



UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT
SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

**B. A ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND
LITERATURE**

(I SEMESTER)

Core Course: ENG1B01

INTRODUCING LITERATURE

(2019 ADMISSION ONWARDS)

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SELF-LEARNING MATERIAL

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Introducing Literature

The paper “Introducing Literature” tries to explain the linguistic, social and cultural elements which go into the making of literature. The paper tries to tell the students why literature is needed and how it is written. The text takes a practical look at literature and analyses literary works to see what they are made of.

The first part of the paper deals with the linguistic aspects of literature. How is literary language different from normal language? The next part of the text familiarises students with poetic techniques used by writers. Another important subject of discussion is how diverse points of view are incorporated in the text. The students are trained to read beyond the literal meaning of texts. Students also learn to understand the ideologies behind texts. The text also helps readers to distinguish marginalised voices within literary works.

Module 1:

Language and its Literary Nuances

The first module of “Introducing Literature” is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the syntax of language while the second part deals with the literary techniques which transform ordinary language into literary language.

Syntax

The language that is used in literature is different from ordinary language. While scientific and ordinary languages are objective and direct, literary language is creative and imaginative. Writers often use language in innovative ways and experiment with language. They put language to the best use and explore all the possibilities of language.

While ordinary language is used to convey simple messages, literature deals with complex emotions that people experience in their life. It is important to understand the structure of a language in order to understand its literature. The problem faced by many Malayalam speakers is the difference between the structure of English and Malayalam. In Malayalam, the meaning of a sentence does not change when the order of the words change. For example, “Raman Ravanane konnu”, means the same as “Ravanan Ramanal kollappettu”. However in English this is not the case. Rama killed Ravana and Ravana killed Rama do not have the same meaning.

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Verbs are words which denote action in a language. Transitive and Intransitive are two types of verbs.

“Mary ate a biscuit”. In this sentence “ate” is the verb. If the verb answers the question “what” or “whom”, then we can say that, the verb is a transitive verb. So if we ask the question, “What did Mary eat?” The answer is “Mary ate a biscuit”. Thus “ate” is a transitive verb.

Other examples of transitive verbs -

Alex **sent** a postcard from Argentina. She **left** the keys on the table.

My father **took** me to the movies.

Now let us look at intransitive verbs. Consider this sentence. “He walked home”. If we ask the question “What did he walk”, we do not get an answer. Thus we can say that **walk** is an intransitive verb.

There are certain sentences like “I gave him some money”, which answer not only the question, what was given, but also to whom it was given. Such verbs which take two objects are known as di-transitive verbs. Verbs which take only a single verb are known as mono-transitive verbs.

Let us look at some other examples.

She **hesitated** for a moment.

They **skate** together.

Adjuncts

Adjuncts are words, phrases or clauses that accompany an Intransitive verb which answer the question where, how and when the action took place.

For example, in the sentence “He spoke last night”, “last night” is a phrase which answers the question when. Similarly in the sentence, “He spoke at the seminar”, “at the seminar” is the answer to the question where. In the sentence, “He spoke uneasily”, the word uneasily answers the question how.

Even if adjunct part of the sentence is removed it does not affect the other words in the sentence.

E.g. John helped Bill in New York

Inversion

Writers often change the order of words in a sentence to create a sense of novelty (newness) in the minds of the reader. However we will not be able to understand this inversion (change of order) unless we are familiar with the usual order of words in that language. Thus an understanding of the structure or syntax of language is necessary to understand and appreciate literature properly.

A writer may even invert the order of words to give emphasis to one thing over another. Let us look at an example from the story “Eyes of the Cat” by Ruskin Bond.

“Her steps seem to grow lighter, her limbs more sinewy as she moved gracefully, softly over the mountain path.”

In this sentence, how the cat moves is given more importance than where she moves.

Native speakers often use small particles with verbs although they do not make any change to the meaning of what is being said. For example instead of saying stand, native speakers say, stand up. Up is a particle which is used with the verb stand in this case.

However there are certain particles which change the meaning of the verb when they are used along with a verb. Such verbs are known as phrasal verbs. Examples: look after, put on, put up with etc.

The word put means to place something. For example, “put the book on the table.” However the phrasal verb “put on” means to wear. Example: “Put on your hat.” On is a particle used with the verb put in this case.

Examples from poetry -

‘Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines’

This line is from “Sonnet 18” by William Shakespeare. Instead of saying “the eye of heaven shines too hot”, he inverts it to make it literary.

Collocation

Collocations are conventional word combinations which are used in a language. Strong is a word which is often used with tea, but it is not usually used with rain. We often use the phrase strong tea, but we do not say strong rain. Instead we say “heavy rain”. Such combinations in a language are known as collocations.

Examples -

To do the homework

To make the bed

To take a risk

Sense groups

In language the meaning of a sentence may not depend on a single word. Meaning is often dependent on a group of words used together. Such groups of words which contribute to the meaning of a sentence are known as **sense groups**. Sense groups are so important that at times how we group the words in a sentence determines the meaning of the sentence.

For example: “Woman without her man / is a big zero”, is different from, “Woman / without her / man is a big zero”. In the first sentence a woman is zero without her man whereas in the second sentence, a man is zero without his woman. Thus where we pause within a sentence often determine its meaning. Speakers are expected to pause at the end of a sense group to make the meaning clear.

Example -

When I went to the market / it was crowded.

Parataxis

Parataxis is a technique used in literature in which sentences or ideas are linked together by listing them out. These parallel sentence constructions are known as Parataxis.

E.g. 1) “The leopard had sprung at her throat”, 2) “broken her neck” 3) “and dragged her into the bushes”.

Hypotaxis

In hypotaxis, different clauses are linked together by using words like although, unless, because, while, whenever etc and one clause is subordinate to another. This means that one of the clauses is dependent on the other.

E.g. While he cooked my breakfast, I slept.

The Poetic

Poetry finds novel ways of expressing ideas and emotions. In ordinary usage, language is used in a limited sense. Only the obvious meaning is evoked. This meaning is known as denotative meaning. In poetry however the indirect meaning of words and

sentences are implied. This meaning is known as connotative meaning.

Eg. I have to go miles miles before I seep

The line given above is from Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening".

Denotative meaning: The speaker has a long distance to travel to reach his destination.

Connotative meaning: The speaker has lots of responsibilities to fulfill before he dies.

Comparison

One way of enriching the meaning of an expression is to compare the idea to something else. Often an abstract idea is compared to a concrete image. Love is a feeling which cannot be seen or heard. However love can be expressed through a concrete object like a flower which can be seen and touched.

E.g. My love is like a red red rose.

Imagery

Imagery refers to the use of a series of images to convey a feeling or idea. The image of a lone cloud floating over a valley can be used to express the loneliness of the writer.

E.g. I wandered lonely as a cloud

The line is from Wordsworth's poem with the same title as the line mentioned above

Metaphor

Metaphors are comparisons in which the two things are equated to each other.

E.g. He was a lion on the battlefield.

Here the man and the lion are equated. Words like "as" and "like" are not used. Metaphors can be considered as symbols also. For example, a 'red rose' is considered as the symbol of love.

E.g. from poetry -

She's all states and all princes, I...

The line is from John Donne's "The Sun Rising"

Simile

Simile is a form of comparison in which one thing is compared to another by using words like **as, like** etc. E.g. He was like a lion on the battlefield.

When we compare one thing to another the qualities of one thing is ascribed to the other. For example, when we compare love to a rose, the beauty and fragrance of the rose is ascribed to love.

E.g. from poetry -

Oh my love's like a red, red rose..

Oh my love's like a melodie

These lines were written by Robert Burns. The poem is "A Red, Red Rose"

Personification

When we attribute human qualities to something non-human or consider a non-human entity as a human, it is known as personification. Personification makes the unfamiliar familiar to us.

E.g. "Because I could not stop for Death -

He kindly stopped for me" - These are lines from a poem written by Emily Dickinson.

"I am silver and exact, I have no preconceptions".

These lines are spoken by a mirror. The mirror is personified by Sylvia Plath in her poem "The Mirror".

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a kind of exaggerated comparison. In order to express the intensity of an emotion extremely, a writer compares his emotion to something which is bigger than it. For example, a writer may compare a tear to a flood to convey the intensity of the sorrow. Hyperbole can be considered as an amplified simile or metaphor.

E.g. Bright like a sun

E.g. from poetry -

Homer in Illiad says, " Mars cried out as loudly as nine or 10 thousand men".

Apart from ideas, poetry also uses music to add more value to the poem. Rhythms and rhymes are techniques which are used to add to the musical quality of the poem.

Syllables

Syllables are the smallest unit of utterance. A syllable is considered as a group of sounds which is uttered together. A word may consist of one or more syllables. **Bud** is a word which consists of a single syllable. However the word **summer** consists of two syllables sum/mer. Certain syllables are given more prominence over others. The emphasis given to certain syllables is known as **stress**. All the syllables in a word are not stressed equally. Some syllables are stressed while others are unstressed.

Rhythm

Similarly some words in a sentence are given more stress compared to others. The presence of stressed and unstressed words in a sentence creates rhythm in speech as well as poetry. English is therefore known as a stress-timed language.

Metre

Metre refers to the number of feet in a line of poetry. Foot consists of a combination of stressed and/or unstressed syllables. If a line consists of just one foot, then it is known as monometre. Similarly two feet lines are dimetre, three feet lines are trimetre, four feet lines are tetrametre and five feet lines are pentameter. Instead of the word feet, beats can also be used.

An iamb is a feet in which an unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed syllable. Five iambs are present in an iambic pentametre. The iambic pentametre is a common metre in English.

Eg. And (one) and (two) and (three) and (four) and (five).
The words given in the bracket are the stressed syllables in the line.

When a stressed syllable is followed by an unstressed syllable in a feet, it is known as trochee.

Eg. (In) the (for)ests (of) the (night). The syllables given in the brackets are stressed.

Punctuation also plays an important role in conveying the meaning and emotion in poetry.

If a complete thought is expressed in a line in poetry, it is known as end-stopped lines.

E.g. “The woods decay, the woods decay and fall
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground”.

However in certain lines the idea is not complete and runs on to the next line. Such lines are known as run **on lines or enjambment**. Enjambment helps the writer to convey the confusion or indecision in the mind of the speaker.

“I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent but only
Vaulting ambition...”

Similarly, the speaker in a poem might pause in the middle of a line. Such pauses are known as **caesura**.

E.g. “Vaulting ambition / which o’erleaps itself
And falls on the other / - How now! What news?”
(/ represents a pause in the line.)

Module 2

Polyphony in Texts

Point of view

There are different points of view from which a story can be narrated. If the story is told from the point of view of the author or the central character, we can say that the story is narrated in the **first-person point of view**. For example, the novel *Treasure Island* by R. L. Stevenson is narrated by the protagonist (central character) Jim Hawkins. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle is narrated by the sidekick Dr. Watson.

If a story is narrated by an observer who is not part of the narrative, then the story is narrated in the **third person point of view**. Most times such narrators are **omniscient**, which means that they know everything about the story and the characters. Sometimes the narrators know everything about only one character, thus they are **limited**. For example, in the novel *1984* by George Orwell, the narrator knows only about the thoughts and feeling of the protagonist, Winston. However in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, the narrator knows everything about every character. Thus the narrator is omniscient.

Some stories or novels may be narrated from multiple perspectives. For example, the novel *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie is narrated by a third person narrator from the perspective of five different characters in different chapters. This enables the author to express multiple ideas and view points in the novel.

Polyphony

Perspective is very important in any story as the perspective expresses the intentions of the author and controls the meaning of the narrative. Some novelists employ a technique which gives importance to the point of view of one character, but also makes room for the point of view of other characters. The novel, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe is narrated by an omniscient

narrator who gives importance to the protagonist Okonkwo, but at the same time other characters are also given space to express themselves. Such novels are termed as **polyphonic or dialogic** by critics. The terms were used by Mikhail Bakhtin to describe the novels of Dostoevsky.

Polyphony brings about more balance and objectivity to the narrative. Novels are different from epics which usually focus on a single character. Novels usually present the view points of multiple characters in the story. Some writers take polyphony to the extreme and narrate the same event from the perspective of different characters. The Japanese film *Rashomon* by Akira Kurosawa for example, tells the story of a murder from different perspectives.

Allusion

Allusion is a brief and indirect reference to a person, place, thing or idea of historical, cultural, literary or political significance. It does not describe in detail the person or thing to which it refers. It is just a passing comment and the writer expects the reader to possess enough knowledge to spot the allusion and grasp its importance in a text.

For instance, you make a literary allusion the moment you say, “I do not approve of this quixotic idea,” Quixotic means stupid and impractical derived from Cervantes’s “Don Quixote”, a story of a foolish knight and his misadventures.

The use of allusions is not confined to literature alone. Their occurrence is fairly common in our daily speech. Look at some common allusion examples in everyday life:

“Don’t act like a Romeo in front of her.” – “Romeo” is a reference to Shakespeare’s Romeo, a passionate lover of Juliet, in “Romeo and Juliet”.

“The rise in poverty will unlock the Pandora’s box of crimes”. – This is an allusion to one of Greek Mythology’s origin myth, “Pandora’s box”.

“This place is like a Garden of Eden.” – This is a biblical allusion to the “garden of God” in the Book of Genesis.

“Hey! Guess who the new Newton of our school is?” – “Newton”, means a genius student, alludes to a famous scientist Isaac Newton.

“Stop acting like my ex-husband please.” – Apart from scholarly allusions we refer to common people and places in our speech.

