

**KUNTHAVAI NAACCHIYAAR GOVERNMENT ARTS COLLEGE ORWOMEN(AUT),
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WOMEN'S WRITING IN ENGLISH

CODE :18K5E12

UNIT-I POETRY-DETAILED

- 1.Margaret Atwood-This is a Photograph of Me
- 2.Emily Dickinson-After Great Pain, a Formal Feeling Comes
- 3.Audre Lorde- A Woman Speaks

POETRY(NON-DETAILED)

- 4.Mamta Kalia-Positive Thinking
- 5.Maya Angelou- Caged Bird

THIS IS A PHOTOGRAPH OF ME

- MARGARET ATWOOD

It was taken some time ago.
At first it seems to be
a smeared
print: blurred lines and grey flecks
blended with the paper;

then, as you scan
it, you see in the left-hand corner
a thing that is like a branch: part of a tree
(balsam or spruce) emerging
and, to the right, halfway up

what ought to be a gentle
slope, a small frame house.

In the background there is a lake,
and beyond that, some low hills.

(The photograph was taken
the day after I drowned.

I am in the lake, in the center
of the picture, just under the surface.

It is difficult to say where
precisely, or to say
how large or small I am:
the effect of water
on light is a distortion

but if you look long enough,
eventually
you will be able to see me.)

Summary:

The speaker of the poem begins to describe an old photograph from many years ago. The speaker further illustrates the photograph as “smeared” or “smudged” and “blurry”. Then she instructs the reader through a more detailed analysis of the photograph first pointing out a tree that creeps into the frame from one of its left corners.

Then the speaker identifies “a small frame house” that sits on a slope as well as “a lake” and “some low hills”. As such she has been describing a natural scenic landscape the speaker admits in a parenthetical statement that the photograph was taken the day after she has drowned in the lake. The speaker makes the reader to look more closely and try to identify the corpse submerged within the lake. At last the speaker said to the audience that they have been gazing the photo for a while so that they can identify the speaker.

Introduction to the poet

Margaret Eleanor Atwood born in November 18,1939. She is a Canadian poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist, teacher, environmental activist and inventor. She has published 18 books of poetry, 18 novels, 11 books of nonfiction, 9 collections of short fiction, 8 children's book and 2 graphic novels. Atwood has won numerous Awards and honors for her writings like Booker price (twice) Arthur C Clarke award, Governor General award, Franz Kafka price, National Book Critics and PEN centre USA's Lifetime Achievement Award. She wrote different genres like historical fiction, speculative fiction science fiction, dystopian fiction. Her important and notable works are ‘Surfacing’, ‘The Handmaid's Tale’, ‘Cat's Eye’, ‘ Alias Grace’, ‘The Blind Assassin’ and ‘Oryx and Crake’. Her important writings are focused on the themes like theorizing Canada, Canadian identity, victim position in Canadian literature, Self-consciousness and self-actualization.

Introduction to the poem

Woman's writing may refer to the general study of women writers or women literature as a genre in general or in particular language. It becomes a chain of inspiration among writers, readers, and everyone else within the lives. When women share their voice, powerful things can happen. Atwood is a well known feminist writer who often writes about the oppression of women in society. This

poem belongs to Atwood's second collection of poems, "The Circle Game" (1939) In this poem "This is the Photograph of me" Atwood utilizes several aspects of nature observed in a photograph to symbolize the dominance of men over women in our oppressive Society.

Essay on "This is a Photograph of me"

In the beginning of the poem the speaker who narrates each and every minute details of a very old photograph. The image looks like smeared smudged and blurry. The speaker tries to impress the reader's attention to various details within its beautiful landscape. The speaker uncovers that once understanding of the fact or truth is always concerned with subjectivity. The initial scan of the photograph which reflects that this can be used to illustrate the past events.

The speaker continues to point out one corner of the photograph, from which a tree grows and this shows her subtle hints that once understanding of the photograph. The speaker uses the soft language to portray the scene such as "gentle slope", "small frame house" and "low hills". Due to that the scene looks so calm and quiet.

Suddenly this attitude of description disappears. Because it is revealed that the photograph was taken on the day after the speaker died. The speaker persuades the reader to observe more closely and try to identify the corpse submerged in the lake. This shows that the speaker's experience has been hidden in the lake like her body. The speaker also calls the reflection of sunlight on lake "a distortion".

It suggests that the photograph misrepresents the scene the word "distortion" represents the speaker unsure of "how large or how small I am". The parenthesis in the poem reveals that this information could easily be unnoticed. It

implies that the speaker's corpse is seen as secondary or insignificant. At the outset the speaker's perspective is entirely neglected.

