Actually, he carried nothing but the lunch wrapped in the handkerchief. He was surprised, however, at the cold. It certainly was cold, he decided, as he rubbed his nose and face with his mittened hand. He had a good growth of hair on his face, but that did not protect his nose or the upper part of his face from the frosty air.

Following at the man's heels was a big native dog. It was a wolf dog, gray-coated and not noticeably different from its brother, the wild wolf. The animal was worried by the great cold. It knew that this was no time for traveling. Its own feeling was closer to the truth than the man's judgment. In reality, it was not merely colder than 50 below zero; it was colder than 60 below, than 70 below. It was 75 below zero. Because the freezing point is 32 above zero, it meant that there were 107 degrees of frost.

The dog did not know anything about temperatures. Possibly in its brain there was no understanding of a condition of very cold, such as was in the man's brain. But the animal sensed the danger. Its fear made it question eagerly every movement of the man as if expecting him to go into camp or to seek shelter somewhere and build a fire. The dog had learned about fire and it wanted fire. Otherwise, it would dig itself into the snow and find shelter from the cold air.



What was the man's initial destination?

How many dogs does the man have with him?

Which dog accompanied the man?

Why did the dog feel anxious about the journey?



The frozen moistness of its breathing had settled on its fur in a fine powder of frost. The hair on the man's face was similarly frosted but more solidly. It took the form of ice and increased with every warm, moist breath from his mouth. Also, the man had tobacco in his mouth. The ice held his lips so tightly together that he could not empty the juice from his mouth. The result was a long piece of yellow ice hanging from his lips. If he fell down it would break, like glass, into many pieces. He expected the ice formed by the tobacco juice, having been out twice before when it was very cold. But it had not been as cold as this, he knew.

He continued through the level forest for several miles. Then he went down a bank to the frozen path of a small stream. This was Henderson Creek and he knew he was ten miles from where the stream divided. He looked at his watch. It was ten o'clock. He was traveling at the rate of four miles an hour. Thus, he figured that he would arrive where the stream divided at half-past twelve. He decided he would eat his lunch when he arrived there.



What settled on the dog's fur and the man's face?

Why couldn't the man spit out the juice from his mouth?

Which creek is mentioned here?

The dog followed again at his heels, with its tail hanging low, as the man started to walk along the frozen stream. The old sled trail could be seen, but a dozen inches of snow covered the marks of the last sleds. In a month no man had traveled up or down that silent creek. The man went steadily ahead. He was not much of a thinker. At that moment he had nothing to think about except that he would eat lunch at the stream's divide and that at six o'clock he would be in camp with the boys. There was nobody to talk to; and, had there been, speech would not have been possible because of the ice around his mouth.

Once in a while the thought repeated itself that it was very cold and that he had never experienced such cold. As he walked along he rubbed his face and nose with the back of his mittened hand. He did this without thinking, frequently changing hands. But, with all his rubbing, the instant he stopped, his face and nose became numb. His face would surely be frozen. He knew that and he was sorry that he had not worn the sort of nose guard Bud wore when it was cold. Such a guard passed across the nose and covered the entire face. But it did not matter much, he decided. What was a little frost? A bit painful, that was all. It was never serious.



Empty as the man's mind was of thoughts, he was most observant. He noticed the changes in the creek, the curves and the bends. And always he noted where he placed his feet. Once, coming around a bend, he moved suddenly to the side, like a frightened horse. He curved away from the place where he had been walking and retraced his steps several feet along the trail. He knew the creek was frozen to the bottom. No creek could contain water in that winter. But he knew also that there were streams of water that came out from the hillsides and ran along under the snow and on top of the ice of the creek. He knew that even in the coldest weather these streams were never frozen, and he also knew their danger. They hid pools of water under the snow that might be three inches deep, or three feet. Sometimes a skin of ice half an inch thick covered them, and in turn was covered by the snow. Sometimes there was both water and thin ice, and when a man broke through he could get very wet.

That was why he had jumped away so suddenly. He had felt the ice move under his feet. He had also heard the noise of the snow-covered ice skin breaking. And to get his feet wet in such a temperature meant trouble and danger. At the very least it meant delay, because he would be forced to stop and build a fire. Only under its protection could he bare his feet while he dried his socks and moccasins.

He stood and studied the creek bottom and its banks. He decided that the flowing stream of water came from the right side. He thought a while, rubbing his nose and face. Then he walked to the left. He stepped carefully and tested the ice at each step. Once away from the danger, he continued at his four-mile pace.

During the next two hours he came to several similar dangers. Usually, the snow above the pools had a sunken appearance. However, once again he came near to falling through the ice. Once, sensing danger, he made the dog go ahead. The dog did not want to go. It hesitated until the man pushed it forward. Then it went quickly across the white, unbroken surface. Suddenly it fell through the ice, but climbed out on the other side, which was firm. It had wet its feet and legs. Almost immediately the water on them turned to ice. The dog made quick efforts to get the ice off its legs. Then it



Why did the man suddenly jump aside?

What happened to the water on the dog's legs?



lay down in the snow and began to bite out the ice that had formed between the toes. The animal knew enough to do this. To permit the ice to remain would mean sore feet. It did not know this. It merely obeyed the commands that arose from the deepest part of its being.

But the man knew these things having learned them from experience. He removed the mitten from his right hand and helped the dog tear out the pieces of ice. He did not bare his fingers more than a minute, and was surprised to find that they were numb. It certainly was cold. He pulled on the mitten quickly and beat the hand across his breast.

At twelve o'clock the day was at its brightest. Yet the sun did not appear in the sky. At half-past twelve, on the minute, he arrived at the divide of the creek. He was pleased at his rate of speed. If he continued, he would certainly be with the boys by six o'clock that evening.

He unbuttoned his jacket and shirt and pulled forth his lunch. The action took no more than a quarter of a minute, yet in that brief moment the numbness touched his bare fingers. He did not put the mitten on, but instead, struck the fingers against his leg. Then he sat down on a snow covered log to eat. The pain that followed the striking of his fingers against his leg ceased so quickly that he was frightened. He had not had time to take a bite of his lunch. He struck the fingers repeatedly and returned them to the mitten. Then he bared the other hand for the purpose of eating. He tried to take a mouthful, but the ice around his mouth prevented him.

Then he knew what was wrong. He had forgotten to build a fire and warm himself. He laughed at his own foolishness. As he laughed, he noted the numbness in his bare fingers. Also, he noted that the feeling which had first come to his toes when he sat down was already passing away. He wondered whether the toes were warm or whether they were numb. He moved them inside the moccasins and decided that they were numb.

He pulled the mitten on hurriedly and stood up. He was somewhat frightened. He stamped forcefully until the feeling returned to his feet. It certainly was cold, was



his thought. That man from Sulphur Creek had spoken the truth when telling how cold it sometimes got in this country. And he had laughed at him at the time! That showed one must not be too sure of things. There was no mistake about it, it was cold. He walked a few steps, stamping his feet and waving his arms, until reassured by the returning warmth. Then he took some matches and proceeded to make a fire. In the bushes, the high water had left a supply of sticks. From here he got wood for his fire. Working carefully from a small beginning, he soon had a roaring fire.

Bending over the fire, he first melted the ice from his face. With the protection of the fire's warmth he ate his lunch. For the moment, the cold had been forced away. The dog took comfort in the fire, lying at full length close enough for warmth and far enough away to escape being burned. When the man had finished eating, he filled his pipe with tobacco and had a comfortable time with a smoke. Then he pulled on his mittens, settled his cap firmly about his ears, and started along the creek trail toward the left.

The dog was sorry to leave and looked toward the fire. This man did not know cold. Possibly none of his ancestors had known cold, real cold. But the dog knew and all of its family knew. And it knew that it was not good to walk outside in such fearful cold. It was the time to lie in a hole in the snow and to wait for this awful cold to stop. There was no real bond between the dog and the man. The one was the slave of the other. The dog made no effort to indicate its fears to the man. It was not concerned with the well-being of the man. It was for its own sake that it looked toward the fire. But the man whistled and spoke to it with the sound of the whip in his voice. So, the dog started walking close to the man's heels and followed him along the trail.

The man put more tobacco in his mouth and started a new growth of yellow ice on his face. Again his moist breath quickly powdered the hair on his face with white. He looked around him. There did not seem to be so many pools of water under the snow on the left side of Henderson Creek, and for half an hour the man saw no signs of any. And then it happened. At a place where there were no signs, the man broke through. It was not deep. He was wet to the knees before he got out of the water to the firm snow.



What was the dog's reaction to the extreme cold?



He was angry and cursed his luck aloud. He had hoped to get into camp with the boys at six o'clock, and this would delay him an hour. Now he would have to build a fire and dry his moccasins and socks. This was most important at that low temperature. He knew that much.

So he turned aside to the bank, which he climbed. On top, under several small pine trees, he found some firewood which had been carried there by the high water of last year. There were some sticks, but also larger branches, and some dry grasses. He threw several large branches on top of the snow. This served for a foundation and prevented the young flame from dying in the wet snow. He made a flame by touching a match to a small piece of tree bark that he took from his pocket. This burned even better than paper. Placing it on the foundation, he fed the young flame with pieces of dry grass and with the smallest dry sticks.

He worked slowly and carefully, realizing his danger. Gradually, as the flame grew stronger, he increased the size of the sticks with which he fed it. He sat in the snow, pulling the sticks from the bushes under the trees and feeding them directly to the flame. He knew he must not fail. When it is 75 below zero, a man must not fail in his first attempt to build a fire. This is especially true if his feet are wet. If his feet are dry, and he fails, he can run along the trail for half a mile to keep his blood moving. But the blood in wet and freezing feet cannot be kept moving by running when it is 75 degrees below. No matter how fast he runs, the wet feet will freeze even harder.