Function of allusion

By and large, the use of allusions enables writers or poets to simplify complex ideas and emotions. The readers comprehend the complex ideas by comparing the emotions of the writer or poet to the references given by them. Furthermore, the references to Greek Mythology give a dreamlike and magical touch to the works of art. Similarly, biblical allusions appeal to the readers with religious backgrounds.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality is the shaping of a text’s meaning by another text. It is the interconnection between similar or related works of literature that reflect and influence an audience’s interpretation of the text. Intertextuality is a literary device that creates an ‘interrelationship between texts’ and generates related understanding in separate works. These references are made to influence the reader and add layers of depth to a text, based on the readers’ prior knowledge and understanding. Intertextuality is a literary discourse strategy utilized by writers in novels, poetry, theatre and even in non-written texts (such as performances and digital media).

Examples of intertextuality are an author’s borrowing and transformation of a prior text, and a reader’s referencing of one text in reading another.

Examples - *Ulysses* by James Joyce

Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys

Module 3

Literature and Ideology

Introduction

This module would give an insight about the connection between the existing power structure and literature. Literature reflects and sometimes reveals the ideology that refers to the dominant beliefs, ideas and representations which legitimize the existing power relations. This module encourages learners to read beyond the literal and enables them to perceive how literary / cultural texts conceal /interrogate power, how they document, critique or subvert the dominant power. It would enable learners to read a text closely, critically and politically. Two texts prescribed are

1. “A Hanging” by George Orwell
2. “The Adivasi will not Dance” by Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar

Terms/ Concepts Discussed

Power, Hegemony, Subjectivity, Irony, Interpellation, Discourse

How is literature related to ideology? Literature most commonly refers to works of the creative imagination, including poetry, drama, fiction, nonfiction, and in some instances, journalism, and song. Simply put, literature represents the culture and tradition of a language or a people. It deals with man’s relationship with his environment, society and his fellow beings and hence is not free from the workings of **power**. A literary text carries by default the value system of the author and the society it addresses, impressions of the existing power structure and the certain subjective perspectives. Therefore, when we learn a text, we have to learn to interact with its **ideology**.

Let us discuss these concepts after reading the text given below. It is an extract from Arundhati Roy’s Booker prize winning novel *The God of Small Things*

“As a young boy, Velutha would come with Vellya Paapen to the back entrance of the Aymenem House to deliver the coconuts they had plucked from the trees in the compound. Pappachi would not allow paravans into the house. Nobody would. They were not allowed to touch anything that Touchables touched. Caste Hindus and Caste Christians. Mammachi told Estha and Rahel that she could remember a time, in her girlhood, When Paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their footprints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into Paravan’s footprint. In Mammachi’s time, Paravans, like other Untouchables, were not allowed to walk on public roads, not allowed to carry umbrellas. They had to put their hands over their mouths when they spoke, to divert their polluted breath away from those whom they addressed.”

(*The God Of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy)

We can see that the text deals with the ideological foundations of the caste system. Let us examine how Arundhati Roy’s writing uses caste hierarchy to comment on how power works in our society. As you know caste is a 2,000-year-old system working within the context of the four principal varnas, or large caste categories. In order of precedence these are the *Brahmins* (priests and teachers), the *Ksyatriyas* (rulers and soldiers), the *Vaisyas* (merchants and traders), and the *Shudras* (laborers and artisans). A fifth category falls outside the varna system and consists of those known as “untouchables”, who are not even considered as human beings in the Varna system .But today caste has moved beyond this formulation and has become a live force in Indian culture, society and politics. Mulkraj Anand, the great Indian English writer, portrays the evil face of caste system in his novel *The Untouchables*. He has vividly depicted in the novel the miserable lot of the unfortunate untouchables through the story of Bakha, a sweeper boy. Later many Dalit writers come into forefront to speak up their own experiences through different literary forms. C Ayyappan,

Omprakash Valmiki, Bama, Sarathkumar Limbale...etc are a few among them.

- In the given passage how do you think Arundhati Roy documents the discrimination against and ostracism of the lower castes perpetrated in the social history of Kerala.
- Arundhati Roy, in her novel, illustrates the social injustice faced by the lower castes through the characterization of Velutha who represents the Parava community and descriptions of discriminations faced by the Paravans. These descriptions allow the reader to understand the **power hierarchy** between upper castes like Brahmins and Syrian Christians and lower castes like Paravans and the hegemony at play. Through the recollections of Mammachi and the narrator and the employment of terms ‘untouchables’, ‘caste Hindus’ and ‘caste Christians’, author here acknowledges the caste system as omnipresent in the social history of Kerala across religions. The literary text becomes a documentation of **the hegemony** exercised by the upper castes of both the Hindu and the Christian religion.
- How does she sensitize the readers to the social injustices committed against the Paravans?
- Through the description of the lived experience, Roy sensitizes the reader about the caste system and how it was perpetrated across communities. Roy draws in the image of untouchability by recounting their experiences which includes how they had to sweep away their footprints off the roads and abstain from clothing their upper bodies. By documenting their lived experiences Roy makes the readers aware of the hegemony and power hierarchy existed between upper castes and Paravans and thereby opens up a space for critique of the caste system.

What is power and ideology?

We all know that power is an ability to control people and events. Power plays everywhere. Since ancient time, social theorists tried to define the queries that people who lack economic

power consent to hierarchies of social and political power. They have used **philosophy, hegemony and discourse** as main notion to explain the power relations. The Marxist thought of ideology explains how the dominant ideas within a given society reveal the interests of a ruling economic class. Marx and others relate ideology to a vision of society dominated by economic class as a field of social power. Hegemonic practices of power are those acts where the people are blind to the exercise of power. They more or less agree to the apparatus that subjugates them. For example, when the high caste spread the common sense that the hierarchy of caste system is true and divinely ordained, the society as a whole takes it for an axiomatic common sense.

Hegemony:

The notion of hegemony is especially difficult to explain in concrete political terms. It is the political, economic, or military predominance or control of one state over others. In Ancient Greece (8th century BCE - 6th century CE), hegemony signified the politico-military supremacy of a city-state over other city-states. The dominant state was known as the hegemon.

In the 19th century, hegemony represented the “Social or cultural predominance by one group within a society or milieu”. Afterwards, it could be used to mean “a group or regime which exerts undue influence within a society.” In theoretical viewpoint, hegemony is the expression of society’s ruling classes over the majority of the nation or state over whom they propose to rule. Italian Thinker Antonio Gramsci (1971) describes hegemony as, “a conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and in all manifestations of individual and collective life.”

Hegemony is the process through which the dominant classes/ groups propagate their beliefs and ideas with the consent of the subordinate groups. This main stream values and ideas are assimilated through **interpellation**. This term was coined by Louis Althusser to explain the way in which ideas get into our heads and have an effect on our lives. It is a process in which we encounter our culture’s values and internalize them. We

are interpellated from the day that we are born into specific roles that society has created for us. For example:

Girls being portrayed in magazines playing with dolls and loving the color pink are an example of gender - role interpellation.

Ideology:

Ideology is a subject that caught great attention during the last half of the twentieth century. In fundamental terms, an ideology is a belief or a set of beliefs, especially the political beliefs on which people, parties, or countries base their actions. It is a plan of action for applying these ideas.

In a wider perspective, ideology can be explained as the way a system, a single individual or even a whole society rationalizes itself. American scholars Erikson & Tedin (2003) define ideology as a “set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved”.

The leading Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser used the term Ideology to refer to these dominant beliefs, ideas and representations which legitimize existing power relations. According to Althusser , there are two ways in which the existing power relations are enforced.

1) through institutions which use brute force such as the army and the police, which he calls the Repressive State Apparatus or RSAs

2) through various institutions such as the family, schools, religion, politics and the media which he calls Ideological State Apparatus or ISAs.

However, ideology is a problematic notion: it is a relatively stable body of knowledge that the ruling class transmits to its subordinate classes. The hierarchy of the ruler and the ruled plays its logic to various ideological categories including that of the binary man/woman. This latter binary is the core political quantum around which the idea of **feminism** is constituted.

Feminism and Literature

As you may be well aware, we are living in a patriarchal society where man is deemed to be the nucleus. The dictionary

defines ‘**patriarchy**’ as a “social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family in both domestic and religious functions”. Patriarchy is characterized by male domination and power. All the social norms, religions, ethics, morality, family system and even education system have been constructed and developed from the patriarchic system. Male domination and the subjugation of women, children and other (LGBT)communities are the basic operational logics of the patriarchic system.

Literature reflects or sometimes reinforces existing power relations. Feminist writers use literature as a tool to expose and critique the **gender discrimination** in a patriarchal society. Feminism is an ideology that believes in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes. Feminists bring out the injustice of male dominance in the society; the general attitude of male towards female; the exploitation and discrimination faced by females; the need for and ways of improving the condition of women and, so on.

Feminist approaches to Literature

Feminist literary critics have concentrated on the role played by literature in reinforcing gender discrimination, as well as resisting it; the reasons for lesser significance of the contribution by female writers in the literary tradition than that of the male writers; the difference in the ways in which works of male writers and female writers have represented gender discrimination differently; and, the ways in which social conditions and literary traditions regarding gender discrimination have affected one another.

See for instance, this passage from Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*:

I saw he was going to marry her, for family, perhaps political reasons, because her rank and connections suited him; I felt he had not given her his love, and that her qualifications were ill adapted to win from him that treasure. This was the point- this was where the nerve was touched and teased –this was where

the fever was sustained and fed:**SHE COULD NOT CHARM HIM.** If she had managed the victory at once, and he had yielded and sincerely laid his heart at her feet, I should have covered my face, turned to the wall, and (figuratively) have died to them. If Ingram had been a good and noble woman, endowed with force, fervour, kindness, sense, I should have had one vital struggle with two tigers- jealousy and despair: then, my heart torn out and devoured, I should have admired her – acknowledged her excellence, and been quiet for the rest of my days : and the more absolute her superiority, the deeper would have been my admiration- the more truly tranquil my quiescence. But as matters really stood, to watch Miss Ingram’s efforts at fascinating Mr. Rochester, to witness their repeated failure – herself unconscious that they did fail; vainly fancying that each shaft launched hit the mark, and infatuatedly pluming herself on success, when her pride and self –complacency repelled further and further what she wished to allure- to witness THIS, was to be at once under ceaseless excitation and ruthless restraint. Because, when she failed, I saw how she might have succeeded. Arrows that continually glanced off from Mr. Rochester’s breast and fell harmless at his feet, might, I knew , if shot by a surer hand, have quivered keen in his proud heart – have called love into his stern eye, and softness into his sardonic face; or, better still, without weapons a silent conquest might have been won. ‘Why can she not influence him more, when she is privileged to draw so near to him?’ I asked myself. ‘Surely she cannot truly like him, or with true affection! If she did, she need not coin her smiles so lavishly, flash her glances so unremittingly, manufacture airs so elaborate, graces so multitudinous. It seems to me that she might, by merely sitting quietly at his side, saying little and looking less, get near his heart. I have seen in his face a far different expression from that which hardens it now while she is so vivaciously accosting him; but then it came of itself: it was not elicited by meretricious arts and calculated maneuvers; and one had but to accept it – to answer what he asked without pretension, to address him when needful without grimace – and it increased and grew kinder and

more genial, and warmed one like a fostering sunbeam. How will she manage to please him when they are married? I do not think she will manage it; and yet it might be managed; and his wife might, I verily believe, be the very happiest women the sun shines on.’(This passage is from Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*.)

- Reflect on the words in capital

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- Do you think this fact has more importance in a patriarchal society?

In order to answer the questions above, we need to focus on certain areas of the text. Let us see how Charlotte Bronte presents here heroine and her passions.

Jane Eyre, the protagonist of this novel is in love with her employer Mr. Rochester. Jane becomes desperate when Rochester brings home a beautiful but ruthless woman named Blanche Ingram. Jane expects Rochester to propose to Blanche. Jane doesn’t get why anyone would not marry for love, especially if they’re rich enough to do pretty much whatever they want, but she figures there must be some reason that so many people who are already wealthy and important insist on marrying to get more money and status instead of to make themselves happy. Notice that Jane doesn’t talk about her own ideas about marriage—only the ideas that she would have if she were in Rochester’s place. Somehow Jane can’t conceive of herself needing to make a choice about marrying for love or status—only of a man like Rochester doing so. She knows that the lady-like Miss Ingram could not charm him. However, this fact has no importance in a patriarchal society. A patriarchal arrangement looks at marriage more as a social mechanism that sustains the status quo than as a union of loving souls. In this perspective, considerations of class, caste and social status determine marriage and matches. Jane Eyre is critical of Victorian England’s strict social hierarchy. In addition to class hierarchy, she must fight against patriarchal domination—against those who believe women to be inferior to men and try to treat them as such. In Chapter 12 of *Jane Eyre*,

Jane articulates what was for her time a radically feminist philosophy:

“Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex”.

Literature may portray the life of the marginalized and excluded from the privileges of language, knowledge, material wealth, high culture and mainstream social spaces. See this excerpt from Maya Angelou’s autobiographical essay “Graduation”.

Graduation, the hush-hush magic time of frills and gifts and congratulations and diplomas was finished for me before my name was called. The accomplishment was nothing. The meticulous maps, drawn in three colors of ink, learning and spelling decasyllabic words, memorizing the whole of *The Rape Of Lucrece* – it was for nothing. Donleavy had exposed us. We were maids and farmers, handymen and washerwomen and anything higher that we aspired to was farcical and presumptuous.

Maya Angelou, American poet, memoirist, and actress whose several volumes of autobiography explore the themes of economic, racial, and sexual oppression.