This poem brings out Atwood's major themes in her poetry collection "The Circle Game". It explains and immortalizes female perspective under the male dominated societies. Thus "This is a photograph voices out the experiences of those who feel shut out of their own histories. This poem will bring out such truths.

Short question

1. What is the central theme of the poem "This is the photograph of me"?
2. How does the speaker describe the photograph?
3. Is the speaker alive?
4. Mention any two works of Atwood.
5. What is the implication of last line of the poem "This is the photograph of me"?

AFTER GREAT PAIN, A FORMAL FEELINGS COMES

-EMILY DICKINSON

After great pain, a formal feeling comes –
The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs –
The stiff Heart questions ‘was it He, that bore,’
And ‘Yesterday, or Centuries before’?

The Feet, mechanical, go round –
A Wooden way
Of Ground, or Air, or Ought –
Regardless grown,
A Quartz contentment, like a stone –

This is the Hour of Lead –
Remembered, if outlived,
As Freezing persons, recollect the Snow –
First – Chill – then Stupor – then the letting go –

Summary

“After Great Pain, a Formal Feelings Comes” has written by Emily Dickinson who illustrates the emotional condition one exists in after a great loss. Formal feeling means an absence of feeling. The speaker describes the various part of the body to show how the loss of someone makes her body so painful. The feet are mechanical and wooden, it is just move on autopilot. She lives like a stone,

cold and without any movement. Then she is describing the formal feelings of death

Introduction to the Poet

American literature is literature written in the United States of America and proceeding colonies. The present-day United States were heavily influenced by English literature. Emily Dickinson was an American poet. She was born in December 10, 1830 at Amherst, Massachusetts into a prominent family. Her poetry was heavily influenced by the metaphysical poets of 17th century England. She was extremely prolific as a poet and she was not publicly recognized during her lifetime. The first volume of her work was published posthumously in 1890 and the last in 1955. She died in Amherst in 1886. After her death her family identified 40 hand bound volumes of nearly 1800 poems or “fascicles”. She came under the Romantic Movement, but Emily Dickinson live a life different from other writers of romantic period. She lived largely in seclusion. She was a woman working at a time when men dominated the literary scene. Her poems are sharp-edged and emotionally intense. Her poems were unique to her era and they contained short lines typically lack. Titles often used slant rhyme as well as unconventional capitalization and punctuation

Introduction to the poem

Emily Dickinson’s poems deal with the themes of death and immortality. Through her poem she explored aesthetics, society, nature and spirituality. Dickinson was troubled “from a deepening menace of death” especially the death of those who were close to her. This poem concentrates on mental anguish, grief and sorrow it explores internal pain-naming actual anatomical parts such as the

nerves, feet and the heart. This poem is focusing on pain, sorrow, grief, terror and death.

Essay on “After Great Pain, a Formal Feeling Comes”.

This poem “After Great Pain, a Formal Feeling Comes” contains three stanzas that are separated into sets of four, five and then four again. The stanzas do not follow a single rhyme scheme, but have patterns of their own. Caesura is an interesting technique that Dickinson used in this poem. It can be seen when one line is divided in half, usually with the same number of syllables on either side.

The speaker of the poem begins by saying that “a formal feeling” happens after one get through a great pain. The reader can understand that the speaker is going to focusing on the aftermath of tragedy. The word “formal feeling” is the most distinct part of the line. It evinces the question in the reader’s mind that what kind of feelings are called formal?. Through a simile “one’s nerve sits ceremonious like tombs” illustrates, the nerves are motionless and cold like a graveyard. The speaker has mentioned “He” actually this he is referred to God the Almighty. The God has created pain in her nerves and heart the feeling of being frozen or stiff continues in the second stanza. “The feet” or said to “go around” mechanically. They move without much conscious. It's like autopilot. The feet move in a wooden way. They also travel on the ground or in the air. Then she has mentioned to a stone-quartz and the feeling of contentment, the speaker might have been thinking about steady, emotionless state and being content there, “like a stone”. The speaker would be numb to the world at large.

In the concluding stanza, the particular time after mourning is called “the hour of Lead”. Lead is a cold, heavy metal fitting perfectly with the rest of the imagery. The hours are heavy on one's mind and body. The time actually

referenced with the word 'hour'. It might not be "outlived". She is comparing feeling of loss with word "stupor", means a state of reduced consciousness or sensibility. It can make one in, to death. There is the cold, the numbness, and then death. Emily Dickinson describes the emotion state one exist in after suffering an important loss.