All this the man knew. The old man on Sulphur Creek had told him about it, and now he was grateful for the advice. Already all feeling had gone from his feet. To build the fire he had been forced to remove his mittens, and the fingers had quickly become numb. His pace of four miles an hour had kept his heart pushing the blood to all parts of his body. But the instant he stopped, the action of the heart slowed down. He now received the full force of the cold. The blood of his body drew back from it. The blood was alive, like the dog. Like the dog, it wanted to hide and seek cover, away from the fearful cold. As long as he walked four miles an hour, the blood rose to the surface. But now it sank down into the lowest depths of his body. His feet and hands were the first to feel its absence. His wet



What are the tools used by the man to build the fire?



feet froze first. His bare fingers were numb, although they had not yet begun to freeze. Nose and face were already freezing, while the skin of all his body became cold as it lost its blood.

But he was safe. Toes and nose and face would be only touched by the frost, because the fire was beginning to burn with strength. He was feeding it with sticks the size of his finger. In another minute he would be able to feed it with larger branches. Then he could remove his wet moccasins and socks. While they dried, he could keep his naked feet warm by the fire, rubbing them first with snow. The fire was a success. He was safe.

He remembered the advice of the old man on Sulphur Creek, and smiled. The man had been very serious when he said that no man should travel alone in that country after 50 below zero. Well, here he was; he had had the accident; he was alone; and he had saved himself. Those old men were rather womanish, he thought. All a man must do was to keep his head, and he was all right. Any man who was a man could travel alone. But it was surprising, the rapidity with which his face and nose were freezing. And he had not thought his fingers could lose their feeling in so short a time. Without feeling they were, because he found it very difficult to make them move together to grasp a stick. They seemed far from his body and from him. When he touched a stick, he had to look to see whether or not he was holding it.

All of which mattered little. There was the fire, promising life with every dancing flame. He started to untie his moccasins. They were coated with ice. The thick socks were like iron almost to the knees. The moccasin's strings were like ropes of steel. For a moment he pulled them with his unfeeling fingers. Then, realizing the foolishness of it, he grasped his knife.

But before he could cut the strings, it happened. It was his own fault, or instead, his mistake. He should not have built the fire under the pine tree. He should have built it in an open space. But it had been easier to pull the sticks from the bushes and drop them directly on the fire.

Now the tree under which he had done this carried a weight of snow on its branches. No wind had been blowing for weeks and



Does the man value the advice given by the old timer?

What mistake does the man make in building the fire?



each branch was heavy with snow. Each time he pulled a stick he shook the tree slightly. There had been just enough movement to cause the awful thing to happen. High up in the tree one branch dropped its load of snow. This fell on the branches beneath. This process continued, spreading through the whole tree. The snow fell without warning upon the man and the fire, and the fire was dead. Where it had burned was a pile of fresh snow.

The man was shocked. It was like hearing his own judgment of death. For a moment he sat and stared at the spot where the fire had been. Then he grew very calm. Perhaps the old man on Sulphur Creek was right. If he had a companion on the trail he would be in no danger now. The companion could have built the fire. Now, he must build the fire again, and this second time he must not fail. Even if he succeeded, he would be likely to lose some toes. His feet must be badly frozen by now, and there would be some time before the second fire was ready.

Such were his thoughts, but he did not sit and think them. He was busy all the time they were passing through his mind. He made a new foundation for a fire, this time in the open space, where no tree would be above it. Next, he gathered dry grasses and tiny sticks. He could not bring his fingers together to pull them out of the ground, but he was able to gather them by the handful. In this way he also got many pieces that were undesirable, but it was the best he could do. He worked carefully, even collecting an armful of the larger branches to be used later when the fire gathered strength. And all the while the dog sat and watched him. There was an anxious look in its eyes, because it depended upon him as the fire provider, and the fire was slow in coming.

When all was ready, the man reached in his pocket for the second piece of tree bark. He knew the bark was there, although he could not feel it with his fingers. He tried again and again, but he could not grasp it. And all the time, in his mind, he knew that each instant his feet were freezing. This thought alarmed him, but he fought against it and kept calm.



He pulled on his mittens with his teeth, and began swinging his arms. Then he beat his hands with all his strength against his sides. He did this while he was sitting down. Then he stood up to do it. All the while the dog sat in the snow, its tail curled warmly over its feet and its sharp wolf ears bent forward as it looked at the man. And the man, as he waved his arms and hands, looked with longing at the creature that was warm and secure in the covering provided by nature.

After a time, he began to notice some feeling in his beaten fingers. The feeling grew stronger until it became very painful, but the man welcomed the pain. He pulled the mitten from his right hand and grasped the tree bark from his pocket. The bare fingers were quickly numb again. Next, he brought out his pack of matches. But the awful cold had already driven the life out of his fingers. In his effort to separate one match from the others, the whole pack fell in the snow. He tried to pick it out of the snow, but failed. The dead fingers could neither touch nor hold.

Now he was very careful. He drove the thought of his freezing feet, and nose, and face, from his mind. He devoted his whole soul to picking up the matches. He followed the movement of his fingers with his eyes, using his sense of sight instead of that of touch. When he saw his fingers on each side of the pack, he closed them. That is, he willed to close them, because the fingers did not obey. He put the mitten on the right hand again, and beat it fiercely against his knee. Then, with both mittened hands, he lifted up the pack of matches, along with much snow, to the front of his jacket. But he had gained nothing.

After some struggling he managed to get the pack between his mittened hands. In this manner he carried it to his mouth. The ice broke as he opened his mouth with a fierce effort. He used his upper teeth to rub across the pack in order to separate a single match. He succeeded in getting one, which he dropped on his jacket. His condition was no better. He could not pick up the match. Then he thought how he might do it. He picked up the match in his teeth and drew it across his leg. Twenty times he did this before he succeeded in lighting it. As it flamed he held it with his teeth to the tree bark.



What happens to the matches when the man tries to build the fire a second time?



But the burning smell went up his nose, causing him to cough. The match fell into the snow and the flame died.

The old man on Sulphur Creek was right, he thought in the moment of controlled despair that followed. After 50 below zero, a man should travel with a companion. He beat his hands, but failed to produce any feeling in them. Suddenly he bared both hands, removing the mittens with his teeth. He caught the whole pack of matches between his hands. His arm muscles were not frozen and he was able to press the hands tightly against the matches. Then he drew the whole pack along his leg. It burst into flame, 70 matches at once!

There was no wind to blow them out. He kept his head to one side to escape the burning smell, and held the flaming pack to the tree bark. As he so held it, he noticed some feeling in his hand. His flesh was burning. He could smell it. The feeling developed into pain. He continued to endure it. He held the flame of the matches to the bark that would not light readily because his own burning hands were taking most of the flame.

Finally, when he could endure no more, he pulled his hands apart. The flaming matches fell into the snow, but the tree bark was burning. He began laying dry grasses and the tiniest sticks on the flame. He could not choose carefully because they must be pieces that could be lifted between his hands. Small pieces of green grass stayed on the sticks, and he bit them off as well as he could with his teeth. He treated the flame carefully. It meant life, and it must not cease.

The blood had left the surface of his body and he now began to shake from the cold. A large piece of a wet plant fell on the little fire. He tried to push it out with his fingers. His shaking body made him push it too far and he scattered the little fire over a wide space. He tried to push the burning grasses and sticks together again. Even with the strong effort that he made, his trembling fingers would not obey and the sticks were hopelessly scattered. Each stick smoked a little and died. The fire provider had failed. As he looked about him, his eyes noticed the dog sitting across the ruins of the fire from him.



What happens to the fire the man lights the second time he tries to build the fire?

Describe the man's physical condition as the cold intensified.



It was making uneasy movements, slightly lifting one foot and then the other.

The sight of the dog put a wild idea into his head. He remembered the story of the man caught in a storm, who killed an animal and sheltered himself inside the dead body and thus was saved. He would kill the dog and bury his hands in the warm body until feeling returned to them. Then he could build another fire.

He spoke to the dog, calling it to him. But in his voice was a strange note of fear that frightened the animal. It had never known the man to speak in such a tone before. Something was wrong and it sensed danger. It knew not what danger, but somewhere in its brain arose a fear of the man. It flattened its ears at the sound of the man's voice; its uneasy movements and the liftings of its feet became more noticeable. But it would not come to the man. He got down on his hands and knees and went toward the dog. But this unusual position again excited fear and the animal moved away.

The man sat in the snow for a moment and struggled for calmness. Then he pulled on his mittens, using his teeth, and then stood on his feet. He glanced down to assure himself that he was really standing, because lack of feeling in his feet gave him no relation to the earth. His position, however, removed the fear from the dog's mind.

When he commanded the dog with his usual voice, the dog obeyed and came to him. As it came within his reach, the man lost control. His arms stretched out to hold the dog and he experienced real surprise when he discovered that his hands could not grasp. There was neither bend nor feeling in the fingers. He had forgotten for the moment that they were frozen and that they were freezing more and more. All this happened quickly and before the animal could escape, he encircled its body with his arms. He sat down in the snow, and in this fashion held the dog, while it barked and struggled.

But it was all he could do: hold its body encircled in his arms and sit there. He realized that he could not kill the dog. There was no way to do it. With his frozen hands he could neither draw nor



What was the wild idea that crept into the man's mind?

hold his knife. Nor could he grasp the dog around the throat. He freed it and it dashed wildly away, still barking. It stopped 40 feet away and observed him curiously, with ears sharply bent forward.

The man looked down at his hands to locate them and found them hanging on the ends of his arms. He thought it curious that it was necessary to use his eyes to discover where his hands were. He began waving his arms, beating the mittened hands against his sides. He did this for five minutes. His heart produced enough blood to stop his shaking. But no feeling was created in his hands.