Angelou describes the intense differences from the white school and hers. While first preparing for her graduation Angelou was very excited; being quite proud of her academic achievements and other accomplishments, Angelou was hardly able to contain the anticipation of marching up to the stage and receiving her hard-earned diploma. Not only was she proud of herself, but it

was quite obvious that those around her felt the same delight. Her mother made her a beautiful dress, complete with an abundance of embroideries and frills. Many people showered her with gifts and money, imparting with her words of wisdom and encouragement to nourish her desire to achieve. A great feeling of happiness had been bestowed upon her, and she was rather anxious to reap the rewards.

The time for graduation had finally come. After being lead by her mother's hand Angelou, nervously, took her place with the other students as her family seated themselves in the auditorium. They were informed that their guest speaker was on a tight schedule and could not stay long. After taking his place on stage, the chief guest Mr. Donleavy spoke great measures about the improvements that would soon be received by the central, or white school, but little of the accomplishments (outside of sports) for the blacks. Angelou felt crushed, all hope had been admonished as she was reminded of the Negro's place in life; maids, farmers, and other unspectacular positions. She became quite bitter as she listened his speech.

The excerpts from Roy and Angelou show us who exercises power and who is affected by it. The perspective of the one who suffers the power empowers literary narratives in a very special way. We could see that from the above examples. Subjectivity is something in us by which we understand the world around us. It asks us to feel the world on the basis of our perceptions.

Activity

- Assuming Donleavy is a white man of authority, figure out how Black girl students are doubly marginalized.

Discourse

Ideologies create narratives such as the ones that we saw above. But in a complex everyday social milieu it is often difficult to identify each ideology working independently of another. There is a lot of complex overlap and give and take. This alliance of narratives is what we call discourse.

The term 'Discourse' was first used by **Michel Foucault**, a post modern thinker in his studies of modern power and modern state machinery. He called discourse an interdependence of meaning systems, social power and knowledge.

Let us read a passage from George Orwell's "A Hanging" and discuss the nuances of discourses.

George Orwell A Hanging It was in Burma, a sodden morning of the rains. A sickly light, yellow tinfoil was slanting over the high walls into the jail yard. We were waiting outside the condemned cells, a row of sheds fronted with double bars, like small animal cages. Each cell measured about ten feet and was quit bare within expect for a plank bed and a pot of drinking water. In some of them brown silent men were squatting at the inner bars, with their blankets draped round them. These were the condemned men due to be within the next week or two. One prisoner had been brought out of his cell. He was a Hindu, a puny wisp of a man, with a shaven head and vague liquid eyes. He had a thick, sprouting moustache, absurdly too big for his body, rather like the moustache of a comic man on the films. Six tall Indian warders were guarding him and getting him ready for the gallows. Two of them stood by with rifles and fixed bayonets, while the others handcuffed him, passed a chain through his handcuffs and fixed it to their belts, and lashed his arms tight to his sides. They crowded very close about him, with their hands always on in him in a careful, caressing grip, as though all the while feeling him to make sure he was there. It was like men handing a fish which is still alive and may jump back in to the water. But he stood quiet unresisting, yielding his arms limply to the ropes, as though he hardly he hardly noticed what was happening. Eight o'clock struck and a bugle call, desolately thin in the wet air, floated from the distant barracks. The superintendent of the jail, who was standing apart from the rest of us, moodily prodding the gravel with his stick, raised his head at the sound. He was an army doctor, with a grey toothbrush moustache and a gruff voice. 'For God's sake hurry up, Francis,' he said irritably. 'The man ought to have been dead by this time. Aren't you ready

yet? Francis, the head jailer, a fat Dravidian in a white drill suit and gold spectacles, waved his black hand. ‘Yes sir, yes sir,’ he bubbled. ‘All is satisfactorily prepared. The hangman is waiting. We shall proceed.’ ‘Well, quick march, then. The prisoners can’t get their breakfast till this job’s over. We set out for the gallows. Two warders marched on either side of the prisoner, with their rifles at the slope; two others marched close against him, gripping him by arm and shoulder, as though at once pushing and supporting him. The rest of us, magistrates and the like, followed behind. Suddenly, when we had gone ten yards, the procession stopped short without any order or warning. A dreadful thing had happened – a dog, come goodness knows whence, had appeared in the yard. It came bounding among us with a loud volley of barks, and leapt round us wagging its whole body, wild with glee at finding so many human beings together. It was a large woolly dog, half Airedale, half pariah. For a moment it pranced round us, and then, before anyone could stop it, it had made a dash for the prisoner, and jumping up tried to lick his face. Everyone stood aghast, too taken aback even to grab at the dog. ‘Who let that bloody brute in here?’ said the superintendent angrily. ‘Catch it, someone!’ A warder, detached from the escort, charged clumsily after the dog, but it danced and gamboled just out of his reach, talking everything as part of the game. A young Eurasian jailer picked up a handful of gravel and tried to stone the dog away, but it dodged the stones and came after us again. Its yaps echoed from the jail walls. The prisoner, in the grasp of the two warders, looked on incuriously, as though this was another formality of the hanging. It was several minutes before someone managed to catch the dog. Then we put my handkerchief through its collar and moved off once more, with the dog still straining and whimpering. It was about forty yards to the gallows. I watched the bare brown back of the prisoner marching in front of me. He walked clumsily with his bound arms, but quiet steadily, with that bobbing gait of the Indian who never straightens his knees. At each step his muscles slid neatly into place, the lock of hair on his scalp danced up and

down, his feet printed themselves on the wet gravel. And once, in spite of the men who gripped him by each shoulder, he stepped slightly aside to avoid a puddle on the path. It is curious, but till that moment I had never realized what it means to destroy a healthy, conscious man. When I saw the prisoner step aside to avoid the puddle, I saw the mystery, the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting a life short when it is in full tide. This man was not dying; he was alive just as we were alive. All the organs of his body were working – bowels digesting food, skin renewing itself, nails growing, tissues forming – all toiling away in solemn foolery. His nails would still be growing when he stood on the drop, when he was falling through the air with a tenth of a second to live. His eyes saw the yellow gravel and the grey walls, and his brain still remembered, foresaw, reasoned – reasoned even about puddles. He and we were a party of men walking together, seeing, hearing, feeling, understanding the same world; and in two minutes with a sudden snap, one of us would be gone – one mindless, one wordless. The gallows stood in a small yard, separate from the main grounds of the prison, and overgrown with tall prickly weeds. It was a brick erection like three sides of shed, with planking on top, and above that two beams and a crossbar with the rope dangling. The hangman, a grey-haired convict in the white uniform of the prison, was waiting beside his machine. He greeted us with a servile crouch as we entered. At a word from Francis the two warders, gripping the prisoner more closely than ever, half led, half pushed him to the gallows and helped him clumsily up the ladder. Then the hangman climbed up and fixed the rope round the prisoner's neck. We stood waiting, five yards away. The warders had formed in a rough circle round the gallows. And then, when the noose was fixed, the prisoner began crying out on his god. It was a high, reiterated cry of 'Ram! Ram! Ram! Ram! Ram!' not urgent and fearful like a prayer or a cry for help, but steady, rhythmical, almost like the tolling of a bell. The dog answered the sound with a whine. The hangman, still standing on the gallows, produced a small cotton bag like a flour bag and drew it down over the prisoner's face. But the sound,

muffled by the cloth, still persisted, over and over again: ‘Ram! Ram! Ram! Ram!’ The hangman climbed down and stood ready, holding the lever. Minutes seemed to pass. The steady, muffled crying from the prisoner went on and on, ‘Ram! Ram! Ram!’ never faltering for an instant. The superintendent, his head on his chest, was slowly poking the ground with his stick; perhaps he was counting the cries, allowing the prisoner a fixed number – fifty, perhaps, or a hundred. Everyone had changed colour. The Indians had gone grey like bad coffee, and one or two of the bayonets werewavering. We looked at the lashed, hooded man on the drop, and listened to his cries – each cry another second of life; the same thought was in all our minds; oh, kill him quickly, get it over, stop that abominable noise! Suddenly the superintendent made up his mind. Throwing up his head he made a swift motion with his stick. ‘chalo! He shouted almost fiercely. There was a clanking noise, and then dead silence. The prisoner had vanished, and the rope was twisting on itself. I let go of the dog, and it galloped immediately to the back of the gallows; but when it got there it stopped short, barked, and then retreated into a corner of the yard, where it stood among the weeds, looking timorously out at us. We went round the gallows to inspect the prisoner’s body. He was dangling with his toes pointed straight downwards, very slowly revolving, as a stone. The superintendent reached out with his stick and poked the bare body; it oscillated, slightly. ‘he backed out from under the gallows, and blew out a deep breath. The moody look had gone out of his face quite suddenly. He glanced at his wristwatch. ‘Eight minutes past eight. Well, that’s all for this morning, thank God.’ The warders unfixing bayonets and marched away. The dog, sobered and conscious of having misbehaved itself, slipped after them. We walked out of the gallows yard, past the condemned cells with their waiting prisoners, in to the big central yard of the prison. The convicts, under the command of warders armed with lathis, were already receiving their breakfast. They squatted in long rows, each man holding a tin pannikin, while two warders with buckets marched round ladling out rice; it seemed quite a

homely, jolly scene after the hanging. An enormous relief had come upon us now that the job was done. One felt an impulse to sing, to break in to a run, to snigger. All at once everyone began chattering gaily. The Eurasian boy walking beside me nodded towards the way we had come, with a knowing smile: 'Do you know, sir our friend (he meant the dead man), when he heard his appeal had been dismissed, he pissed on the floor of his cell. From fright kindly take one of my cigarettes, sir. Do you not admire my new silver case, sir? From the box wallah, two rupees eight annas. Classy European style.' Several people laughed – at what nobody seemed certain. Francis was walking by the superintendent, talking garrulously. 'Well, sir, all has passed off with the utmost satisfactoriness. It was all finished – flick! Like that. It is not always so- oh, oh! I have known cases where the doctor was obliged to go beneath the gallows and pull the prisoner's legs to ensure decease. Most disagreeable!' 'Wriggling about, eh? That's bad,' said the superintendent. 'Ach, sir it is worse when they become refractory! One man, I recall, clung to the bars of his cage when we went to take him out. You will scarcely credit, sir, that it took six warders to dislodge him. "My dear fellow, "we said "think of all the pain and trouble you are causing to us!" But no, he would not listen! Ach, he was very troublesome!' I found that I was laughing quiet loudly. Everyone was laughing. Even the superintendent grinned in a tolerant way. 'You'd better all come out and have drink,' he said quite genially. 'I've got a bottle of whisky in the car. We could do with it.' We went through the big double gates of the prison, into the road. 'Pulling at his legs!' exclaimed a Burmese magistrate suddenly, and burst into a loud chuckling. We all began laughing again. At that moment Francis's anecdote seemed extraordinarily funny. We all had a drink together, native and European alike, quite amicably. The dead man was a hundred yards away.

The short story "A Hanging" is based on the author's firsthand experience as an imperialist police officer in Burma. His detailed and clear portrayal of an entire hanging episode is the central feature of Orwell's work. Orwell treats the entire scene

with brutal honesty and directness that evokes in readers mind a strong feeling against capital punishment.

This story uses a technique of hiding the real message by projecting a lot of unimportant facts and details. This technique is known by the name **Irony**. Irony is useful in places where direct statements cannot fetch maximum force.

1. What strikes you first about the narrator? Does he have the authority to stop the hanging? Why doesn't he?

In the given narrative, the narrator is neither the one in charge, nor the victim. This positioning makes him an observer, not as responsible as the officer and not as hopeless as the one who is to be hung. The first thing we observe in such a narrator is compliance with the mood of the majority. He laughs with the crowd on jokes cracked about the victims, he observes the face of the victim with a sense of derision, and always keeps line with the fellow warders. The irony works precisely because of this narrative position.

2. How do you think a 'civilized' society punishes its wrongdoers?

A civilized group of people would not believe in punishment but corrective measures that do not employ force or violence. In the given passage on the pretext of civilization, a group of people punish a man by hanging him to death. This is not only a return to the barbaric past, but a forsaking of everything good that the journey to civilization has put in human souls. The fact that most of the modern nations have removed capital punishment from their legal procedures makes acts of war heinous, lawless and anti-civilizational.

As a reader, one naturally focuses on the high emotional points: those of the officer and the prisoner. The emphasis given by the narrator on certain points will not be agreed upon by the reader. This kicks off the irony in the narrative. As the narrator waxes descriptive about the awkward physical appearance of the prisoner in the first part, the reader will be more worried about the mental landscape of the prisoner.

The capital punishment to be executed is seen by the narrator as an everyday, inconsequential activity. Except in that instance when the narrator stops to think of the life of the prisoner in terms of his functioning anatomy, the narrative keeps guarded detachment from the emotions being staged.

The irony grows deeper when the Indian to be hung, contrary to the expectation, maintains a very stoic, civilized and poised stance while the white European warders appear uncouth and inhumane. That the characters belong to different racial backgrounds also don't make a prominent narrative trope in the story. This is another instance of irony. This is irony in the mode of understatement. We as readers pick up the intended meaning precisely because it is underplayed.

To describe the working of modern **power** there is no better literary device than irony. Power, in the contemporary society is not an evident force. It is hidden in the mesh of social relations. It runs through hierarchies and bureaucratic labyrinths. The hidden nature of this phenomenon can be brought out only by those devices that can hide meanings so skillfully as to make them shine through more powerfully.

Let us now read another story to see how literature unfolds and interrogates the way power designs both social relations and the relations between man and environment.