Short Questions.

1. What is called "formal feeling" according to Emily Dickinson?
2. What is the poetic technique used by Emily Dickinson in her poems?
3. Whom does the pronoun 'He' refer to?
4. What is the central theme of this poem?
5. What is the meaning of the word 'stupor'?

A WOMAN SPEAKS

-BY AUDRE LORDE

Moon marked and touched by sun

my magic is unwritten

but when the sea turns back

it will leave my shape behind.

I seek no favor

untouched by blood

unrelenting as the curse of love

permanent as my errors

or my pride

I do not mix

love with pity

nor hate with scorn

and if you would know me

look into the entrails of Uranus

where the restless oceans pound.

I do not dwell

within my birth nor my divinities

who am ageless and half-grown

and still seeking
my sisters
witches in Dahomey
wear me inside their coiled cloths
as our mother did
mourning.

I have been woman
for a long time
beware my smile
I am treacherous with old magic
and the noon's new fury
with all your wide futures
promised
I am
woman
and not white

Summary

‘A Woman Speaks’ is a poem for the invisible and a conversation between women of different cultures and nationalities. It describes the lived experience of black women in United States and across the Diaspora .At the same time this poem discuss about what could also be done within the black feminist movement to help the lives of women of color. The specialty of this poem is that Audre Lorde never makes any accusations, but declaration of Lorde’s own truth. This poem is not meant to blame but to start a perspective of the world to others who may not have understood a problem of a black woman.

Introduction to the poet

Audre Lorde born in February 18, 1934 at New York to Caribbean immigrant parents. She is an American writer, feminist, womanist, liberarian and civil right activists. She was a self-described “black lesbian, mother, poet”. She dedicated both her life and creative talent to confronting and addressing injustices of racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism and homophobia. As a child Lorde struggled with communication and came to appreciate the power of poetry as a form of expression. She describes herself as thinking in poetry. She also memorized a great deal of poetry and use to communicate to the extent that, “if asked how she was feeling, Audre would reply by reciting a poem. Her writings are based on the theory of “difference”, the idea that binary opposition between men and women is overly simplistic.

Audre Lorde identified issues of race, class, age and ageism, sex and sexuality ,later in her life chronic illness and disability and she lived with cancer. She wrote of all of these factors are fundamental to her experience of being woman.

Introduction to the poem

'A Woman Speaks' is a both confessional and identity poem. In this poem she explains how patriarchal society has misnamed it and used it against women causing women to fear it. She is not only addressing her internal battle and self suffering but also discussing that societal inequalities, the African American women were suffering in the US. This poem is an anthem for African American women and uses vivid imagery and a call to the reader and enact fight against the under-representation of African American woman

Essay on "A Woman Speaks"

The poem "A Woman Speaks" from the collected works of Audre Lorde has written in three stanzas. The form and the tone in the beginning of the poem evince a calm atmosphere. But the poem progresses, it explores towards the true conflict within. She concentrates on the inconsistencies in how black women are perceived and their battle to define their identity outside of society's norms. The beginning of the poem illustrates the attention of the readers to how the black women are viewed as both unearthly, Goddess-like being described in jazz, the black American art form and many other art forms. Many of the art forms praise the beauty and features of African American women, but at the same time their history is mostly forgotten by the people.

The speaker expresses a sense of loss of identity and being unknown by others in the second stanza. She draws attention to the strange position of women of color as so strong and also underestimated. She has given the reference of witches in the Dahomey. Black women have been called by the whites as witches are meant to portray how their strength is seen as evil and make them an outsider. Audre has positioned herself in the world of Dahomey and then return again to her

mother and then to her own experience. This represents Audre feels the oneness with her elders and ancestors.

In the final stanza Audre has warned the feminist movement and patriarchal society. They have failed to uplifting of black women. She says “beware my smile/ I am treacherous with old magic”. It is a true warning and also the declaration of incomprehensible power and she tries to dismantle the idea of black women as dangerous. The last line of the poem. “I am /woman/ and not white” represents the bold attitude of the poet and still she wants to struggle against the right for black women.

Short Questions

1. Why does Audre Lorde write this poem” A Woman Speaks”?
2. Write the reference of ‘Dahomey’
3. What is the problem between black and white people?
4. Is a woman speaks a confessional poem?
5. How was the black woman perceived by the society?

POSITIVE THINKING

-MAMTA KALIA

Let us forget your death and mine.

We have so much to remember:

A comfortable home

Your air-conditioned office

Our quarter-dozen children

Your bank balance

The Race Course nearby

Your Yoga exercises

My fortnightly manicure

And all those social engagements.