A certain fear of death came upon him. He realized that it was no longer a mere problem of freezing his fingers and toes, or of losing his hands and feet. Now it was a problem of life and death with the circumstances against him. The fear made him lose control of himself and he turned and ran along the creek bed on the old trail. The dog joined him and followed closely behind. The man ran blindly in fear such as he had never known in his life. Slowly, as he struggled through the snow, he began to see things again—the banks of the creek, the bare trees, and the sky.

The running made him feel better. He did not shake any more. Maybe, if he continued to run, his feet would stop freezing. Maybe if he ran far enough, he would find the camp and the boys. Without doubt, he would lose some fingers and toes and some of his face. But the boys would take care of him and save the rest of him when he got there. And at the same time, there was another thought in his mind that said he would never get to the camp and the boys. It told him that it was too many miles away, that the freezing had too great a start and that he would soon be dead. He pushed this thought to the back of his mind and refused to consider it. Sometimes it came forward and demanded to be heard. But he pushed it away and tried to think of other things.

It seemed strange to him that he could run on feet so frozen that he could not feel them when they struck the earth and took the weight of his body. He seemed to be flying along above the surface and to have no connection with the earth.



His idea of running until he arrived at the camp and the boys presented one problem: he lacked the endurance. Several times he caught himself as he was falling. Finally, he dropped to the ground, unable to stop his fall. When he tried to rise, he failed. He must sit and rest, he decided. Next time he would merely walk and keep going.

As he sat and regained his breath, he noted that he was feeling warm and comfortable. He was not shaking, and it even seemed that a warm glow had come to his body. And yet, when he touched his nose or face, there was no feeling. Running would not bring life to them. Nor would it help his hands and feet. Then the thought came to him that the frozen portions of his body must be increasing. He tried to keep this thought out of his mind and to forget it. He knew that such thoughts caused a feeling of fright in him and he was afraid of such feelings. But the thought returned and continued, until he could picture his body totally frozen. This was too much, and again he ran wildly along the trail. Once he slowed to a walk, but the thought that the freezing of his body was increasing made him run again.

And all the time the dog ran with him, at his heels. When he fell a second time, the dog curled its tail over its feet and sat in front of him, facing him, curiously eager. The warmth and security of the animal angered him. He cursed it until it flattened its ears. This time the shaking because of the cold began more quickly. He was losing his battle with the frost. It was moving into his body from all sides. This thought drove him forward. But he ran no more than 100 feet, when he fell head first.

It was his last moment of fear. When he had recovered his breath and his control, he sat and thought about meeting death with dignity. However, the idea did not come to him in exactly this manner. His idea was that he had been acting like a fool. He had been running around like a chicken with its head cut off. He was certain to freeze in his present circumstances, and he should accept it calmly. With this newfound peace of mind came the first sleepiness. A good idea, he thought, to sleep his way to death. Freezing was not as bad as people thought. There were many worse ways to die.



What manifestation of the dog's survival instinct does the man fail to recognise?





What does the dog symbolise to you?

He pictured the boys finding his body the next day. Suddenly he saw himself with them, coming along the trail and looking for himself. And, still with them, he came around a turn in the trail and found himself lying in the snow. He did not belong with himself any more. Even then he was outside of himself, standing with the boys and looking at himself in the snow. It certainly was cold, was his thought. When he returned to the United States he could tell the folks what real cold was.

His mind went from this to the thought of the old man of Sulphur Creek. He could see him quite clearly, warm and comfortable, and smoking a pipe.

"You were right, old fellow. You were right," he murmured to the old man of Sulphur Creek.

Then the man dropped into what seemed to him the most comfortable and satisfying sleep he had ever known. The dog sat facing him and waiting. The brief day ended in a long evening. There were no signs of a fire to be made. Never in the dog's experience had it known a man to sit like that in the snow and make no fire. As the evening grew darker, its eager longing for the fire mastered it. With much lifting of its feet, it cried softly. Then it flattened its ears, expecting the man's curse. But the man remained silent. Later, the dog howled loudly. And still later it moved close to the man and caught the smell of death. This made the animal back away. A little longer it delayed, howling under the stars that leaped and danced and shone brightly in the cold sky. Then it turned and ran along the trail toward the camp it knew, where there were the other food providers and fire providers.

Source https://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/to-build-a-fire.pdf



**Let us enrich**

Yukon /'juː.kən/	: cold snowy region in northwestern Canada known for its extreme climate
blizzard /'blɪz.əd/	: snowstorm
ice jam /,aɪs 'dʒæm/	: a blockage of ice in a river or water body
conflagration /ˌkɒn.flə'ɡreɪ.jən/	: destructive fire
spruce tree /spruːs triː/	: an evergreen tree found in cold regions
trail /treɪl/	: a path through a wilderness
smother /'smʌðə/	: to stop the air flow
flounder /'flaʊn.dər/	: to struggle clumsily
tinder /tɪndəː/	: very dry bark or grass that catches fire easily
sulphur matches /'sʌlfə 'mætʃɪz/	: old fashioned matches made with sulphur
thaw /θɔː/	: to melt
wolf dog /'wʊlf.dɒg/	: a mixed breed of wolf and dog
old timer /,əʊld'taɪmər/	: an experienced old man

**Let us discuss**

1. The man underestimates the power of nature and this affects the outcome of his journey. Evaluate this statement.
2. The story is built upon the theme of human arrogance versus animal instinct. Compare the effect of man's reasoning with the dog's instincts.
3. Analyse the role of nature as a character in the story and its influence on Man.
4. The man's death was inevitable. Justify this statement with evidence from the text.
5. Evaluate Jack London's portrayal of nature – is it realistic, exaggerated or symbolic? Justify your views.
6. Was the dog's loyalty a reflection of instinct or intelligence? Evaluate, with evidence from the story.
7. Analyse how fear and determination co-exist in the protagonist's mind.
8. Compare the man's mental strength and physical weakness in the story. How do they conflict and support each other?



Let us apply our thoughts

1. The relationship between humans and animals in the story reflect our connection to the natural world. Elaborate on this from your own experience.
2. Reflect the limitations of human knowledge in dealing with extreme natural conditions.
3. Analyse the importance of respecting natural forces when planning a journey or activity. Cite an example from your life.
4. List the survival strategies from the story that can be applied to life in the wilderness.
5. Compare the story with other survival stories you know.



Let us express ourselves

1. Draft a screenplay based on the story and enact it in class.
2. Attempt a role play on survival decisions and the challenges faced by man.
3. Design an awareness poster about the man – nature relationship.
4. Create a wall of consequences in the classroom, with the different sides dedicated to “Trophic Cascade,” “E is for E-waste,” “Maricha Kiliyude Manam”, “Earth Song” and “To Build a Fire” and draw arrows connecting the four sides to show the chain of consequences.



Let us go ahead

London, Jack. Jack London: An American Life—Earle Labor (Biography 2013)

Life of Pi <https://www.hotstar.com/in/movies/life-of-pi/1770000706>

To Build a Fire <https://www.justwatch.com/uk/movie/to-build-a-fire>

The Revenant <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1663202/>

The Grey <https://www.justwatch.com/in/movie/the-grey>

Into the Wild <https://www.netflix.com/in/title/70075064>

5

NEW LITERATURES

"Stories of imagination tend to upset those without one."

- Terry Pratchett

Let us explore the unit

Literature today is marked by dynamic turns in creative self expressions and active literary engagement. The boundaries of literature have been extended as never before. The traditional understanding of what counts as 'literary' has undergone innumerable change in the recent years. This unit introduces us to this evolving landscape through diverse new forms like Speculative Fiction, Electronic Literature, Graphic Narrative and Film Literature. They reflect the growing thrust for innovation both in theme and techniques.

The unit includes a short story "The Pedestrian" by Ray Bradbury, an essay *Electronic Literature* by Scott Rettberg, an excerpt of the graphic novel *Koprachevu* by Joshy Benedict and *The Great Dictator* by Charles Chaplin.





Let us begin

Read the lines in the picture below. It is a well-known story in six words attributed to Ernest Hemingway. It illustrates how narrative power can gain from brevity prompting readers to interpret meaning in individual ways. This is a precursor to contemporary flash fiction.



The story demonstrates that untold details can carry significance and encourages the active participation of readers in discovering meaning, providing ample space for imagination.

- Write a review of the story "For sale: baby shoes, never worn."
- Literary creations in the digital world now use fewer words to express ideas and emotions. Do you think using abbreviations and emojis in literature affects the literary aesthetic? Conduct a panel discussion on this pointing out the negative as well as positive implications.

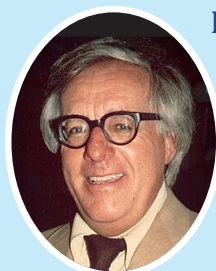
Before we begin

Speculative fiction, Science fiction

Speculative fiction is a literary genre that explores narratives diverging from reality in hypothetical scenarios, raising “what if” questions concerning the world, its history, and future. It is characterised by extensive world building and social commentary, with plots centred around large-scale events and innovative concepts. This genre includes subgenres such as science fiction, fantasy, horror, dystopian literature, alternate history, post-apocalyptic fiction and magical realism. Notable works in speculative fiction include George Orwell’s *1984*, Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* and Frank Herbert’s *Dune*. Included in speculative fiction, key themes in science fiction encompass the exploration of space and time, extra terrestrial life, societal models and speculative technologies such as artificial intelligence and tele-porting.



Let us know the author



Ray Bradbury (1920–2012) is a celebrated American fantasy and science fiction writer. He was self educated and had a prolific career in writing, mainly screenplays for iconic shows and adaptations. His most famous work, *Fahrenheit 451*, addresses the themes of censorship and technological anxiety. Other notable works include *The Martian Chronicles*, *The Illustrated Man*, *Dandelion Wine* and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. Bradbury’s writings focused on the dehumanising impact of technology and nostalgia for small town

America. He received numerous accolades, such as the Pulitzer Prize Special Citation and the National Medal of Arts, with NASA naming a rover landing site in his honour as “Bradbury Landing” in 2012.