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar

The Adivasi will not Dance

They pinned me to the ground. They did not let me speak, they did not let me protest, they did not even let me raise my head and look at my fellow musicians and dancers as they were being beaten up by the police. All I could hear were their cries for mercy. I felt sorry for them. I had failed them. Because what I did, I did on my own. Yet, did I have a choice? Had I only spoken to them about my plan, I am sure they would have stood by me. For they too suffer the same as they would have stood by me, they would have spoken with me and, together, our voices would have rung out loud. They would have travelled out

of our Santhal Pargana, out of our Jharkhand, all the way to Dillli and all of Bharot-disom; the world itself would have come to know of our suffering. Then, perhaps, our President would have agreed with what I said to him.

But I did not share my plan with anyone. I went ahead alone, like a fool. They grabbed me, beat me to the ground, put their hands on my mouth and gagged me. I felt so helpless and so foolish.

But we Santhals are fools, aren't we? All of us Adivasis are fools. Down the years, down generations, the Diku have taken advantage of our foolishness. Tell me if I am wrong.

I only said, "We Adivasis will not dance anymore what is wrong with that? We are like toys- someone presses our 'ON' button, or turns a key in our backsides, and we Santhals start beating rhythms on our tamak and tumdak, or start blowing tunes on our tiriyo while someone snatches away our very dancing grounds. Tell me, am I wrong? I had not expected things to go so wrong. I thought I was speaking to the best man in India, our President. I had thought he would listen to my words. Isn't he our neighbour? His forefathers were all from the Birbhum district next door. His ancestral house is still there. Birbhum, where Rabin-haram lived in harmony with Santhals. I have been to that place Rabin-haram set up. What is it called? Yes, Santiniketan. I went there a long time ago, to perform with my troupe. I saw that we Santhals are held in high regard in Santiniketan. Santiniketan is in Birbhum, and our president is also from Birbhum. He should have heard me speak, no? But he didn't.

Such a fool I am! A foolish Santhal. A foolish Adivasi.

My name is Mangal Murmu. I am a musician. No, wait... I am a farmer. Or... was a farmer. Was a farmer is right. Because I don't farm anymore. In my village of Matiajore, in Amrapara block of the Pakur district, not many Santhals farm anymore. Only a few of us still have farmland; most of it has been acquired by a mining company. It is a rich company. It is not that we didn't fight the acquisition. We did. While we were fighting, this political leader came, that political leader came, this Kiristan sister came,

that Kiristan father came. Apparently to support us. But we lost. And after we lost, everyone left the leaders went back to Ranchi and Dilli or wherever they had to go. The Kiristans returned to their missions. But our land did not come back to us. On the other hand, a Kiristan sister was killed and our boys were implicated in her murder. The papers, the media, everyone blamed our boys. They reported that the Kiristan sister was fighting for our rights and yet our boys killed her. No one bothered to see that our boys had been fighting for our land and rights from even before that Kiristan sister came. Why would they kill her? Just because our boys did not have reporter friends, their fight went unseen; while the Kiristansister, with her network of missionaries and their friends, got attention. Now that our boys are in jail on false charges of murder, who will fight for us? Where are the missionaries and their friends now? If the missionaries are our well-wishers and were fighting for us. Why did they run away? Kill a well-known Kiristan sister, accuse a few unknown Santhal boys fighting for their lands of her murder, move both obstacles – the Kiristan sister and the Santhal boys out of the way, grab as much land as possible, build as many mines as possible and dig out all the coal. This is how this coal company works. Is this scenario so difficult to understand that the media does not get it?

If coal merchants have taken a part of our lands, the other part has been taken over by stone merchants, all Diku- Marwari, Sindhi, Mandal, Bhagat, Muslim. They turn our land upside down, inside out, with their heavy machines. They sell the stones they mine from our earth in faraway places – Dilli, Noida, Panjab. This coal company and these quarry owners, they have built big houses for themselves in town; they wear nice clothes; they send their children to good schools in faraway places; when sick, they get themselves treated by the best doctors in Ranchi, Bhagalpur, Malda, Bardhaman, Kolkata. What do we Santhals get in return? Tatters to wear. Barely enough food. Such diseases that we can't breathe properly; we cough blood and forever remain bare bones.

For education, our children are at the mercy of either those free government schools where teachers come only to cook the midday meal, or those Kiristan missionary schools where our children are constantly asked to stop worshipping our Bonga-Buru and start revering Jisu and Mariam. If our children refuse, the sisters and the fathers tell our boys that their Santhal names- Hopna, SomSingrai- are not good enough. They are renamed David and Mikail and Kiristofer and whatnot. And as if that were not enough, Muslims barge into our homes, sleep with our women, and we Santhal men cannot do a thing.

But what can we do? They outnumber us. Village after village in our Santhal Pargana- which should have been a home for us Santhals – are turning into Muslim villages. Hindus live around Pakur town or in other places. Those few Hindus here, who live in Santhal villages, belong to the lower castes. They too are powerless and outnumbered. But why would the Hindus help us? The rich Hindus living in Pakur town are only interested in our land. They are only interested in making us sing and dance at their weddings. If they come to help us, they will say that we Santhals need to stop eating cow-meat and pig-meat that we need to stop drinking haaandi. They too want to make us forget our Sarna religion, convert us into Safa –Hor, and swell their numbers to become more valuable vote banks. Safa-Hor, the pure people, the clean people, but certainly not as clean and pure as themselves, that's for sure. Always a little lesser than they are. In the eyes of the Hindus, we Santhals can only either be Kiristan or the almost Safa-Hor. We are losing our Sarna faith, our identities, and our roots. We are becoming people from nowhere.

It's the coal and stone, sir; they are making us lazy. The Koyla road runs through our village. When the monstrous Hyvas ferry coal on the Koyla Road, there is no space for any other vehicle. They are so rough, these truck- drivers, they can run down any vehicle that comes in their way. They can't help it, it's their job. The more rounds they make, the more money they

earn. And what if they kill? The coal company can't afford to have its business slowed down by a few deaths. They give money to the family of the dead, the matter remains unreported, and the driver goes scot-free, ferrying another load company.

And we Santhals? Well, we wait for when there is NO ENTRY ON THE Koyla Road. For that is when all our men, women and children come out on to the road and swam up these Hyvas. Then, using nails, fingers, hands, and whatever tools we can manage, we steal coal. The drivers can't stop us, nor can those pot-bellied Bihari security guards posted along the Koyla Road by the company. For they know that if they do not allow us to steal the coal, we will gherao the road and not let their trucks move.

But a few stolen quintals, when the company is mining tones and tones, hardly matters. They know that if we- the descendants of the great rebels Sido and Kanhu make up our minds, we can stop all business in the area. So they behave sensibly, practically. After all, they already have our land, they are already stealing our coal, and they don't want to snatch away from us our right to re- steal it.

It is this coal, sir, which is gobbling us up bit by bit. There is blackness – deep, indelible – all along the Koyla Road. The trees and shrubs in our village bear black leaves. Our ochre earth has become black. The stones, the rocks, the sand, all black. The tiles on the roofs of our huts have lost their fibre – burnt red. The vines and flowers and peacocks we Santhals draw on the outer walls of our houses are black. Our children- dark – skinned as they are – are forever covered with fine black dust. When they cry, and tears stream down their faces, it seems as if a river is cutting across a drought – stricken land. Only our eyes burn red, like embers. Our children hardly go to school. But everyone – whether they attend school or not – remains on the alert, day and night, for ways to steal coal and for ways to sell it.

Santhals don't understand business. We get the coal easy yet we don't charge much for it; only enough for food, clothes

and drink. But these Jolha – you call them Muslim, we, Jolha – they know the value of coal, they know the value of money. They charge the price that is best for them. And the farther coal travels from Matiajore, the higher its price becomes.

A decade earlier, when the Santhals of Matiajore were beginning their annual journey to share crop in the farms of Namal, four Jolha families turned up from nowhere and asked us for shelter. A poor lot, they looked as impoverished as us. Perhaps worse. In return, they offered us their services. They told us that in our absence they would look after our fields and farm them for a share of the produce. We trusted them. They started working on our fields and built four hut in the corner of Matiajore . Today that small cluster of four huts has grown into a tola of more than a hundred houses. Houses, not huts. While we Santhals , in our village, still live in our mud houses, each Jolha house has at least one brick wall and a centered yard. This tola is now called the Jolhatola of Matiajore. Once, Matiajore used to be an exclusively Santhal village. Today, it has a Santhaltola and a Jolhatola , with the latter being the bigger. Sometimes I wonder who the olposonkhyok is here. These Jolha are hardworking, and they are always united. They may fight among themselves, they may break each other's scalps for petty matters, they may file FIR against each other at the thana, they may drag each other to court; but if any non- Jolha says even an offensive word to a Jolha the entire Jolha gets together against that person. Jolha leaders from Pakur and Sahebganji and where not come down to express solidarity. And we Santhals? Our men are beaten up, thrown into police lock-ups, into jails, for flimsy reasons, and on false charges. Our women are raped, some sell their bodies on Koyla Road. Most of us are fleeing our places to birth. How united are we? Where are our Santhal leaders? Those chor-chuhad leaders, where are they?

Forgive me. What can I do? I cannot help it. I am sixty years old and sitting in the lock-up after being beaten black and blue, I have no patience any more. Only anger. So, what was I saying? yes, there are no shoulders, no powerful voice among us

Santhals. And we Santhals have no money – though we are born in lands under which are buried riches. We Santhals do not know how to protect our riches. We only know how to escape.

That is probably why thousands of Santhals from corners of Pakur district and elsewhere in the Santhal Pargana board trains to Namal every farming season. They are escaping.

Did I tell you? I was once a farmer. Once. My sons farm now. The eldest stays back to work our fields while the other two migrate seasonally to Namal, along with their families. I used to compose songs. I still do. And I still maintain a dance troupe. Though it is not regular one, the kind I had earlier, some fifteen-twenty years ago, when I was younger and full of energy, enthusiasm and hope. Matiajore, Patharkola, Amrapara – I had singers and dancers and musicians from all these villages. I used to compose songs and set them to music. And my troupe, young men and women, they used to bring my songs to life through their dances, through their voices, through their rhythms of the tamak and the tumadak and the trilling of the tiriyo and the banam.

At that time, our Santhal Pargana was not broken up into so many districts. Today, all Diku, Bihari and all, they have broken up our Santhal Pargana for their own benefits. If it suits them, they can go on breaking down districts and create a district measuring just ten feet by ten feet. At that time, when I was younger, even Jharkhand had not been broken away from Bihar. Yet, there used to be so much hope. We used to perform in our village, in neighbouring villages, in Pakur, in Dumka in Sahebganji, in Deoghar, in Jamatra, in Patna, in Ranchi, even in Kolkata, and in Bhubaneswar, where we were taken to see the sea at Puri. What a sight it was! And we performed in Godda, too. Godda, where my daughter, Mugli, has been married. We used to be paid money. We used to be given good food, awarded medals and shields and certificates. We used to be written about in the papers.

All that has changed now. First, all the members of my troupe are now old. Some have been died. Many have migrated

seasonally. The ones who remain hum songs, sing to each other, but a stage performance? No, not again. Like me, even they are tired, disillusioned. All our certificates and shields, what did they give us? Diku children go to schools and colleges get education, jobs, what do we Santhals get? We santhals can sing and dance, and we are good at our art. Yet, what has our art given us? Displacement, Tuberculosis.

I have turned sixty. Perhaps more. I am called Haram now. Haram, respectfully. I am having to wear thick glasses. Even my hearing has weakened, though my voice is still quite good. People in my village say that my voice still impress them. Sometimes they ask me to sing. I sing some of my old compositions. It makes them happy. I still invited to perform at public functions in Pakur and Dumka and Ranchi.

But I keep putting together new troupes, though the members constantly change. I have dancer today, tomorrow he is growing potatoes for some Bengali Zamindar in Bardhaman. So I have to replace the substitute. This is how my troupes work nowadays. But it brings us some money. And when we are hosted in towns, we are usually fed good food. So we perform.

Our music, our dance, our songs are sacred to us Santhals. But hunger and poverty has driven us to sell what is sacred to us. When my boys perform at a Diku wedding, I am so foolish, I expect everyone pay attention. Which Diku pays attention to our music? Even at those high-profile functions, most Diku just wait for our performance to end. Yet, be it an athletic meet, some inauguration, or any function organized by someone high and mighty – in the name of Adivasi culture and Jharkhandi culture, it is necessary to make Adivasi dance. Even Bihari and Bengali and Odiya say that Jharkhand is theirs. They call their culture and music and dance superior to those of us Adivasi. Why don't they get their women to sing and dance in open grounds in the name of Jharkhandi culture? For every benefit, in job, in education, in whatever, the Diku are quick to call Jharkhand their own- let the Adivasi go to hell. But when it comes to displaying Jharkhandi culture, the onus of singing and dancing is upon the Adivasi alone.

So how did I land up in front of the President, you ask. Some three months ago, an official letter came to my house in Matiajore: a thick white envelope bearing the emblem of the government of Jharkhand. The paper on which the letter was typed in Hindi was equally thick and crisp. In fewer than five sentences I was told that the government of Jharkhand sought to pleasure of my musical performance at some vent, the identity and venue of which would be told to me later, and that I should gather a troupe for fifteen- twenty – minute performance, and that all participants would be well paid. The letter was signed by some high- ranking IAS officer in Ranchi.

What does a hungry man need?

Food. What does a poor man need? Money. So here I was, needing both. And recognition too. We artistes are greedy people. We are hungry for acceptance, some acknowledgement, some remembrance. So, without thinking, I sent back a reply the very next day saying that yes, I would be happy to perform. I was so happy; I went to the big post office in Pakur, more than twenty kilometers away, all by myself, to register that letter. I went in Vikram, packed with many other Santhals like me, all going to Pakur. Nearly all of us travelers were blackened by the dust from the Koyla Road. Yet, I was so happy that I didn't notice it at all.