The Pedestrian : An overview

The story was written in 1951, but is set in 2052-53. The story critiques technological advancements that could happen in future, ultimately harming humanity. The story follows Leonard Mead, who enjoys solitary evening walks through deserted streets while most people watch TV indoors. As he strolls, he senses a lack of human connection, often ‘speaking’ to the empty houses and wondering about the world inside. One night, he encounters a police car, which questions him about his profession and his evening activities. When he admits to simply walking, he is placed under arrest and taken to the Psychiatric Centre for Research on Regressive Tendencies. His arrest highlights the possible societal changes and loss of individual freedom in the future world. As he is driven away, he notices his brightly lit home, contrasting with the surrounding darkness. The narrative also contrasts Mead’s appreciation for nature with the bleakness of city life, highlighting his love of the outdoors against the backdrop of a technology-dominated society.

“

“I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots.” - Albert Einstein

”



Let us read and contemplate

The Pedestrian

Ray Bradbury



What did Mr. Leonard Mead love to do?

At what point in time does the story occur?

What was the usual routine of Mr. Leonard Mead's walks?

What were the phantoms mentioned here?

To enter out into that silence that was the city at eight o'clock of a misty evening in November, to put your feet upon that buckling concrete walk, to step over grassy seams and make your way, hands in pockets, through the silences, that was what Mr. Leonard Mead most dearly loved to do. He would stand upon the corner of an intersection and peer down long moonlit avenues of sidewalk in four directions, deciding which way to go, but it really made no difference; he was alone in this world of A.D. 2053, or as good as alone and with a final decision made, a path selected, he would stride off, sending patterns of frosty air before him like the smoke of a cigar.

Sometimes he would walk for hours and miles and return only at midnight to his house. And on his way he would see the cottages and homes with their dark windows and it was not unequal to walking through a graveyard where only the faintest glimmers of firefly light appeared in flickers behind the windows. Sudden gray phantoms seemed to manifest upon inner room walls where a curtain was still undrawn against the night, or there were whisperings and murmurs where a window in a tomblike building was still open.

Why are you walking?
What's your job?

I'm a writer.

Mr. Leonard Mead would pause, cock his head, listen, look and march on, his feet making no noise on the lumpy walk. For long ago he had wisely changed to sneakers when strolling at night, because the dogs in intermittent squads would parallel his journey with barkings if he wore hard heels and lights might click on and faces appear and an entire street be startled by the passing of a lone figure, himself, in the early November evening.

On this particular evening, he began his journey in a westerly direction, toward the hidden sea. There was a good crystal frost in the air; it cut the nose and made the lungs blaze like a Christmas tree inside; you could feel the cold light going on and off, all the branches filled with invisible snow. He listened to the faint push of his soft shoes through autumn leaves with satisfaction and whistled a cold quiet whistle between his teeth, occasionally picking up a leaf as he passed, examining its skeletal pattern in the infrequent lamplights as he went on, smelling its rusty smell.

"Hello, in there," he whispered to every house on every side as he moved. "What's up tonight on Channel 4, Channel 7, Channel 9? Where are the cowboys rushing and do I see the United States Cavalry over the next hill to the rescue?"

The street was silent and long and empty, with only his shadow moving like the shadow of a hawk in midcountry. If he closed his eyes and stood very still, frozen, he could imagine himself upon the center of a plain, a wintry, windless Arizona desert with no house in a thousand miles and only dry river beds, the streets, for company.

"What is it now?" he asked the houses, noticing his wrist watch. "Eight-thirty P.M.? Time for a dozen assorted murders? A quiz? A revue? A comedian falling off the stage?"

Was that a murmur of laughter from within a moon-white house? He hesitated, but went on when nothing more happened. He stumbled over a particularly uneven section of sidewalk. The cement was vanishing under flowers and grass. In ten years of walking by night or day, for thousands of miles, he had never met another person walking, not once in all that time.



Why did Mr. Mead change his shoes?

What did Mr. Mead see as he walked?

What did Mr. Mead whisper to every house?

Describe the street that Mr. Mead walked along.

To what does Mr. Mead compare the lonely street?

What sound did he hear from the moon-white house?



What was the intersection like during the day and at night?

What showed the fierce cone of light at Mr. Leonard Mead?

What did the metallic voice order Mr. Leonard Mead to do?

Why was Mr. Leonard Mead astonished by the sight of the police car?

He came to a cloverleaf intersection which stood silent where two main highways crossed the town. During the day it was a thunderous surge of cars, the gas stations open, a great insect rustling and a ceaseless jockeying for position as the scarab beetles, a faint incense pattering from their exhausts, skimmed homeward to the far directions. But now these highways, too, were like streams in a dry season, all stone and bed and moon radiance.

He turned back on a side street, circling around toward his home. He was within a block of his destination when the lone car turned a corner quite suddenly and flashed a fierce white cone of light upon him. He stood entranced, not unlike a night moth, stunned by the illumination and then drawn toward it.

A metallic voice called to him:

"Stand still. Stay where you are! Don't move!"

He halted.

"Put up your hands!"

"But-" he said.

"Your hands up! Or we'll shoot!"

The police, of course, but what a rare, incredible thing; in a city of three million, there was only one police car left, wasn't that correct? Ever since a year ago, 2052, the election year, the force had been cut down from three cars to one. Crime was ebbing; there was no need now for the police, save for this one lone car wandering and wandering the empty streets.

"Your name?" said the police car in a metallic whisper. He couldn't see the men in it for the bright light in his eyes.

"Leonard Mead," he said.

"Speak up!"

"Leonard Mead!"

"Business or profession?"

"I guess you'd call me a writer."



"No profession," said the police car, as if talking to itself. The light held him fixed, like a museum specimen, needle thrust through chest.

"You might say that, " said Mr. Mead. He hadn't written in years. Magazines and books didn't sell any more. Everything went on in the tomblike houses at night now, he thought, continuing his fancy. The tombs, ill-lit by television light, where the people sat like the dead, the grey or multi-coloured lights touching their faces, but never really touching them.

"No profession," said the phonograph voice, hissing. "What are you doing out?"

"Walking," said Leonard Mead.

"Walking!"

"Just walking," he said simply, but his face felt cold.

"Walking, just walking, walking?"

"Yes, sir."

"Walking where? For what?"

"Walking for air. Walking to see."

"Your address!"

"Eleven South Saint James Street."

"And there is air in your house, you have an air conditioner, Mr. Mead?"

"Yes."

"And you have a viewing screen in your house to see with?"

"No."

"No?" There was a crackling quiet that in itself was an accusation.

"Are you married, Mr. Mead?"

"No."



How did the police car question Mr. Leonard Mead?



"Not married," said the police voice behind the fiery beam, The moon was high and clear among the stars and the houses were grey and silent.

"Nobody wanted me," said Leonard Mead with a smile.

"Don't speak unless you're spoken to!"

Leonard Mead waited in the cold night.

"Just walking, Mr. Mead?"

"Yes."

"But you haven't explained for what purpose."

"I explained; for air and to see and just to walk."

"Have you done this often?"

"Every night for years."

The police car sat in the center of the street with its radio throat faintly humming.

"Well, Mr. Mead," it said.

"Is that all?" he asked politely.

"Yes," said the voice. "Here." There was a sigh, a pop. The back door of the police car sprang wide. "Get in."

"Wait a minute, I haven't done anything!"

"Get in."

"I protest!"

"Mr. Mead."

He walked like a man suddenly drunk. As he passed the front window of the car he looked in. As he had expected, there was no one in the front seat, no one in the car at all.

"Get in."



How did the
police car arrest
Mr Leonard?



He put his hand to the door and peered into the back seat, which was a little cell, a little black jail with bars. It smelled of riveted steel. It smelled of harsh antiseptic; it smelled too clean and hard and metallic. There was nothing soft there.

"Now if you had a wife to give you an alibi," said the iron voice. "But—"

"Where are you taking me?"

The car hesitated, or rather gave a faint whirring click, as if information, somewhere, was dropping card by punch-slotted card under electric eyes. "To the Psychiatric Center for Research on Regressive Tendencies."

He got in. The door shut with a soft thud. The police car rolled through the night avenues, flashing its dim lights ahead.

They passed one house on one street a moment later, one house in an entire city of houses that were dark, but this one particular house had all of its electric lights brightly lit, every window a loud yellow illumination, square and warm in the cool darkness.

"That's my house," said Leonard Mead.

No one answered him.

The car moved down the empty river-bed streets and off away, leaving the empty streets with the empty side-walks and no sound and no motion all the rest of the chill November night.



Why did the car smell of a jail?

Where did the police car take Mr. Leonard?

What did Mr. Leonard do when he saw his house?





Let us enrich our vocabulary

westerly /'westə·li/	:	facing the west; directed towards the west.
cloverleaf /'kləʊvəli:f/	:	a shape or pattern resembling a leaf of clover (with four parts)
intersection /,ɪntə'sekʃən/	:	the place where two or more points meet
metallic /mə'tælɪk/	:	having the quality of metal
rivettted /'rɪv.ɪtɪd/	:	to keep somebody very interested
illumination /ɪˌluː.mɪ'neɪ.ʃən/	:	bright colourful lights
sidewalk /'saɪdwɔ:k/	:	paved path for pedestrians
chill /tʃɪl/	:	an unpleasant feeling of coldness
alibi /'ælɪ.baɪ/	:	proof that one was not in a place when a crime was committed



Let us discuss

1. Why does Mr. Leonard Mead enjoy walking alone in the night? What does such behaviour reveal about him?
2. How does the empty city reflect the mood of the story?
3. Why does the police car consider Mr. Mead as 'abnormal'?
4. What role does television play in shaping the lives of the people in the story?
5. How does the story end? Comment on the ending of the story.