Around the time that I was preparing for our performance, selecting young men and women for my troupe, digging up old songs from memory, I was faced with strange situation.

I told you that the Mugli, my daughter, is married into a family in the Godda district, didn't i? Well, she began calling in the Godda district, didn't I? Well, she began calling me regularly on my mobile phone. I couldn't understand the situation clearly at first but it seemed to me that I had something to do with their land. Her husband was a farmer – they are a family of farmers – as are all the Santhal families in the village. There are more villages nearby, populated by Santhals, Paharis and low caste Hindus.

What had happened was that the district administration had asked the inhabitants of all the villages to vacate their land – their

village, farms, everything. Eleven villages! Can you imagine? The first question everyone asked was: what will the Sarkar do with so much land?

Initially, I thought they were all rumours. And, I thought, how can anyone force Santhals to vacate their land in the Santhal Pargana? Didn't we have the Tenancy Act to protect us?

Still, when the rumours floating, I went to Godda. We all marched to the block office in a huge group. The officers there assured us that they were all just rumours. The lands were safe. The villages were safe.

Yet, later, police were sent to villages. They came with written orders from the district administration. The villagers would have to be vacated to make room for a thermal power plant.

The villagers were refused outright. Santhals, low- caste Hindus, Paharis, everyone began fighting for their land.

The district administration fought back. The agitators were all beaten up and thrown into police lock- ups. I called my daughter and her small children to Matiajore after her husband was jailed. Mugli arrived, her children and in-laws in tow. It was strange: a village which annually empties itself every few months suddenly providing shelter to immigrants.

How would I manage to provide all these people who were dependent on me now?

How could the members of my troupe feed all those who had come to seek refuge in their houses? We needed money. And our current mysterious- assignment was our only hope. Despite our troubles, we kept practicing.

In the meantime, some people arrived to help the villagers facing displacement in Godda. They wrote letters to the government, to people in Ranchi and Dilli. They even wrote letters to the businessman who was planning to build that thermal power plant in the Godda. We heard that he was a very rich and very shrewd man. He was also heard that he liked polo – a game played with horses – and that his horses were far better off than all the Santhals of the whole of the Santhal Pargana.

News about displacement taking place in Godda began to come in newspapers and the TV after a few days. All of us tried to concentrate on our practice, but how could we sing and dance with such a storm looming ahead? In between, I received phone call from several officers in Ranchi and Dumka and Pakur. They asked me to keep working for the show. They never forgot to remind me that this show was of the utmost importance that we were going to perform before some very important people. Some officers from Dumka and Pakur even came to Mitiajore to see if we were really working hard, they were happy. They smiled and encouraged us; they talked to us very sweetly. So sweetly that we all wondered if they could really not see how troubled we were feeling. Many times, I felt like asking them: How can all of you be so indifferent? How can you expect us to sing and dance when our families are being uprooted from their villages?

At other times, I felt like asking: which VIP is coming? The President of India? The President of America? You are making us Santhals dance in Pakur, and you are displacing Santhals from their villages in Godda? Isn't your VIP going to see that?

Doesn't your VIP read the papers or watch news on TV? We foolish Santhals can see what damage is happening around. Doesn't your VIP see all that?

But I stayed silent.

Reality started dawning on us three weeks before the date of our performance. First as floating rumours which were, gradually, confirmed by new paper reports.

The reality was that the businessman was certainly going to set up a thermal power plant in Godda. That plant would run on coal from the mines in Pakur and Sahebganji. If needed, coal would be brought from other places. That businessman, in fact, needed electricity for the iron and steel plants he was planning to set up for his own selfish needs; but if he were to be believed, the whole Jharkhand would receive electricity from his plant. Whole towns would be lit up non- stop, factories would never stop working for lack of power. There would be development and

jobs and happiness all over. And, finally, news also reached us that the foundation stone of the plant would be laid by the President of India. We would be performing for him.

Yes I was shocked. All of us were. Shocked and sad, but also surprised and delighted. We couldn't believe our luck. We had performed before ministers, chief ministers and governors. But never before the President of the country!

Then, we heard more news. People demonstrating and agitating against the forceful acquisition of land were being beaten up by the police, they were being thrown into lock-ups. Paramilitary forces, the CRPF, had been called to control the situation. Four villages out of eleven had already been razed to the ground by bulldozers to make room for the foundation – stone – laying ceremony.

But the papers carried glowing reports, along with pictures, of the roads which were being repaired or rebuilt in Ranchi and Dumka. Breathlessly, they reported that the President would stay in Jharkhand for three days. He would spend day one in Ranchi. On day two, he would preside over university convocation in Dumka. On day three, he would visit Godda, lay the foundation stone, and fly out of Jharkhand.

We received official intimation of the event a week before it was to take place. One day before the event, we were taken to Godda by bus. The entire district, the district headquarters, was unrecognizable. A football ground had been converted into a massive helipad. There were hundreds of policemen and CRPF jawans. And everywhere we turned our heads; all we could see was a sea of people. I knew they had come to see the helicopter. Tucked away in the papers had been reports that all protestors had been detained and were being held somewhere. Perhaps my son-in-law too was among them.

From where I stood, the stage looked massive, but still not big enough for all people who had climbed upon it. Ministers from Dilli and Ranchi, all dressed in their best neat clothes, laughing and chatting among themselves. All very happy with the progress,

the development. The Santhal Pargana would now fly to the moon. The Santhal Pargana would now turn into Dilli and Bombay. The businessman was grinning widely. Patriotic songs in Hindi were playing from the loudspeakers placed at all corners of the field. ‘Bharat Mahaan’, someone was shouting from the stage, trying to rouse the audience, his voice amplified by numerous loudspeakers. What mahaan? I wondered. Which great nation displaces thousands of its people from their homes and livelihoods to produce electricity for cities and factories? And Jobs? What jobs? An Adivasi farmer’s job is to farm. Which other job should he be made to do? Become a servant in some billionaire’s factory built just a week earlier?

Reporters with cameras swarmed all over the place. Three vans with huge disc antennae on their roofs were parked near the venue. I identified the logo of a popular TV channel painted on the sides of one of those vans. I wondered if any of its reporters had visited the place where the villagers were being detained by the police.

My troupe was waiting in an enclosure built especially for the performers at the event. All the women were wearing red blouses, blue rings and green panchhi, and huge, colourful plastic flowers in their buns. They were carrying steel lotus with flowers and leaves put inside them. All the men were wearing red football jerseys and green kacha and had tied green gumchhas around their heads. We all looked very good.

The helicopter arrived. thud. . . . thudthudthud. . . The rotors swirled dust from the playing field. The crowd was excited and a slow roar began.

The President was accompanied by his security staff to the stage. He was short, thoughtful man. All Bengali look learned and thoughtful. Why should this Bengali President be any different?

The festive began. The man who had been shouting ‘Bharat mahaan’ announced how fortunate the land of Jharkhand was that the iconic billionaire had deemed it suitable to set up a thermal

power plant here. He didn't mention how fortunate the billionaire was that he got to come to Jharkhand – a place rich with mineral deposits beneath its earth; a naïve population upon it; and a bunch of shrewd, greedy, thief leaders, officers and businessmen who ran the state and controlled its land, people and resources.

The 'Bharath mahaan' man announced the welcome dance and my troupe was ushered into the open space before the stage. We entered with our tamak, tumdak, tiriyo and banam. The President seemed impressed. The businessmen looked bored.

When we had taken our places before the stage, I took the mic in my hand and bowed to the President. Then I tapped the mike to check if it was working and began in Hindi, as good Hindi as I could muster at the height of my emotions. Actually, it was a miracle that I did not weep and choke up.

'Johar, Rashtrapati- babu. We are very proud and happy that you have come to our Santhal Pargana and we are also very proud that we have been asked to sing and dance before you and welcome you to our place. We will sing and dance before you but tell us, do we have a reason to sing and dance? Do we have a reason to be happy? You will now start building the power plant, but this plant will be the end of us all, the end of all the Adivasi. These men sitting beside you have told you that this power plant will change our fortune, but these same men have forced us out of our homes and villages. We have nowhere to go, nowhere to grow our crops. How can this power plant be good for us? And how can we Adivasis dance and be happy unless we are given back our homes and land, we will not sing and dance. We Adivasis will not dance. The Adivasi will not'.

1. What does the narrator use to relate the story of the Santhals?
The narrator uses the first person narrative with the personal pronoun I. The story is narrated by a sixty year old Santhal. This perspective and the empathetic tone manage to move the hearts of the reader.
 2. If you were living the lives of the Santhals what would you find the most disturbing? How would you resist it?
-

Living a life of a Santhal is a harrowing experience. To lose one's own land and the richness in its underbelly, to lose one's language and culture, only to be thrown out of their homeland, rendering them as refugees or faceless names on a government list is a near to death experience. The greatest form of resistance in times of turbulence is unity, which the Santhal community in the story lacks. Those in power have always, in history, been terrorized by the might of the underprivileged that flocked the streets.

3. Do you think the mode of resistance adopted by the protagonist helps the cause of the Santhals?

The sixty year old Santhal protagonist who silenced his disagreements with the capitalist system until the end of the story emerges as a rebel when he refuses to dance in front of the power wielders. The Adivasi will not dance thus becomes a very political statement through a mighty negation on the face of the state. This mode of protest finds parallels in the short story "Loneliness of a long distance Runner" by Allen Sillitoe, where the protagonist refuses to run in a long distance race as a rebellion towards the authority.

This mode of resistance adopted by the Santhal hero will fetch immediate media attention, which Santhals lacked until then. It can draw the plight of the Adivasis to the attention of the state, thus effecting a change.

4. What do the others in his community do to escape oppression?

No evidences of resistance from the Santhals are indicated by the story. The men swallowed their protest and succumbed to the will of their state. They migrated in search of work. Women are set to have resorted to prostitution on the Koyla Road. Only when there is the risk of a mass usurping of land that the Santhals resort to a massive protest, which is immediately disbursed by the authority. History, however is rich with stories of tribal resistance, The Santhals rebelled against imposed authority in the 1850s, resulting in

the passing of the Santhal Tenancy act, which is referred in the story. The heroic stories of the Munda tribal chief, BirsaMunda echo in the history which made the authorities to name the International Air Port of Jharghand after the Munda Chief.

5. Trace the ways in which power deprives the Santhals of their most valued possessions: their land, art, language, culture and identity.

Power is omnipresent. Foucault's position on power is that even a dark room can exert power on a man inside. The play of power renders the underprivileged economically weak, devoid of resources and sometimes, homeless as in the case of the Santhals. Those in power are backed by the state in deep mining the coal, buried in the underbellies of the land, which traditionally belonged to the Santhals who had the legal document to prove their ownership. But with onset of mining, the Santhals were outcaste and geographically marginalized. Also their art and culture were deemed uncivilized. Their religion was considered pagan by the Christian Missionaries and they were forced to convert and worship 'Yesu and Marium'.

6. What are the ways in which power works in the story?

Denying a Santhal his land, language, art and culture is a metaphorical ethnic genocide. His songs and dance are however inevitable to market the ethnic diversity of the state. The very existence of a Santhal gets capitalized through the play of power.

7. How does power appear many-layered (economic, cultural, social and psychological) and how do these layers act and react in the context of the story?

Power functions in many layers in the story. Economically, the play of power renders the poor poorer. The class gap is widened by the exercise of power. Those in power steal the financial recourses offered by the Santhal's land. Coal mining is monopolized by the powerful, denying the Santhals

their right to 're-steal' what they rightfully own. Socially, the Santhals are marginalized by being driven out of their land and branding their religion as pagan. Culturally the Santhals are deprived of their language, art, music and dance which become necessary only to promote the ethnic heritage of Jharghand. All these result in an accumulated psychological trauma that emotionally incapacitates the Santhal.

See this passage from the story

While we were fighting, this political leader came, that political leader came, this Kiristan sister came, that Kiristan father came. Apparently to support us. But we lost. And after we lost, everyone left the leaders went back to Ranchi and Dilli or wherever they had to go. The Kiristans returned to their missions. But our land did not come back to us. On the other hand, a Kiristan sister was killed and our boys were implicated in her murder. The papers, the media, everyone blamed our boys. They reported that the Kiristan sister was fighting for our rights and yet our boys killed her. No one bothered to see that our boys had been fighting for our land and rights from even before that Kiristan sister came. Why would they kill her? Just because our boys did not have reporter friends, their fight went unseen; while the Kiristan sister, with her network of missionaries and their friends, got attention. Now that our boys are in jail on false charges of murder, who will fight for us? Where are the missionaries and their friends now? If the missionaries are our well-wishers and were fighting for us. Why did they run away? Kill a well-known Kiristan sister, accuse a few unknown Santhal boys fighting for their lands of her murder, move both obstacles – the Kiristan sister and the Santhal boys out of the way, grab as much land as possible, build as many mines as possible and dig out all the coal. This is how this coal company works. Is this scenario so difficult to understand that the media does not get it?

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8. What do you think the media doesn't get it? Or does it?
-

It is not that media fails to see the Santhal reality. But they have other events and other perspectives of national interest to focus their attention on. Tribal issues are probably the last to find a space on the news, irrespective of their locations.