Let us apply our thoughts

1. Can you find parallels between the world of the story and the world we live in?
2. Imagine Leonard Mead does the same thing in our city now. How would his behaviour be viewed by the authorities of the city?
3. What would happen if people stopped reading, walking or talking to one another, as depicted in the story?

4. What could replace television if the story were set in today's digital age?
5. What lessons does the story offer about freedom, individuality and conformity?



Let us express ourselves

1. The character of the story, Mr. Leonard Mead enjoys solitary walks. 'Walking encourages us to observe the natural world, which can have a substantial impact on our mental and physical health.' Substantiate.
2. Can we view Mr. Mead as a symbol of freedom and individuality? Express your views.
3. Do you think the automated police car with its metallic voice symbolises the dehumanisation of law? Does this interrogation of Mr. Mead affect him? Explain.
4. In the context of virtual arrests, we can view Mr. Mead's arrest as a modern cyber attack. It raises questions about the legality of technology in policing. Do you think that over dependence on technology has led us to suspect even the simple act of walking. Substantiate your views with events in recent news.



Let us go ahead

Ray Bradbury. "The Pedestrian", The Reporter Magazine, The Fortnightly Publishing Company (1951).



Before we begin

Electronic Literature

One cannot live outside the technological world in the present day. Mobile phones, tablets, interactive games and social media are all part of our daily lives. We read, write, watch and share stories on screens. Because of our close relation with technology, we naturally connect ourselves with digital texts. Electronic literature combines words, images, sounds, links and movement, making reading interactive and engaging. Print literature is visually fixed and read in a linear way from beginning to end. Electronic literature, on the other hand, is often nonlinear and interactive. While printed books depend mainly on words, electronic texts may use visuals, hyperlinks and animations.



Let us know the author



Scott Rettberg is an American digital artist and scholar of electronic literature based in Bergen, Norway. He is co-founder and the first executive director of the Electronic Literature Organisation. Presently, he leads the Centre for Digital Narrative, a Norwegian Centre of Research Excellence. Rettberg is the author / co-author of novel-length pieces of electronic literature, including *The Unknown*, *Kind of Blue* and *Implementation*. His works have been exhibited both online and at art venues, such as the Krannert Art Museum.

Electronic Literature : An overview

Scott Rettberg, in his essay on electronic literature, attempts to define electronic literature as that which is shaped by the digital environment. He explains that electronic literature marks a key shift in reading practices, moving from linear, passive consumption to interactive, participatory and nonlinear modes of engagement. This transformation challenges traditional ideas of authorship, text and meaning, as readers may click, choose, navigate, or even co-create literary works. Rettberg links electronic literature to earlier avant-garde literary movements, such as Modernism, Dadaism and Postmodernism, which also questioned conventions and experimented with form, language and structure.

“

*Devices are not dangerous for literature. People can be dangerous for literature.
People, for example, who do not read. - Lazlo Krasznahorkai*

”



Let us read and contemplate

Electronic Literature

Scott Rettberg

Electronic literature is most simply described as new forms and genres of writing that explore the specific capabilities of the computer and network – literature that would not be possible without the contemporary digital context.

Electronic literature is an area that has rapidly developed as a field of creative practice, academic research and pedagogy over the past half-century, most intensively from the 1990s until the present. Computers and the network have radically affected many aspects of life for a significant proportion of people on the planet. Textuality and communications are now digitally mediated.

The first question asked by beginning readers of electronic literature – and even experienced readers encountering a new text – is “how do I read this?” For electronic literature, this question is not only hermeneutic – it refers not simply to how readers might encounter the meaning, style, themes and language of the work but also to how readers can operate the text-machine itself. As Espen Aarseth established in *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (1997), non-trivial effort is required from the reader of a cybertext in order to traverse the text – and this understanding of how to move through the text must happen before any kind of interpretative reading can take place. One reason to consider genre in electronic literature is to simplify that aspect of the process, to give readers a set of tools to enable them to understand “how to read” as they encounter the **new forms of digital writing** that electronic literature comprises.

While electronic literature must be read from a standpoint of media and platform-specificity, these new literary genres did



How does Scott Rettberg describe electronic literature?

Comment on the evolution of electronic literature over the past half century.

For electronic literature, reading is not just hermeneutic. What do you understand by this?



Does electronic literature negotiate with media and platform specificity? Explain.

Discuss the link between the various genres of electronic literature and 20th century avant-garde literary movements.

Why is the term “electronic literature” still controversial in the field?

What is ELO ? What were the conversations going on in ELO on electronic literature in the late 1990s?

not emerge from a cultural vacuum, but in response to and in conversation with literary and artistic traditions. The various genres of electronic literature such as **hypertext fiction, kinetic poetry, combinatory poetics, interactive fiction, network-based collective narrative, locative narrative, interactive textual installations and interactive cinema**, in fact owe significant debts to specific twentieth-century literary and avant-garde movements such as Dadaism, Surrealism, Modernism and Postmodernism, Situationism, Fluxus and others.

Defining electronic literature

The term “electronic literature” is controversial within the field itself. Detractors of the term claim that it is not specific enough – after all “electronic” refers essentially to any device powered by electricity and the boundaries of “literature” are equally murky. Others prefer that “digital literature” should refer to roughly the same body of work. John Cayley (2002) offers “writing in networked and programmable media” as a more specific term. “**E-Poetry**” and “**hypertext**” also have their specific adherents and Aarseth’s “**cybertext**” is a narrower term for texts with specific interactive properties. A key advantage of the term “electronic literature” is its generality and thus its ability to include those emerging genres that did not exist in the 1990s, when the term was first widely circulated. This may have contributed to the term’s longevity.

The establishment of the Electronic Literature Organization (ELO) in 1999 produced a need for a single term to be agreed upon. Even in the late 1990s, it was clear that the type of work writers were creating in digital media, using the specific computational properties of the computer and produced within cultural contexts of the global network, could not easily be pigeonholed into one specific category. At the time there was some distance between “hypertext fiction” and “E-Poetry” writing



communities, I was one of the founders of the ELO and took part in the conversations that lead to the adoption of “electronic literature” as a term to establish our frame of reference. The ELO board wanted to use a term that could encompass work produced in both of those contexts and others, independent of literary tradition or form. Virtually any definition or specific typology for electronic literature would likely become obsolete within a decade. New forms were already emerging then that challenged established generic boundaries and there was need for a term that would be open enough to encourage diverse approaches to writing in digital media. During this early period in the popular adoption of the Web, the ELO board was also trying to choose a term that might appeal to a general audience, one that would not sound so technical or jargon-heavy that it would scare away potential readers or writers who were coming from print traditions. During our discussion of the term at one of the first ELO board meetings, Robert Coover characterized the term as “charmingly old fashioned.” The term was purposefully anachronistic from the beginning – intended to mark both a break and continuity between contemporary literary practices in digital media and hundreds of years of literary tradition.

In 2004, the ELO put together a committee, led by Noah Wardrip-Fruin, to try to establish once and for all a definition that would be applicable to the forms of literary practice that the organization centrally focused on. The result was this statement and list of exemplary forms: Electronic literature, or e-lit, refers to works with important literary aspects that take advantage of the capabilities and contexts provided by the standalone or networked computer. Within the broad category of electronic literature are several forms and threads of practice, some of which are:

- **Hypertext fiction and poetry, on and off the Web**
- **Kinetic poetry presented in Flash and using other platforms**
- **Computer art installations, which ask viewers to read them or otherwise have literary aspects**
- **Conversational characters, also known as chat bots**
- **Interactive fiction**
- **Literary apps**
- **Novels that take the form of emails, SMS messages or blogs**



What was the definition of Electronic Literature established by the ELO?

Which are the forms and threads of practice within the broad category of electronic literature?

Let us familiarise:

Kinetic Poetry

<https://www.youtube.com/live/rciVwjB-pUrY?si=DP1-QDRT-211M2lj3>

Chat fiction

<https://youtu.be/KKan-P10QS5A?si=E89VtxvL-hkloz-cq>

Let us familiarise:

TWITTER FICTION



■ Brief encounters: writers try their hand at brevity. Illustration: Kelly Dyson

Geoff Dyer

I know I said that if I lived to 100 I'd not regret what happened last night. But I woke up this morning and a century had passed. Sorry.

James Meek

He said he was leaving her. "But I love you," she said. "I know," he said. "Thanks. It's what gave me the strength to love somebody else."

Jackie Collins

She smiled, he smiled back, it was lust at first sight, but then she discovered he was married, too bad it couldn't go anywhere.

- Poems and stories that are generated by computers, either interactively or based on parameters given at the beginning
- Collaborative writing projects that allow readers to contribute to the text of a work
- Literary performances online that develop new ways of writing

The list was not intended to be exhaustive, but instead to identify existing threads of practice and to encourage new ones to develop. A distinction that has clearly remained important over time is that between "e-books" and "e-lit." What we talk about when we talk about electronic literature is not primarily the digital environment as a new means of distribution for literature that could just as easily be printed in a book. There is no doubt that e-books have in the past two decades had significant effects on the way that literature is published, distributed and consumed. E-books have brought some new innovations in their own right – such as **social bookmarking** of texts and "**whispersync**" features that merge the experience of text and audio-book across different reading and listening devices – but they are not essentially, to use N. Katherine Hayles' term, "**born digital**" (Hayles, 2008).

Works of electronic literature are native to the digital environment – for the most part they could not easily be produced or consumed in print literary contexts. Stephanie Strickland argues that electronic literature "relies on code for its creation, preservation and display: there is no way to experience a work of e-literature unless a computer is running it – reading it and perhaps also generating it". These works depend in some essential way on the computer. Electronic literature is fundamentally **experimental literature**: the writers and artists producing these works are centrally concerned with new narrative forms and poetic approaches that could not exist in the absence of this computational context.

Considering the ELO's definition of electronic literature, Hayles took particular notice of the phrase "important literary aspects," pointing out that in some cases works of electronic literature operate in a literary context beyond the boundaries of what is typically considered literature. Some works refer to



How are the e-books and electronic literature distinguished in the text?

Why is electronic literature described as 'fundamentally experimental'?

literature or inscription, without themselves operating in the same signifying apparatus as literature in print contexts. Some examples of works in the Electronic Literature Collection, Volume One such as Giselle Beiguelman's *Code Movie 1* (2006) or Jim Andrews' *Nio* (2001) use language not as a direct semantic signifier, but instead as conceptual or visual material. The process of inscription and recoding, in Beiguelman's work, or the relationship between letters as visual form and representation of sound, in Andrews' work, take the place of **representational semantics**. The corpus of electronic literature is a literature of new literary forms, genres that have varying degrees of correspondence with those from previous traditions and contexts.

Novelty is undoubtedly central to electronic literature – its authors are trying out new tools and approaches and, in some sense, conducting experiments in the same way as scientists do in a lab, testing how materials work together, what sorts of reactions occur when new mixes of computational method and literary practice are cast into the same cauldron. But it is also the case that the new forms and thematic concerns of electronic literature do not merely emerge from the technology itself: instead they emerge from the interaction of new technologies with aesthetic concerns that have much longer histories. While the works' address are born digital, they are not exclusively of digital lineage. They have particularly deep connections to experimental writing and avant-garde art movements of the twentieth century.



Let us enrich

hermeneutic /,hɜː.mɪˈnjuː.tɪk/	: concerning the action of explaining the meaning of something
vacuum /vækjuəm/	: a space that is completely empty of substance
avant garde /,ævɑːˈɡɑːd /	: experimental
detractor /dɪˈtræktə(r)/	: a person who disparages someone or something
murky /ˈmɜːki/	: dark, unpleasant
longevity /lɒnˈdʒevɪti/	: long life
pigeonhole /ˈpɪdʒ.ən.həʊl/	: assign to a particular category
obsolete /ˈɒbsəliːt/	: no longer useful
anachronistic /ə,nakrəˈnɪstɪk/	: old fashioned
semantic /sɪˈmæntɪk/	: related to the meaning of words and phrases
corpus /ˈkɔː.pəs/	: collection of written or spoken texts
computation /,kɒmpjʊˈteɪʃən/	: relating to the working of computers



How are writers in electronic literature and scientists in labs compared in the text?

Electronic literature emerges from the interactions between new technology and aesthetic concerns of a much longer history. Explain.

Let us familiarise:

CHAT FICTION - SPECIMEN

- Julia
Where did you get this dog?
- Mom
I found her behind our house in the woods, why?
- Julia
She's sleeping at the end of my bed but has been acting a little weird.
- Julia
Her eyes are so human like.
- Mom
Okay... I'm sure she's fine, we will be back tomorrow.



Let us discuss

1. Electronic literature cannot be understood without considering its medium. What role does digital technology play in shaping new literary forms?
2. What is the role of the author in electronic literature? How does the role of the author change in electronic texts?
3. Explain how time, movement, interactivity and multimedia elements influence the reading experience in electronic literature.
4. Scott Rettberg explains that electronic literature uses digital technology for the creative process. How can Artificial Intelligence (AI) be used to create new forms of electronic literature? Give an example to explain your idea.



Let us apply our thoughts

1. Think of a digital text you have encountered recently (a game, interactive stories, social media narratives). How did it enhance your understanding of electronic literature?
2. 'The future of literature lies in the digital form.' Some argue that literature has its life in the print form. What do you think about it?
3. Imagine your school magazine is going digital. How will you create electronic literature content for the magazine?
4. Electronic literature combines text, sound and images. Choose a poem from your Course book and suggest how it can be transformed into a digital experience.
5. Imagine you are a part of a team creating a short digital narrative on climate change. What digital features (animation, sound, images) would you include?



Let us express ourselves

1. Electronic literature challenges the traditional idea of reading. Do you agree with this statement?
2. Do you think that electronic literature may change the way literature is taught in schools? Explain.
3. Can electronic literature be considered as serious or artistic as printed literature? Discuss using ideas from the essay.



Let us go ahead

Rettberg, Scott (2019). *Electronic Literature*, Polity Press, UK.

Hayles, Katherine (2008). *Electronic Literature*, New Horizons for the Literary, University of Notre Dame, US.

“

“All perceiving is also thinking, all reasoning is also intuition,
all observation is also invasion.”

- Rudolf Arnheim

”



Before we begin

Graphic narratives

Graphic novels combine text and sequential art into book-length works. They are different from regular comic books since they are self-contained, have a defined beginning, middle and end and often have more complex, adult, and more diverse stories. Graphic novels may be in paperback or hardcover form. They tell stories on their own, unlike earlier comic books that were serialised and needed to be read in sequential order to understand the tale. Will Eisner's book *A Contract with God* (1978) made the phrase 'graphic novel' prominent, but the art form had been around for a few years before that.

There are different types of graphic novels, such as fiction, non-fiction, memoir, fantasy and historical records. Some well-known examples are superhero stories like *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and *Dave Gibbons* and *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* by Frank Miller: non-fiction and memoir work like *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, which was the first graphic novel to win a Pulitzer Prize, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi and Manga titles such as *Death Note* and *Fullmetal Alchemist*. *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien may be seen as an example of graphic adaptation of the form and manner of classical literature.

There are a few differences between graphic novels and comic books. Comic books are usually shorter and part of continuing serials, while graphic novels are usually lengthier and have a full story arc. This is because graphic novels take longer to make than comic books, which come out quickly. Graphic novels became popular in the 1980s, thanks in large part to the success of *Maus* and *Watchmen*. Today, they are considered an important literary form and are often found in libraries and bookshops for people of all ages. They cover a wide range of genres, from superhero stories to complicated autobiographies and historical accounts.

Graphic novels are becoming more popular nowadays in Malayalam. These novels include well-known titles such as *Thakara* by Muraleedharan, *Pannimalathu* by Joshy Benedict and *Idivettu* from Kokkachi Publishers. *Thakara* is based on Padmarajan's movie and *Idivettu* depicts the life of a burglar in Kottayam. It is an upcoming genre in Malayalam, and people are still trying to come up with new ideas. B. M. Gafoor and Akbar Ali are two of the most important pioneers in the field and have set important models for future creators.



Let us know the author



Joshy Benedict is a graphic novelist from Kozhikode. He is a freelance animator, illustrator and creative director. His work *A Coconut Tree* won the Best Animation Short Film at the national level. He worked as a creative director for M. T. Vasudevan Nair's visualisation of short stories and on an animation work titled *Kalkkandam*, based on a collection of short poems by Kunjunni Mash. His first graphic novel, *The Pig Flip (Pannimalathu)* received wide acclaim in literary circles. It depicts the life of Babycha who struggles hard to keep away from his addiction of gambling.

Koprachevu : An overview

Koprachevu is a graphic novel by Joshy Benedict, originally published in Malayalam in 2017. Benedict is an animator and artist recognised for his acclaimed short film, *A Coconut Tree*. The novel is distinguished by its visual stylistics which employs artistic narrations with minimal text, akin to the cinematographer's narrative technique. The central theme revolves around a fierce conflict between two families over a 'koprachevu', a traditional tiled-roof shed in northern Keralam for storing and drying the molds of coconuts as copra. The narrative delves into the struggles of the village community in Keralam highlighting the jealousy and tensions that arise from this dispute. A key moment in the story is when 'Shourichettan' ignites the 'koprachevu', leading to further events. The book's artistic approach relies heavily on illustrations rather than conventional text, creating a cinematic atmosphere that captures the essence of rural Keralam.

Let us begin

To gain a comprehensive understanding of graphic novels, particularly their unique narrative techniques, artistic styles and cultural significance, let us explore a segment of the graphic novel *The Coconut Larder (Koprachevu)*.



Let us read and contemplate

The Coconut Larder (Koprachevu)

Wet Drying - Day Three



'Is it raining?
Hell! It rains!'



'Where're you?
It's raining..
the water will
soak up the dried
coconuts.
God!'



'Gah! Where
the hell
are you?'

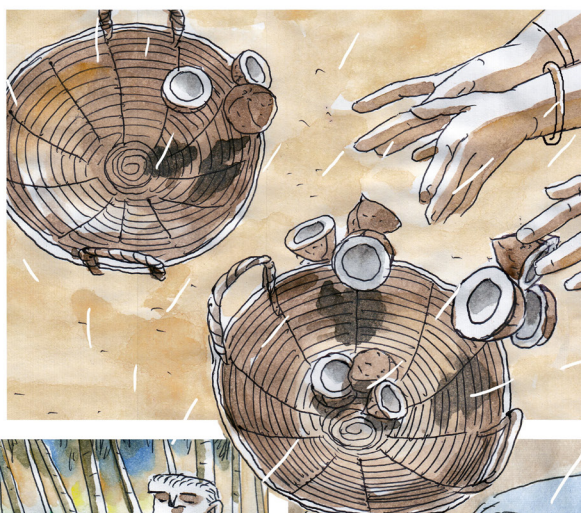








‘When it started drizzling, I thought of the coconuts left here. Forget old grudges. Hurry, take out the baskets. Looks like it’s going to pour.’



Translated by : Santhosh Karunakaran Thampi



Let us discuss

1. How does the author weave together various scenes to portray an event?
2. Why are the characters in the graphic narrative trying hard to keep the coconuts dry?
3. What do you know about the term 'Koprachevu'?
4. The term 'Koprachevu' is very important in the lives of coconut farmers like Shourichettan. Discuss the relevance of the title 'Koprachevu' for the novel.