9. Comment on the usual role of NGOs in sites of conflict in the context of the intervention of the ‘Kristan’ missionaries. NGOs play an important role in mobilizing the tribal population. In the instance of the massive land usurp for the thermal plant that rendered the Santhals homeless and their protests sabotaged, the NGOs help to mobilize them, to give them voice and file petitions on behalf of the unlettered tribes. However, outside interventions such as that of the missionaries also had an unintentional side that culturally deprives the Santhals. The “Kiristan” missionaries believed the Santhals to be pagan and attempted to Baptize and rename them. Also the conflicts between the “Kirstian” sisters and the tribals further put the Santhal boys in danger. Here is something for you to ponder over:

A thick and green wooded forest does not appear the same to a businessmen, a carpenter and a poet. The businessman can only see the huge logs of wood that he can sell. The carpenter invariably imagines chairs, tables, cots and cupboards. For a poet, it is his muse.

-
10. How do the Santhals and the mining company owners perceive the land and its resources in the village of Matiajore?
-

Is there a difference? If there is, why?

The perceptions of the land vary from a Santhal to the mining company. The Santhal lives in harmony with the land, without taking ownership over it but considering himself as a tenant and treating the land with reverence. The mining company lacks any commitment towards land and nature. It recklessly exploits the land for monetary benefit. This difference in perspective of the old owners and the new owners of the land terribly jeopardize the ecology and the tribal existence.

11. How do the powerful exercise their hegemony?
How are the Santhals interpellated? Explore the story
Those in powers have their own means to exercise their hegemony over the powerless. They will always be backed by the state. They find ways to oust the tribal out of their land, socially, culturally and psychologically weaken them. All their resistance gets sabotaged by those in power.
For every benefit, in job, in education, in whatever, the Diku are quick to call Jharkhand their own – let the Adivasi go to hell. But when it comes to displaying Jharkhandi culture, the onus of singing and dancing is upon the Adivasi alone.
12. What does the writer use irony here?
Which point of view is foregrounded in the story?
The Irony in the story is that the culture that is perpetually ignored by the state suddenly becomes the face of the state. The state that was continuously attempting to silence and cripple the Adivasi now wanted the Adivasi to sing and dance for them.

Activity

Pick out the specific Santhal terms used to describe the powerful Other and the world in which they operate.

For further reading;

Angelou , Maya. *I know Why the Caged Birds Sings*. Bantam, 1971.

Roy, Arundhathy, *The God of Small Things*, Penguin, 2017.

Shekhar Hansda Sowendra, *The Adivasi will not Dance: Stories*. Speaking Tiger Publishing Private Limited

Noys, Benjamin, *Introducing Theory: A Practical Guide*. Continuum, 2007

MODULE 4

PERSPECTIVES OF THE SUBALTERN

Introduction

This module will encourage the students to be sensitive to perspectives from the margins such as those of female, Dalit, child and sexual minorities and how these subaltern perspectives figure in literature. Their engagement with such texts will help them to identify and question the counter, privileged voices in the mainstream texts.

Texts

1. Female : “No Name Woman” by Maxine Hong Kingston
2. Dalit
 - a) “Which language should I Speak” by Arun Kamble
 - b) “Habit” by FM Shinde
 - c) “Identity card” by S Joseph
3. Child
 - a) Selections from Calvin and Hobbes
 - b) Child (Singapore Drama short film)
4. Queer: The Letter Q: Ely Shipley

Terms /Concepts Discussed

Marginalized, gender, stereotype, class, subaltern, sexuality

While reading a text, a reader negotiates with the text and infers new meanings out of it. The subject position of the writer is very important in writing. Writer’s class and cultural values should be reflected in the text. The writer can internalize the values of dominant class of his/her own. By views of the dominant class we usually mean the views which favour the upper class, the upper caste, the male, the heterosexual, the white, the European, and so on. But sometimes they disown such positions and gives voices to the marginalized people.

We are said to be constructed by the value systems and concepts of the dominant class. For instance, the concept like

‘white is beauty’, ‘man is more powerful than woman’, ‘Brahmins are sacred people’, ‘tribes are uncivilized’, adults have more power and higher status than children’ derogatory comments about trans genders like ‘anumpennumkettavan’ are widely accepted by the society directly and indirectly. In a patriarchic society woman is treated as a second sex. Though biologically we are categorized as men and women, it is through socialization we are gendered.

What is Gender?

Gender together with the term of **masculinity** and **femininity**, is an ideology people use in modern societies to imagine the existence of differences between men and women on the basis of their sex. So it is clear that gender is a set of norms and conditions are hold by people about each other in certain contexts. As mentioned above, masculinity and femininity are a set of preconceived norms and behavior which is enacted both man and woman accordingly. Masculinity and femininity are not confined in both male and female body instead both can be seen in male and female body. If anybody violate the rules should be punished or ostracized. If a man is having soft voice or features of woman is often maltreated in Indian society. In Kerala, effeminate men are abusively called “chanthupottu” that means the sticker or Bindi is worn by women on their forehead.

Our society has a set of ideas about how we expect men and women to dress, behave, and present themselves.

What are gender roles?

Gender roles in society means how we’re expected to act, speak, dress, groom, and conduct ourselves based upon our assigned sex. For example, girls and women are generally expected to dress in typically feminine ways and be polite, accommodating, and nurturing. Men are generally expected to be strong, aggressive, and bold. These stereotypes about **gender** can cause unequal and unfair treatment because of a person’s gender. This is called sexism. You probably see gender stereotypes all around you. For example, women are

often expected to be accommodating and emotional, while men are usually expected to be self-confident and aggressive. Women are expected to be thin and graceful, while men are expected to be tall and muscular. Men and women are also expected to dress and groom in ways that are stereotypical to their gender (men wearing pants and short hairstyles, women wearing dresses and make-up.)

There is perhaps a ready-made set of view of male and female gender in literary texts. These typical, fixed images are called **stereotypes**. For instances, women in literature broadly fall into two main categories that is the good angel, the virgin and the bad seductress, the whore.

Here is another story written from the perspective of the female. This story is a part of an autobiography by a first generation Chinese – American, born of Chinese immigrants. This excerpt brings alive a past memory related to Maxine Hong Kingston by her mother and figures in the beginning of her remarkable autobiography, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts*

No Name Women

“You must not tell anyone”, my mother said, “what I am about to tell you. In china your father had a sister who killed herself. She jumped into the family well. We say that your father has all brothers because it is as if she had never been born.

“ In 1924 just a few days after our village celebrated seventeen hurry-up weddings- to make sure that every young man who went ‘ out on the road’ would responsibly come home- your father and his brothers and your aunt’s new husband sailed for America , the Gold Mountain. It was your grandfather’s last trip. Those lucky enough to get contracts waved goodbye from the decks. They fed and guarded the stowaways and helped them off in Cuba, New York, and Bali, Hawaii, ‘we’ll meet in California next year, they said. All of them sent money home.

“I remember looking at your aunt one day when she and I were dressing; I had noticed before that she had such protruding

melon of such of a stomach. But I did not think, 'she's pregnant', until she began to look like other pregnant women, her shirt pulling and the white tops of her black pants showing. She could not have been pregnant, you see, because her husband had been gone for years. No one said anything. We did not discuss it. In early summer she was ready to have the child, long after the time when it could have been possible.

“The village had also been counting. On the night the baby was to be born the villagers raided our house. Some were crying. Like a great saw, teeth strung with lights, files of people walked zigzag across our land, tearing the rice. Their lanterns doubled in the disturbed black water, which drained away through the broken bunds. As the villagers closed in, we could see that some of them, probably men and women we knew well, wore white masks. The people with long hair hung it over their faces. Women with short hair made it stand up on end. Some had tied white bands around their foreheads, arms, and legs.

“At first they threw mud and rocks at the house. Then they threw eggs and began slaughtering our stock. We could hear the animals scream their deaths—the roosters, the pigs, a last great roar from the ox. Familiar wild heads flared in our night windows; the villagers encircled us. Some of the faces stopped to peer at us, their eyes rushing like searchlights. The hands flattened against the panes, framed heads, and left red prints.

“The villagers broke in the front and the back doors at the same time, even though we had not locked the doors against them. Their knives dripped with the blood of our animals. They smeared blood on the doors and walls. One woman swung a chicken, whose throat she had slit, splattering blood in red arcs about her. We stood together in the middle of our house, in the family hall with the pictures and tables of the ancestors around us, and looked straight ahead.

At that time the house had only two wings. When the men came back, we would build two more to enclose our courtyard and a third one to begin a second courtyard. The villagers pushed

through both wings, even your grandparent's rooms to find your aunt's, which was also mine until the men returned. From this room a new wing for one of the younger families would grow. They ripped up her clothes and shoes and broke her combs, grinding them underfoot. They tore her work from the loom. They scattered the cooking fire and rolled the new weaving in it. We could hear them in the kitchen breaking our bowls and banging the pots. They overturned the great waist-high earthenware jugs; duck eggs, pickled fruits, vegetables burst out and mixed in acrid torrents. The old women from the next field swept a broom through the air and loosed the spirits-of-the broom over our heads. 'Pig'. 'Ghost'. 'Pig', they sobbed and scolded while they ruined our house.

When they left, they took sugar and oranges to bless themselves. They cut pieces from the dead animals. Some of them took bowls that were not broken and clothes that were not torn. Afterward we swept up the rice and sewed it back up into sacks. But the smells from the spilled preserves lasted. Your aunt gave birth in the pigsty that night. The next morning when I went for the water, I found her and the baby plugging up the family well.

"Don't let your father know that I told you. He denies her. Now that you have started to menstruate, what happened to her could happen to you. Don't humiliate us. You wouldn't like to be forgotten as if you had never been born.

The villagers are watchful"

Whenever she had to warn us about life, my mother told stories that ran like this one, a story to grow up on.

Maxine Hong Kingston begins her search for a personal identity with the story of an aunt, to whom this title "No name Woman" refers. Ironically, the first thing we read is Kingston's mother's warning Kingston, "You must not tell anyone . . . what I am about to tell you. In China your father had a sister who killed herself. She jumped into the family well. We say that your father has all brothers because it is as if she had never been

born”. As an American, Kingston uncovers just what this Chinese cultural history is, and one way of doing so is by listening to, and then altering, her mother’s stories about the family’s Chinese past.

Her mother’s story of ‘No Name Woman’ provides one valuable inroad into Kingston’s discovering her cultural history. Mother relates how on the night when Kingston’s aunt gave birth to an illegitimate child, the people of the Chinese village in which the aunt and her family lived ransacked the family’s house, killed all of their livestock, and destroyed their crops. Shunned by her family, the aunt gave birth in a pigsty, alone. The next morning, mother went to gather water from the family’s well, where she discovered that No Name Woman had committed suicide by throwing herself and her child down into the well.

- Do you think tradition is a great driving force, a part of the dominant ideology.

Yes, tradition plays an important role in gender discrimination. For instance, In Indian tradition, widows are always alienated from the mainstream society.

The widower says men are like ‘free birds’ and he has not had to face any restrictions after his wife passed away. By contrast, the widow woman must control her desires and abide by what tradition has dictated for her. Such gender-based discrimination is the function of the iron-grip of patriarchy in our lives. Honour Killing in India is another example of the same. human rights watch define “honour killing” as follows - Honour killings are acts of vengeance, usually death, committed by male family members against female family members, in response to a belief that the women have offended a family’s honour and have brought shame to the family unit. A woman can be targeted by (individuals within) her family for a variety of reasons, including: refusing to enter into an arranged marriage, being the victim of a sexual assault, seeking a divorce even from an abusive husband or (allegedly) committing adultery. This uncovers the core of subjugation of women by a specifically male violence on which the social order is dependent, an order that is shot through with

hypocrisy and cowardice. The mere perception that a woman has behaved in a way that “dishonours” her family is sufficient to trigger an attack on her life.

Apart from gender based stereotypes, we have **racial, ethnic and religious stereotypes** - the Jews being depicted as shrewd and ambitious, the Muslims as fanatics and terrorists, the Indians as superstitious, the Africans as barbaric and so on.

It is the subalterns and the marginalized that often get misrepresented in mainstream texts. The word, **Subalterns** refers to any person or group of inferior rank or station, whether because of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religion. In describing cultural hegemony as popular history, Antonio Gramsci coined the term *subaltern* to identify the social groups excluded and displaced from the socio-economic institutions of society in order to deny their political voices. In case of **Dalits** in India, the caste system is a discourse that justifies and promotes the interests of the upper caste. The Dalit s and the lower castes are made to believe that their knowledge system is inferior and therefore they are not agents of their lives. For instance, In Malayalam films, the lead characters are almost always either from a middle class Nair family, or Syrian Christian. Dalits, they have been stereotyped in many ways and reduced to being sidekicks to villains or unskilled labourers having no identity. They remained as instruments to idolize the hero, to act as a contrast to the elite protagonist or as the poor helpless victims who offer the protagonist an opportunity to display his heroism.

The artistic expressions of the Dalits were seen as inferior and dismissed as folk. It is recently that Dalit literature has been made visible. SharankumarLimbale, one of the earliest Dalit writers, defines Dalit literature as “Literature which artistically portraysthe sorrows, tribulations, slavery, degradation, ridicule and poverty endured by Dalits”(Limbale 30).

Let us .read the poem, **Which Language Should I Speak?** by famous Marathi Dalit writer Arum Kamble (14 march 1953- Dec. 2009)

Arum Kamble

Which language should I speak?

Chewing trotters in the badlands

My grandpa

The permanent resident of my body,

The household of tradition heaped on his back,

Hollers at me,

“You whore-son, talk like we do,

Talk, I tell you!”

Picking through the Vedas

His top knot well-oiled with ghee,

My Brahmin teacher tells me,

‘You idiot, use the language correctly!’

Now I ask you,

Which language should I speak?

{Translated from Marathi by PriyaAdarkar}

1. What do the images- “Chewing trotters in the badlands” and “His top knot well-oiled with ghee” evoke?

These images evoke two different ways of living of people belonging to two different caste communities. While poverty and birth in a lower caste community make one person chew trotters (pig’s feet) in badlands as part of survival, being born into a Brahmin community, the latter person can afford to oil his knot with ghee, which becomes another marker of caste superiority.

2. Do you think the stanza division conveys any meaning?
Yes. The stanza division conveys the division of upper and lower caste communities in the society and the disparities in the use of language which is based on the different ways of living that casteism forces them into.
3. What meaning does the line “household of tradition heaped on his back” convey? Can you spot a metaphor here?

Yes. The line is a metaphorical description of how a tradition of caste violence and discrimination burdens the existence of the grandfather and shapes the language that he uses.

4. In which line in the poem, do you think, the poet brings in the anguish of being a social outcast? Explain.

The line “Which language should I speak?” brings in the anguish of being a social outcast because the line expresses the dilemma of a person born in a lower caste community as to which is his language. Should he be using the language of his own community, evolved as a language of resistance against feudal and casteist violence or should he be using the language of the Brahmin perpetuator of caste violence.

F. M Shinde

Habit

Once you're used to it

You never afterwards

Feel anything;

Your blood nevermore

Congeals

Nor flows

For wet mud has been slapped

Over all your bones.

Once you're used to it

Even the sorrow

That visits you

Sometimes, in dreams,

Melts away, embarrassed,

Habit isn't used to breaking out

In feelings

(Translated from Marathi by Priya Adarkar)

1. Who is speaking in the poem? How do you know?

The speaker of the poem is a person who has had to face the discriminations of casteism. Generations of casteist violence have made men used to their segregated existences

in such a way that sorrow is embarrassed to express itself even in dreams.

2. What do you notice about the length of the lines? Does it convey any emotion? What do you think?

The lines are short and broken in keeping with the lives broken by caste which is depicted in the poem. The Dalit consciousness is conveyed through the form of the poem.

3. In what sense is the word **habit** used in the poem? Do these habits, that the speaker's community has developed, help them? How? How not?

The word habit has been used to denote the way in which generations of physical violence and emotional trauma of casteism have led to a passivity in those who have had to face them to such an extent that sorrow itself is embarrassed to show itself. So, these developed habits do not help them in anyway. It only helps the perpetrators of casteism.

S. Joseph

Identity Card

In my student days

a girl came laughing.

Our hands met kneading

her rice and fish curry.

On a bench we became

a Hindu-Christian family.

I whiled away my time

reading Neruda's poetry;

and meanwhile I misplaced

my identity card.

I noticed, she said

returning my card:

the account of your stipend

is entered there in red.

These days I never look at

A boy and a girl lost in themselves.

They will depart after a while.

I won't be surprised even if they unite.

Their identity cards

won't have scribbling in red.

(Translated from Malayalam by K. Sachidanandan)

S. Joseph: Identity Card

1. Do you think the Dalit in the poem above is made to feel marginalized and isolated?

Yes. The dalit is made to feel marginalized and isolated in the classroom because of how he is made conscious about his lower caste identity by his classmate.

2. Why does the poet use the image of the identity card? How does the identity card with “scribbling in red” define the speaker? What are the other words that you think of with the word “red”?

Identity card is a document meant to prove a person's identity as well as establish his/her relationship to a specific nation or space. Here the identity card is the way in which a Dalit student's identity is revealed to his girl friend. The “scribbling in red” denotes the red colour which is used to mark students who require caste reservation. This marking in red prompts the girl to rethink her love towards the boy who is a lower caste. Red is often associated with productivity, creativity, revolution, love etc. however here the scribbling in red leads to the deserting of the boyfriend by the girl.

3. Are there words that evoke a sense of the place? Where do you think the poet sets his poem? What significance does the name Neruda have in the poem?

Words like student days, bench, stipend, identity cards suggest that it is a classroom. Neruda's concept of love is revolutionary and esoteric, which asserts that love is secular and democratic. However Identity Card critiques such a romanticized concept of love. Here love is determined by ones caste identity.

Subject-position of Children in Contemporary Society

Your **children** are not your **children**.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you

(Kahlil Gibran , The Prophet).

The child is another marginalized figure in the society and by extension in literature and culture.

Who is a child?

What marks a person as a child?

A child is seen only as a non – adult or an adult in the making, rather than as an individual on her/his own terms. The concept of a child varies from culture to culture. Power plays an important role in the relationship between child and adult. We often treat them as inferior and their interests, choices, values and attitudes, particularly in the Indian context, are decided /shaped by the adults. The absence of choices makes the relationship hierarchical.

In many literary texts the child is depicted as innocent, angelic/devilish, unreasonable, uninformed, thereby essentializing the person of a child. So The descriptions of children appear homogenous in texts across cultures, nations and historical periods. Therefore , the true voices of children are silenced and their experiences erased. (Watch “Kunjudaivam,amalayalamchildren movie<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DiIrifXESi8>)

- Can you think of instances in literature where children are stereotyped?

Writers may also represent children as violent, insensitive and exploitative beings.

Read the following passage from William Golding's *Lord of Flies*, a novel which portrays how the beastly instincts in children come out in all their viciousness when they find themselves stranded on an uninhabited Island

A procession had appeared, far down among the pink stones that lay near the water's edge. Some of the boys wore black

caps but otherwise they were almost naked. They lifted sticks in the air together whenever they came to an easy patch. They were chanting, something to do with the bundle that the errant twins carried so carefully. Ralph picked out Jack easily, even at that distance, tall red-haired, and inevitably leading the procession.

Simon looked now, from Ralph to Jack, as he had looked from Ralph to the horizon, and what he saw seemed to make him afraid. Ralph said nothing more, but waited while the procession came nearer. The chant was audible but at that distance still wordless. Behind Jack walked the twins, carrying a great stake on their shoulders. The gutted carcass of a pig swung from the stake, swinging heavily as the twins toiled over the uneven ground. The pig's head hung down with gaping neck and seemed to search for something on the ground. At last the words of the chant floated up to them, across the bowl of blackened wood and ashes.

“kill the pig. Cut her throat. Spill her blood.”

Yet as the words became audible, the procession reached the steepest part of the mountain, and in a minute or two the chant had died away. Piggy sniveled and Simon shushed him quickly as though he had spoken too loudly in church.

Jack, his face smeared with clays, reached the top first and hailed Ralph excitedly, with lifted spear.

“Look! We've killed a pig- we stole up on them- we got in a circle-”

Voices broke in from the hunters.

“We got in a circle-”

“We crept up”

“The pig squealed-”

The twins stood with the pig swinging between them, dropping black gouts on the rock. They seemed to share one wide, ecstatic grin. Jack had too many things to tell Ralph at once. Instead he danced a step or two, then remembered his dignity and stood still, grinning. He noticed blood on his hands

and grimaced distastefully, looked for something on which to clean them, then wiped them on his shorts and laughed.

Ralph spoke.

“you let the fire go out.”

Jack checked, vaguely irritated by this irrelevance but too happy to let it worry him.

“We can light the fire again. You should have been with us, Ralph. We had a smashing time. The twins got knocked over-”

“We hit the pig-”

“- I fell on top-”

“I cut the pig’s throat,” said Jack, proudly, and yet twitched as he said it. “can I borrow yours, Ralph, to make a nick in the hilt?”

The boys chattered and danced. The twins continued to grin.

“There was lashings of blood”, said Jack, laughing and shuddering, “you should have seen it!”

“We’ll go hunting every day-”

The major theme of *Lord of Flies* is loss of innocence. Usually children are represented as innocent and blameless. See how in this text the pattern of stereotyping works reversely. A text usually features children in the space of the home and school. The home and the school are ideological sites, where children are taught moral and social values.

Watch the short film *Children by Redream*, available at www.viddsee.com/video/child/rchrk?locale=en. This film clearly shows how adults often dominate the child. The desire and the needs of the child may be overlooked in the adult’s well-meaning acts of ‘educating’ the young.

Sexuality

Just like our subjectivity, our sexuality is also a socially constructed one. We generally think of two sexes: the male and the female. When you were born, the doctor or midwife assigned you a sex based on your body’s physical characteristics. We may have been taught that male and female are the only gender

identities. This is the ‘binary’ view of gender. But a person’s gender identity may differ from the sex they were assigned at birth. Such subjects are called **transgender**.

Sexuality is not just about ‘sex’, and certain body parts that are associated with the male and the female body. Sexuality includes **sexual orientation**, such as who a person is attracted to and whether the person identifies as **hetero sexual, homo sexual, or bi sexual**. People who identify their sexual orientation as heterosexual typically feel attracted to people of a different gender. Our society considers that this orientation is the normal kind .people who identify as “lesbian” or “gay” typically feel attracted to people of the same gender as themselves. People who identify as “bisexual” typically feel attracted to more than one gender, such as being attracted to both women and men. People who use the term “*queer*” may use it to mean lesbian, gay, bisexual, or pansexual, or they may use it because other terms don’t quite describe their experiences. Social prejudices towards these alternative groups still persist in our society. They take the form of indifference ,hostility, revulsion, contempt, scorn and even downright ostracization and violence . this is what we understand as **homophobia**.

Do you think of people who identify their sexuality and sexual orientation as other than the normative? Here is a Kannada story (in translation) which captures the experience of a person whose sexuality is different from the norm. Vasudhendra is a celebrated Kannada writer. His collection of short stories titled ‘Mohanaswamy’ is one of its kind. He has been what seems to be the only openly gay author in Kannada literature. ‘Mohanaswamy’ is about a gay man from rural Karnataka. Vasudhendra’s attempt to write about homosexuality in a regional language is a pioneering move on his part.

Vasudhendra

Mohanaswamy

If I learn to ride bicycle, I will turn from gay to straight.
When this thought flashed across twenty – one – year – old

Mohanaswamy's mind, dark night had descended on the coastal state of Goa. Huge waves crashing down on the seashore. As Mohanaswamy tossed and turned on the bed in a hotel room in that unfamiliar city, his friends tired of cycling and braving the hot sun the whole day, were slipping into deep sleep one by one. Elsewhere in the city, owners of wine and mutton shops were downing their shutters.

It was just about two years ago that Mohanaswamy had come across the word 'gay'. He now identified himself with that word, though he wasn't sure whether it really described him. For him, 'straight' mean every other creature on earth except him and the people of his ilk. English dailies and magazines like Debonaire often used the word 'gay'. But he didn't know what gays were called in the vernacular. So far he had earned several monikers in the local slang- each one filling him with pain, disgust, humiliation and incredulity. But there was no equivalent word for 'gay' in Kannada. You wouldn't even find it in dictionaries and newspapers.

The first moniker Mohanaswamy got was 'Gansu', a short form for 'Gandusule' which, in Kannada, referred to a male prostitute. Shockingly, it was his sister, Janaki, who gave him the horrendous nickname.

Translated from Kannada by Rashmi Terdal

1. How is the word, 'shockingly' appropriate in the last sentence?

The family makes a person's closest social circle. It is usually expected that one's distinctiveness and differences will be accepted first by the family. Since Mohanaswamy confided in his sister, he believed that his coming out as gay will not provoke an insult from her. When she called him a male prostitute, it struck him therefore as a very shocking address.

2. Do you think language plays a role in discriminating sexualities? How?

Language fundamentally is a naming process. A human being identifies the world around him or her by the names. When

Mohanaswamy finds out that the word gay has no Kannada equivalent, he feels he is spaced out of the immediate community.

The following is a letter, a queer writer writes to his younger self. It is a selection from The Letter Q(2012), a collection of letters written by queer writers to their younger selves.

Ely Shipley

The letter Q

1 July 2012

Dear _____,

I want to share one of my favourite poems with you:

“May be, Someday” by Yannis Ritsos (Translated by Edmund Keeley)

I want to show you these rose clouds in the night. But you can't see. It's night – what can one see?

Now , I have no choice but to see with your eyes, he said,
So I'm not alone, so you are not alone. And really,
there is nothing over there where I pointed.

Only the stars crowded together in the night, tired, like those people coming back in a truck from a picnic,
disappointed, hungry, nobody singing,
with wilted wild flowers in their sweaty palms.

But I am going to insist on seeing and showing you, he said,
Because if you too don't see, it will be as if I hadn't –

I'll insist at least on not seeing with your eyes-

And maybe someday, from a different direction,
We'll meet.

I refuse to lie to you; you already know that living in this world is enormously difficult. But what you might not fully realize just yet is that what makes this pain bearable is love. You will go on seeking this love outside of yourself – from family, friends and lovers. Through this process you will learn a lot. But what I need you to know is that I love you, for who you are , just as you are,

absolutely and unconditionally, right now; there is nothing wrong with you.

In fact you have become my muse. You are my creative source. I didn't always realize this. And sometimes, even now, I forget it. So, if I was harsh with you along the way, I hope you will forgive me. We're working on this now.

Something I return to, for example, is the way that every day of your young life, being perceived as a girl because of the body you were born into, you imagined yourself each night before you went to sleep as being recognized by the world as a boy. You could see something about yourself that others couldn't. This is a gift. But it was hard to carry, this secret. You couldn't share your vision with anyone. Often you were picked on for not conforming to your assigned gender role of female. We were ashamed of our vision. And, so, at some point, I scolded you for what I mistakenly felt was a frivolous fantasy. I remember us thinking around age 14 or 15: why am I torturing myself with this thought; it's never going to happen. At the time, we didn't know that it was possible to live in this world and be recognized as male. We were so happy to discover – much later on – that to some degree it is.