Let us apply our thoughts

1. Keralam is often called the 'Land of Coconuts' and coconut is always part of our agro industry. After going through the given part of the graphic narrative what do you think about it?
2. Based on the given piece of graphic novel, describe how graphic novel works as a new medium of story telling and how far is it different from the traditional forms of literature.
3. What do you think about the techniques of drawing that makes the given piece of graphic narrative effective?



Let us express ourselves

1. Just like a movie, a graphic novel speaks through the impact of visuals rather than through the words of text. Try to rework the story into a movie. Draft a script in groups.
2. The excerpt presents the life of coconut farmers trying to earn their livelihood battling climate change. Discuss the life of the coconut farmers who face such challenges and adversities.

“Photography is truth. The cinema is truth twenty-four times per second.”

- Jean- Luc Godard

The Language of Cinema



Before we begin

Cinema: Telling Stories Through Images

Cinema is a powerful art form in which every scene plays a role in telling a story. We live in a world surrounded by visuals and cinema is one of the earliest and most influential forms of modern visual communication. When we read a story, we understand it through words and description. However, when we watch a cinema, the story unfolds through images, sounds, expressions and movements. This unique way of storytelling creates what is known as the visual language of cinema. Behind every cinema is a written plan called a script, which guides how the story will be transformed from words on a page into moving images on the screen.

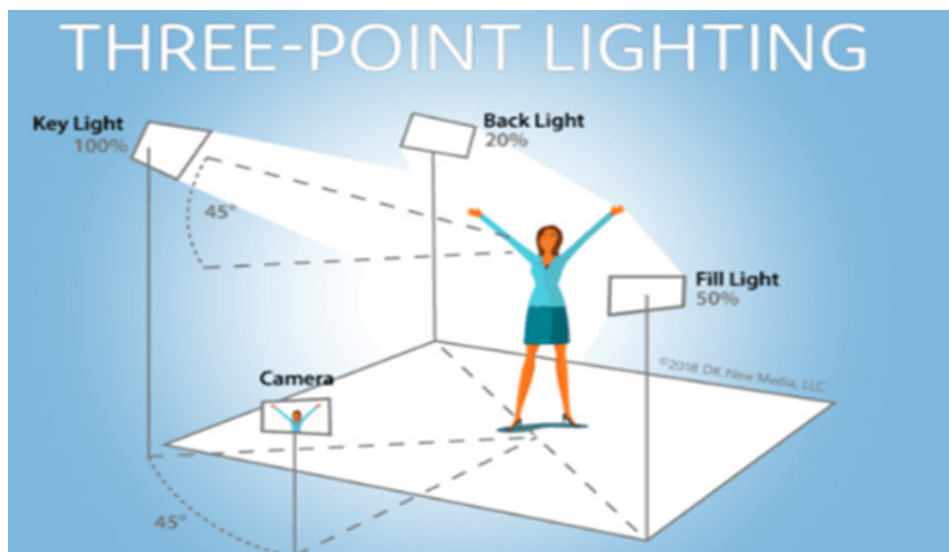
Script / Screenplay

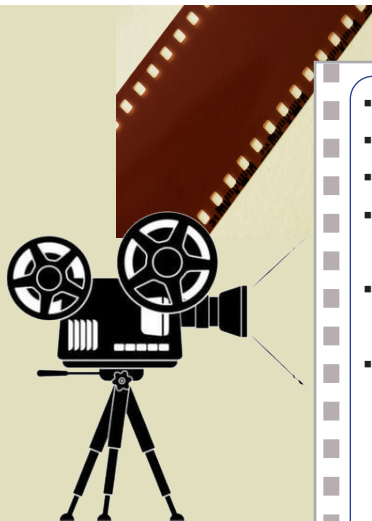
A cinema script, or screenplay, serves as the written blueprint for the cinema. It comprises several critical components: scene headings, which indicate the place and time of each scene; action descriptions, detailing what is visually presented on screen; and dialogue, which captures what characters say. Each of these elements is essential for guiding the production and conveying the narrative effectively. Unlike a novel, a script does not describe a character's thoughts or feelings in great detail. Instead, it presents the story through what can be seen and heard on the screen. Actions, facial expressions, body language, settings and movements help the audience understand what the characters feel or think. Dialogues are usually brief and meaningful, while visuals do much of the storytelling. In this way, a script depends on visual elements rather than on long explanations, allowing the cinema to communicate emotions and ideas through images and actions rather than words.



Let us understand the structure and features of a script :

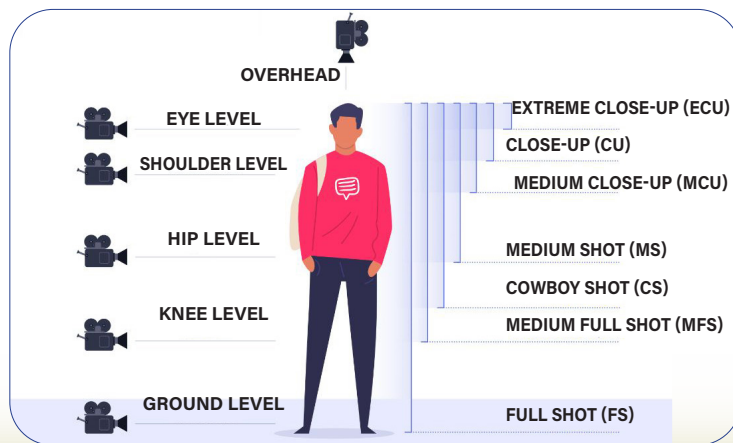
- **Clear Structure** : A cinema script usually follows a clear beginning, middle and end. This helps the story movement and keeps the audience engaged.
- **Visual Storytelling** : Scripts focus on actions, settings and movements rather than long descriptions. What the audience sees is more important than what characters think.
- **Strong Characters** : Characters are shown through their behaviour, dialogue and decisions. Their actions reveal their personality and emotions.
- **Effective Dialogue** : Dialogue is true to life, natural and purposeful. It moves the story forward and reveals character-traits.
- **Scene Descriptions** : Scene descriptions are brief and clear, explaining only what is needed for the audience to understand the setting and action.
- **Show, Don't Tell** : Instead of explaining emotions or ideas, the script shows them through gestures, expressions and actions.
- **Conflict and Tension** : Every scene includes some form of conflict or challenge to retain interest and drive the story forward.
- **Standard Format** : Scripts follow a standard format with scene headings, action lines, character names and dialogues arranged clearly for easy reading.
- **Use of Visual Symbols** : Objects, colours or repeated actions may be used to suggest meaning rather than to state it.
- **Smooth Scene transitions** : Scenes connect logically, ensuring the story flows naturally from one moment to the next.





Let us familiarise ourselves with these terms:

- **Scene** : A part of the cinema taking place in one location.
- **Setting** : The place and time of the story.
- **Shot** : A continuous image captured by the camera.
- **Framing** : What is included or excluded within the frame, which guides the viewers' attention.
- **Editing** : The process of selecting, arranging and joining the shots of a cinema in a meaningful order to tell a clear and engaging story of shots.
- **Camera Angle** : The position of the camera (High, Low, Eye-level). It guides viewers' thoughts - How we see a character/event or scene in a cinema.



<https://www.midjourneycompendium.ch/advanced/cinematic-prompting>

Transforming ideas, anxieties and aspirations into visual images

Cinema is a very powerful medium which is able to transform abstract ideas into visuals. Charlie Chaplin's 'The Great Dictator' is a good example of the transformative power of ideas and visuals. In the final speech of the cinema, the speaker articulates a powerful denunciation of dictatorship, greed and hatred, as well as the dangers of the misuse of technology. Chaplin passionately implores humanity to resist tyranny and violence, advocating instead for kindness, unity, democracy and compassion.



Let us know the author



Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin (1889–1977) was a prominent English comic actor, filmmaker and composer, renowned for his contributions to the silent film. His iconic character, The Tramp, solidified his status as a significant figure in cinema history, with a career lasting over 75 years. Many of his films, such as *The Gold Rush*, *City Lights*, *Modern Times* and *The Great Dictator*, are frequently cited among the greatest films of all time.

Now let us read the script of the final speech in *The Great Dictator*, directed by Charlie Chaplin.



Let us read and contemplate

Final Speech in The Great Dictator

- Charlie Chaplin

I'm sorry, but I don't want to be an emperor. That's not my business. I don't want to rule or conquer anyone. I should like to help everyone - if possible - Jew, Gentile - black man - white. We all want to help one another. Human beings are like that. We want to live by each other's happiness - not by each other's misery. We don't want to hate and despise one another. In this world there is room for everyone. And the good earth is rich and can provide for everyone. The way of life can be free and beautiful, but we have lost the way.



Why does the speaker refuse to be an emperor?

How according to the speaker has greed affected humanity?

Why does the speaker say that knowledge has made people cynical?



Greed has poisoned men's souls, has barricaded the world with hate, has goose-stepped us into misery and bloodshed. We have developed speed, but we have shut ourselves in. Machinery that gives abundance has left us in want. Our knowledge has made us cynical. Our cleverness, hard and unkind. We think too much



How have modern human inventions changed human relationships?

What tone does the speaker adopt when addressing the suffering mass of people?

Why does the speaker urge people not to despair?

What, according to the speaker, will happen to the dictators of the world?

In what ways are soldiers dehumanised by rulers?

What figures of speech are used in the reference to men as machines and cattle?

What is the distinction between the loved and the unloved?

What is the biblical reference in the paragraph?

What kind of a new world does the speaker envision?

What final call to action does the speaker make to the soldiers?

and feel too little. More than machinery we need humanity. More than cleverness we need kindness and gentleness. Without these qualities, life will be violent and all will be lost...