But what's even more valuable to me now than this realization that one can transform one's body is that your imagination conceived it much earlier, before you had the language of society and medicine to name it. Interestingly, around this time, you began to read poems and write song lyrics and poems – a true kind of language. Your poetic imagination gave you insight and joy in the midst of misery. I still remember the first time we read Percy Bysshe Shelley's line "naught may endure but mutability"

from his poem, "mutability". Its paradox was a kind of revelation for you, though you wouldn't understand why for years to come.

Though we denied a part of our self and this creative source for a while, we never lost faith. I am so grateful to you for this. Through reading and writing poems you were able to reconnect

with this source. Reading and writing has been the antidote. Each time I realize you are my muse, I fill up, become expensive, spacious. I think of Walt Whitman’s “Song of Myself”, and his line: “I am large. I contain multitudes.” I remember Jack Spicer’s imperative: “Poet, be like god.”

Recently I read a wonderful book by a Buddhist teacher, Tara Brach, called Radical Acceptance. I was touched by an anecdote she tells:

Several years ago, a small group of Buddhist teachers and psychologists from the United States and Europe invited the Dalai Lama to join them in a dialogue about emotions and health. During one of their sessions, an American Vipassana teacher asked him to talk about the suffering of self-hatred. A look of confusion came over the Dalai Lama’s face. “What is self-hatred?” he asked. As the therapists and teachers in the room tried to explain, he looked increasingly bewildered. “Was this mental state a mental disorder?” he asked them. When those gathered confirmed that self-hatred was not unusual but rather common experience for their students and clients, the Dalai Lama was astonished. How could they feel that way about themselves, he wondered, when “everybody has Buddha nature”

Indeed, “self-hatred is not unusual,” especially for a queer kid. But I’m so proud you’ve survived. I’m so grateful that you found (and continue to find) the way to love yourself, to recognize something like this “Buddha nature” by transforming your suffering into something beautiful through poetry. It looks like reading and writing poems to see your true nature, to return to the source, and to realize there is nothing wrong with you. Your primary transformation, which is ongoing, has to do with perception itself, and nurturing your ability to see. Your resilience, as made evident by our poetry, encourages me to go on.

With love,

Ely.

1. Analyse the line “I am large. I contain multitudes” from the point of view of a queer.
-

Whitman was a gay poet. His vision included the lives and perspectives of marginalized sexualities. Not only did he raise to the status of America's national poet, but made poetry a medium through which differences could be transcended. When he sings "I contain multitudes", he is trying to bring to light how the experience of someone who occupies the margins can sometimes become a wholesome commentary of the way the world works.

2. Do you think the terms 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual' address the complexities of sexualities?

They address the complexities of sexualities after a fashion, in that they provide categories that could satisfy the requirements of governmental formats where alternate sexuality is legally acknowledged. But a formal taxonomy such as this is bound to fail at representing the range of spectrum that human sexuality is spread upon. The neat classification of sexual orientation into heterosexual and homosexual is only an initial attempt to catch the variety of sexual orientations that gender studies has brought for analysis.

3. "Your primary transformation which is ongoing has to do with perception itself, and nurturing your ability to see". Does this sentence signify that there is more to it than the physical condition that determines sexualities?

Yes. The sentence suggests that the physicality of a person is only one of the many variables around which one's idea of oneself is constituted. Sexual behavior is not a direct product of a person's biology, it is predicated upon a complex set of variables ranging from sociological to psychological. In that sense, the sentence tries to suggest that including the primary transformation – that of the body – every change is a process that takes many intermediate phases

Activity.

Pick out sentences from the text to illustrate how sexuality is more than a biological fact.

For further reading

Dasan , M et al ed. *Oxford India Anthology of Malayalam Dalit Writing* OUP, India,2012

Seidman,Steven, Nancy Fischer and Chet Meeks. *Introducing the New Sexuality Studies*. Routledge, 2011

Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble*, Routledge, London,2006

**FIRST SEMESTER BA ENGLISH DEGREE
EXAMINATION**

**MODEL QUESTION PAPER
(CBCSSUG)**

**Core Course-English
Introducing Literature**

Time:2.5Hours

Maximum: 80 Marks

I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences:

1. Complete the given sentences with verb phrases that answer the question when or where:

She _____

He _____

2. I will help you out if you confide in me – Identify the phrasal verbs
3. Identify the paratactic and hypotactic sentences from the given passage –

A jackal howled at the moon, a nightjar called from the bushes, Biniya walked fast and her breath came in short, sharp gasps. Bright moonlight bathed the hillside when she reached her home to village

4. Replace the monotransitive verb with ditransitive verb:
She rode a bicycle.

5. Mark enjambment or caesura in the following stanzas:

Your eyes on me were as eyes that rove
Over tedious riddles of years ago;
And some words played between us to and fro
On which lost the more by our love

6. Mark the syllabic units in the following lines of poetry

Had a dream, which was not all a dream
The bright sun was extinguished, and the stars

7. What is the point of view in this passage? Identify any two markers.

Mary gets up from her chair. The mowers are through for the night and she has no fear that her son will be robbed of his sleep. She will go out and run in the dark. Block by block she can be gone ten minutes at a time, stopping back

after each circuit to look in on him. He's got to learn to be alone and what better way to learn than in your sleep.

8. My love is like a red, red rose – Identify the figure of speech and state how it enhances meaning.
9. Mark the sense groups in the following passage
Among the great leaders of India's renaissance, Jawaharlal Nehru stands out prominently. He was born at Allahabad on November 14, 1889. He was educated at home until the age of sixteen by English governesses and tutors.
10. I remember, I remember
The fir trees dark and high;
I used to thin their slender tops
Were close against the sky:
It was a childish ignorance,
But not 'tis little joy
To –now I'm farther off from heav'n
Than when I was a boy
How do you think the child is stereotyped in this passage?
11. Mohanaswamy loved to play house with the girls. He found it more interesting than playing gilli-danda, top and marbles with boys. Though the girls forced him to go and play with boys, he wouldn't listen. The boys always bullied him – How do gender prejudices work here? Pick out two expressions to justify your answer.
12. Bride wanted: Fair, slim, educated girl below 22 years from a well-off family - What does the ad tell you about the perceptions of our society?
13. As a young boy, Velutha would come with Vellya Paapen to the back entrance of the Ayemenem house to deliver the coconuts they had plucked from the trees in the compound. Pappachi would not allow Paravans into the house. Nobody would – Why were Paravans not allowed to enter the house?
14. Which sentence in the earlier passage suggest that this attitude is not the problem of an individual but a social evil.
15. 'Tyger tyger burning bright
In the forests of the night' – what mood does the trochaic metre of this poem reflect? (Ceiling 25 marks)

II. Do as directed. Paragraph questions shall not exceed 75 words.

16. Do you think the treatment of the Dalit teacher in the passage below is unjust? Why? Pick out at least four words/phrases/sentences that will justify your answer.

The head master had chosen a room at the end of the school building for me. May be he wanted to spare the upper caste teachers the sin of passing in front of a Pulayateacher's room. Wonder whether that innocent of innocents headmaster, Raman Menon had thought that far ahead.

The students looked at me not as though I was a strange creature, but as one who had committed a grave sin. No point in blaming them for that. Those were the circumstances under which they had been raised...

When I returned after lunch in ammavan's home, I got a terrible shock. My blood boiled as never before. Were my eyes growing dim, were my muscles and nerves failing, or was I forgetting myself? I cannot explain my feelings at that moment.

Someone had placed a spade across my desk

17. One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. Explain.
18. Fill in the blanks with the right collocations. Choose from the words given in the brackets

(hard, great, show, pay, take, draw, big, evince, bid)

My father said “_____ attention when I speak.” He was a monster most of the time. He never _____ any interest in my life. My mother was a _____ working woman. I had _____ admiration for my mother. She _____ her role seriously.

19. Read the passage below.

Earlier, much earlier: me, saying to my father, Please, Father! I want to go to Egypt or Iraq, I want to study at university there. He grabbed me by the neck and barked at me. By this beard of mine, I swear you are not leaving Oman. Do you want to sink so low? To come back from Egypt or Iraq with your beard shaven off? Smoking and drinking and I don't know what? Is that who you want to be? So instead, immediately after finishing high school I went to work in his business.

Imagine you are the son. Write a diary entry expressing your feelings.

20. It was a long time ago,
 I have almost forgotten my dream.
 But it was there then,
 In front of me,
 Bright like a sun-
 My dream.
 And then the wall rose,
 Rose slowly,
 Slowly,
 Between me and my dream.
 Rose until it touched the sky-
 The wall.
 Shadow.
 I am black.
 I lie down in the shadow –

What are the figures of speech in the poem? How does the poet convey his meaning through them?

21. Discuss the significance of the advice the mother gives to the daughter at the end of the story No Name Woman.
22. In the text below whose do you think is the dominant voice? Why? Substantiate your views with two examples from the text.

Everyone agreed that my father, my Baba had built the most beautiful house in the Wazir Akbar Khan district, a new and affluent neighbourhood in the northern part of Kabul. Some thought it was the prettiest house in all of Kabul. A broad entry way flanked by rose bushes led to the sprawling house of marble floors and wide windows. . . .

On the south end of the garden, in the shadows of a loquat tree was the servants' home, a modest little mud hut where Hassan lived with his father.

It was there in that little shack, that Hassan was born in the winter of 1964, just one year after my mother died giving birth to me.

23. Do you find viewpoints, silences, or gaps that are unfair to a person or a group in the text below? Whose point of view is represented in this text? How does Stevens respond to this issue?

Then he said: ‘I have been doing a great deal of thinking Stevens. A great deal of thinking. And I’ve reached my conclusion. We cannot have Jews on the staff here at Darlington Hall.’

‘Sir?’

‘It’s for the good of this house, Stevens. In the interests of the guests we have staying here. I’ve looked into this carefully, Stevens, and I’m letting you know my conclusion.’

‘Very well, sir.

‘Tell me Stevens, we have a few on the staff at the moment, don’t we? Jews, I mean.’

I believe two of the present staff members would fall into that category, sir.’

‘Ah.’ His lordship paused for a moment, staring out of his window. ‘Of course, you’ll have to let them go’

I beg your pardon, sir?’ (Remains of the Day)

(Ceiling 35 marks)

III. Answer any *two* out of the two questions in a short essay of 150 words:

24. “I was quite sure that Hamlet had only one possible interpretation, and that one universally obvious.” How is the author proved wrong as he narrates Hamlet to the African tribals?
25. Based on your reading of *Adivasi will not Dance* explain how breaking a habit can be a form of resistance.
26. Read the text from a book published in 1877. Would you say nineteenth century discourses were unfair to women? What do you think of the word ‘holy’ that describes the woman in the text? Compare the present day family with that in the text below.

Coming home one day at his dinner hour, and finding that the meal was not ready, he flew into a furious passion, and began to upset and break the furniture in the dining room. His wife-a holy woman- endeavoured to pacify him and while urging the servants to hurry forward in their preparations, she argued sweetly with her husband on the unseemliness of such displays of anger and begged him to read a book, while she would go to aid the cook. He flung the book away from him and stalked back and forth in a rage, while the lady hastened to the kitchen.

27. What function do the mother's stories perform in shaping the daughter's consciousness as a woman in No Name Woman?

(2 x 10=20 marks)

Please note;

- 3 chapters from module 2,3 and 4 namely Shakespeare in the Bush, The Adivasi will not dance and No Name Woman are meant for detailed study from which paragraph and essay questions will be asked
- Students are expected to write short paragraphs of 75 words and short essays of 150 words

Answer key:

1. She came home early
He spoke at the meeting
2. Help out, confide in
3. A jackal howled at the moon, a nightjar called from the bushes, Biniya walked fast and her breath came in short, sharp gasps – paratactic
Bright moonlight bathed the hillside when she reached her home to village – hypotactic
4. She wrote him a letter
5. Your eyes on me were as eyes that rove Over tedious riddles of years ago
And some words played between us to and fro On which lost the more by our love.
6. Had a/ dream which/ was not/ all a/ dream
The bright/ sun was/ ex ti/ nguish'd and/ the stars
7. Third person. Markers – Mary, she
8. Simile - the reference to the rose adds the quality of grace and beauty
9. *Among the great leaders /of India's renaissance/, Jawaharlal Nehru stands out prominently/ He was born at Allahabad/ on November 14, 1889/ He was educated at home /until the age of sixteen /by English governesses and tutors/*
10. Ignorant and innocent
11. It is normal for the boys to play gillidanda, top and marbles and for the girls to play house. The girls forced him- the boys bullied him

12. It is normal for a man to expect his bride to be fair, slim, young and from a well off family This normative societal expectation is not applicable to the bridegroom (answer is subjective)
13. Paravans were not allowed to enter the house because of the prevailing system of untouchability.
14. Nobody would
15. Sombre mood
16. It is unjust because the Dalit teacher was not treated as a human being by the headmaster, the other teachers and students. Sin, strange creature, grave sin, spade
17. Hints – gender inequality, indoctrination, prescribed gender roles
18. Pay, showed, hard, great, took
19. Answer is subjective
20. Bright like a sun – simile, Rose until it touched the sky-hyperbole – the contrasting images to describe the dream and the wall
21. Indoctrinating only the girl child on values of chastity and morality
22. The narrator and his father – new and affluent neighbourhood, prettiest house, modest little mud hut, little shack
23. Yes. The point of view of the dominant class is represented here. The hotel authorities do not want Jews on the staff in the interest of the guests. Stevens is obliging and submissive
24. The ‘strange’ responses of the tribals to the incidents in the story
25. Dancing is habitual for the adivasis - the adivasis’ adamant decision not to dance – a political act
26. Yes. It is normal for the man to fly into a ‘furious passion’ and for the woman to put up with it and pacify him. The answer for the last part is subjective
27. The girl child is warned of dire consequences if she violates the social norms of chastity