The aeroplane and the radio have brought us closer together. The very nature of these inventions cries out for the goodness in men - cries out for universal brotherhood - for the unity of us all. Even now my voice is reaching millions throughout the world - millions of despairing men, women and little children - victims of a system that makes men torture and imprison innocent people.

To those who can hear me, I say - do not despair. The misery that is now upon us is but the passing of greed - the bitterness of men who fear the way of human progress. The hate of men will pass and dictators die and the power they took from the people will return to the people. And so long as men die, liberty will never perish...

Soldiers! don't give yourselves to brutes - men who despise you - enslave you - who regiment your lives - tell you what to do - what to think and what to feel! Who drill you - diet you - treat you like cattle, use you as cannon fodder. Don't give yourselves to these unnatural men - machine men with machine minds and machine hearts! You are not machines! You are not cattle! You are men! You have the love of humanity in your hearts! You don't hate! Only the unloved hate - the unloved and the unnatural! Soldiers! Don't fight for slavery! Fight for liberty!

In the 17th Chapter of St Luke it is written: "the Kingdom of God is within man" - not one man nor a group of men, but in all men! In you! You, the people have the power - the power to create machines. The power to create happiness! You, the people, have the power to make this life free and beautiful, to make this life a wonderful adventure.

Then - in the name of democracy - let us use that power - let us all unite. Let us fight for a new world - a decent world that will give men a chance to work - that will give youth a future and old age a

security. By the promise of these things, brutes have risen to power. But they lie! They do not fulfil that promise. They never will!

Dictators free themselves but they enslave the people! Now let us fight to fulfil that promise! Let us fight to free the world - to do away with national barriers - to do away with greed, with hate and intolerance. Let us fight for a world of reason, a world where science and progress will lead to all men's happiness. Soldiers! in the name of democracy, let us all unite!



Let us enrich

conquer / 'kɒŋkər/	: to take control of a place or people by force
cynical / 'sɪnɪkəl/	: contemptuous or distrustful of human nature
misery / 'mɪz.əri/	: great unhappiness or suffering
barricaded / 'bær.ɪ.keɪ.dɪd/	: blocked with a barrier
goose step / 'guːs ,step/	: a military marching step in which the legs are not bent at the knee
despise / dɪ'spaɪz/	: feel contempt or dislike
torture / 'tɔːtʃə(ɹ)/	: to cause great pain
brute /bruːt/	: a cruel or violent man
cannon fodder / 'kæn.ən ,fɒd.ər/	: soldiers regarded merely as material to be killed in war (food for guns and cannons)
slavery / 'sleɪvəri/	: the state of being a slave
liberty / 'lɪb.ə.ti/	: the freedom to live as one chooses
barrier / 'bæriə/	: a fence
intolerance / ɪn'tɒl.ərəns/	: unwillingness to accept the beliefs, behaviour and views of others



Let us discuss

1. What contradiction does the speaker point out about machines and human progress?
2. Who are described as the victims of the modern system?

3. What does the speaker mean when he says, "Dictators free themselves but they enslave their people"?
4. How does the speaker define true humanity?



Let us apply our thoughts

1. What responsibilities do citizens have in a democratic nation?
2. How does the message of the speech apply to the people in power today?
3. Can education help prevent hatred and intolerance? Explain with reference to the speech.
4. How is the speaker's criticism of greed relevant in today's world?
5. Do you think that technological progress has brought happiness to humanity? Elaborate.
6. How does Charlie Chaplin criticise dictatorship in *The Great Dictator*?



Let us express ourselves

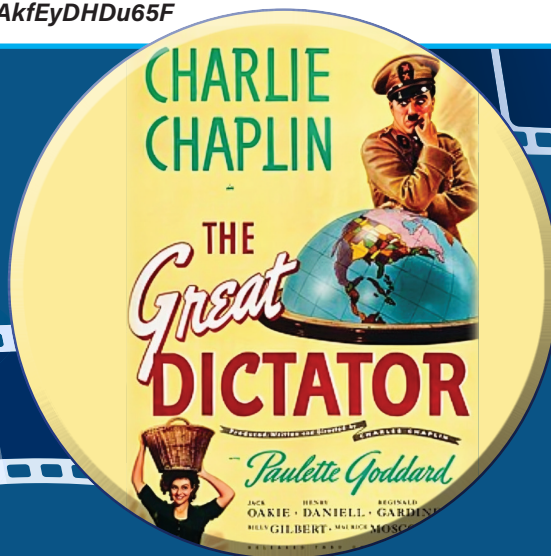
1. Do you agree with the speaker's words "We think too much and feel too little"?
2. Which lines or idea of the speech impressed you the most? Why?
3. Write a short paragraph on what freedom means to you.
4. Express your opinion on whether hatred is natural or learnt.
5. If you could deliver this speech today, what changes would you make?
6. How does Charlie Chaplin visualise the new world in *The Great Dictator*?
7. Make a short cinema based on the notions and ideas derived from the final speech in *The Great Dictator*.
8. In his speech, Chaplin discusses the system that forces men to torture and imprison innocent people. Make a script for a short film revealing the 'system', the 'power', the 'role of narration' that he mentions.
9. Use the above script to produce a short cinema with the help of your classmates.
10. Write the review of a socially relevant cinema which you have watched recently.



Let us go ahead

Let us read the original script of the movie *The Great Dictator*. Please find the first and last part of the script of the speech before you read the entire script using the given link.

<https://share.google/v0iwRAkfEyDHDu65F>



The Great Dictator

I'm sorry
but I don't want to be an emperor.
That's not my business.
I don't want to rule
or conquer anyone.
I should like to help everyone:
Jew, gentile, black man, white.
We all want to help one another.
Human beings are like that.
We want to live by each other's
happiness, not misery.

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.....
.....
.....

Let us fight for a world of reason,
a world where science and progress
will lead to the happiness of all.
Soldiers, in the name of democracy,
let us unite! ■

Let us watch a few movies

- *Adoloscent* (2025) (Four-part TV series)
- *Parasite* (2019)
- *Titanic* (1998)
- *Pursuit of Happyness* (2006)
- *Children of Heaven* (2006)

KEY TO PHONETIC SYMBOLS

VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS

/i:/ as in see /si:/	/ə/ as in ago /ə'gəʊ/
/ɪ/ as in sit /sɪt/	/ɜ:/ as in fur /fɜ:(r)/
/e/ as in ten /ten/	/eɪ/ as in page /peɪdʒ/
/æ/ as in hat /hæt/	/aɪ/ as in five /faɪv/
/ɑ:/ as in arm /'ɑ:m/	/ɔɪ/ as in join /dʒɔɪn/
/ɒ/ as in got /gɒt/	/aʊ/ as in now /naʊ/
/ɔ:/ as in saw /sɔ:/	/əʊ/ as in home /həʊm/
/ʊ/ as in put /pʊt/	/ɪə/ as in near /nɪə(r)/
/u:/ as in too /tu:/	/eə/ as in hair /heə(r)/
/ʌ/ as in cup /kʌp/	/ʊə/ as in pure /pjʊə(r)/

CONSONANTS

/p/ as in pen /pen/	/ʃ/ as in she /ʃi:/
/b/ as in bad /bæd/	/ʒ/ as in vision /'vɪʒ.ən/
/t/ as in tea /ti:/	/h/ as in how /haʊ/
/d/ as in did /dɪd/	/tʃ/ as in chin /tʃɪn/
/k/ as in cat /kæt/	/dʒ/ as in June /dʒu:n/
/g/ as in got /gɒt/	/m/ as in man /mæn/
/f/ as in fall /fɔ:l/	/n/ as in no /nəʊ/
/v/ as in voice /vɔɪs/	/ŋ/ as in sing /sɪŋ/
/θ/ as in thin /θɪn/	/l/ as in leg /leg/
/ð/ as in then /ðen/	/r/ as in red /red/
/s/ as in so /səʊ/	/j/ as in yes /jes/
/z/ as in zoo /zu:/	/w/ as in wet /wet/

CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Part IV A

FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES OF CITIZENS

ARTICLE 51 A

Fundamental Duties- It shall be the duty of every citizen of India:

- (a) to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem;
- (b) to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom;
- (c) to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;
- (d) to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;
- (e) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;
- (f) to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture;
- (g) to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, wild life and to have compassion for living creatures;
- (h) to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform;
- (i) to safeguard public property and to abjure violence;
- (j) to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievements;
- (k) who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between age of six and fourteen years.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Dear Children,

*Wouldn't you like to know about your rights? Awareness about your rights will inspire and motivate you to ensure your protection and participation, thereby making social justice a reality. You may know that a commission for child rights is functioning in our state called the **Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights**.*

Let's see what your rights are:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Right to freedom of speech and expression.• Right to life and liberty.• Right to maximum survival and development.• Right to be respected and accepted regardless of caste, creed and colour.• Right to protection and care against physical, mental and sexual abuse.• Right to participation.• Protection from child labour and hazardous work.• Protection against child marriage.• Right to know one's culture and live accordingly. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protection against neglect.• Right to free and compulsory education.• Right to learn, rest and leisure.• Right to parental and societal care, and protection. |
|--|--|

Major Responsibilities

- Protect school and public facilities.
- Observe punctuality in learning and activities of the school.
- Accept and respect school authorities, teachers, parents and fellow students.
- Readiness to accept and respect others regardless of caste, creed or colour.

Contact Address:



Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights

'Sree Ganesh', T. C. 14/2036, Vanross Junction

Kerala University P. O., Thiruvananthapuram - 34, Phone : 0471 - 2326603

Email: childrights.cpcr@kerala.gov.in, rte.cpcr@kerala.gov.in

Website : www.kescpcr.kerala.gov.in

Child Helpline - 1098, Crime Stopper - 1090, Nirbhaya - 1800 425 1400

Kerala Police Helpline - 0471 - 3243000/44000/45000

Online R. T. E Monitoring : www.nireekshana.org.in