Who cares for primal disappointments?

Introduction

Mamta Kalia was born in 1940 in Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh. She got M.A. English literature from Delhi University, 1963. She writes poetry in English and Hindi. Her books in English are “Tribute to Papa and Other Poems” (1970) and “Poems’78”(1978). In Hindi, She has published five novels to her credit, seven short story collections, two one act play collections, four novelettes for children and she has edited three works.

She is also one of the advisory Committee Member on the Sahitya Academy board New Delhi from 1988-91. She is a regular broadcaster for Akashvani and Doordarshan.

Bruce King has rightly remarked that the present contemporary manner appears to have been initiated by Mamta Kalia (Bruce King 155) . He goes on to add that the directness of expression and natural idiomatic colloquial vigor is more often found in verse of the Das, Kalia ,De Souza and Silgado than in the male Indian English poets. He should have mentioned that a line of wit is existed in the Indian poetry in English by women writers. Mamta Kalia is a bilingual writer who writes both in English and in Hindi. She is a confessional poet like Sylvia Plath. And Kamala Das.

Essay on Positive Thinking

Woman in Indian Society have played different roles as a daughter, wife, daughter-in-law and mother. Mamta Kalia's poetic sensibility is almost unique subjective in its response to experience of woman as a wife or beloved. She has exposed the image of women in Indian context. Many of her poems seem to consider 'the women's view of the world and her position within it'(Ember 71).

It is through the eyes of disappointed woman that she explores her relationship with the outer world. Many of the poems in the first volume focus on Romantic passion of early love. Some of her poems describe the problem of the institution of marriage.

In her short poem, **Positive Thinking** an attempt is made to forget the reality of death with the help of modern amenities and luxuries. The poem exhibits to externalize the loneliness and agony of the social and primal disappointments.

Marital harmony is further developed in this poem. The opening line of the poem “Let us forget your death and mine” can be the most accurate comment on marriage.

In a very casual manner the speaker further saying that “we have so much to remember”. Then she lists out the outcome of their union of marriage: A comfortable home, air-conditioned office, our quarter-dozen children, bank balance, race course, yoga exercise, etc., According to the speaker, marriage has provided her with material comforts and social status. In return she has to given up her own individual personality.

At last, the poet, Mamta Kalia asks a rhetorical question, who cares for primal disappointment? . The fact is that no one in the society is bothered about the love-life of an individual in the context of marriage. The materialistic comforts have been decided by the success of marriage.

The poem throws light on the failure of modern life, with its sick and divided aims. The shield against death is “Positive thinking”. One should not worry about primal disappointments.

Short Questions:

1. When and where Mamta Kalia was born?
2. What is the position of women in Indian Society?
3. Why was the institution of marriage materialized?
4. What are called Primal disappointments?
5. Which is to be a shield against death?

CAGED BIRD

- **Maya Angelou**

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard

on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn
and he names the sky his own

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

SUMMARY

‘Caged Bird’ refers to a bird with clipped wings. A bird which cannot fly. In spite of its physical inability and its despair, the caged bird continues to be full of life and energy, sing songs of freedom. This poem “Caged Bird” deals with themes of freedom and oppression especially African American were oppressed in the United States. The poem draws the comparison between the free bird and caged bird to show what kind of life the caged bird is meant to live. Though the caged bird is trapped, the poem shares a message of resilience, as the bird has not yet give up.

INTRODUCTION TO THE POET

Maya Angelou was an American poet, memorist and civil right activist. She was born in 4th April 1928 at Saint Louis Missouri,US. She published 7 auto biographies, three books of essays, several books of poetry and also credited with a list of plays, movies and television shows spanning over 50 years. African American writer and poet Maya Angelou was honoured by universities, literary organization, government agencies and special interest groups. Her honour include a pulitzer prize nomination for her book of poetry “Just give me a Cool Drink of Water”. In 2000 she was awarded the National medal of arts by President Bill Clinton. Presidential medal of freedom (2010) the highest civilian honour in the US by President Barack Obama. She was awarded more than 50 honorary degrees. More than 30 healthcare and medical facilities named after her. Her early life is the focus of her first autobiographical work, ‘ I Know why the Caged Bird Sings’(1969),which gained critical acclaim and a National Book award nomination. Her autobiography explores the themes of economic, racial and sexual oppression.

INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM

Caged bird was published in Maya Angelou's 1983 poetry collection- "Shaker, Why don't you Sing". The poem describes the opposing experience between two birds: one bird is able to live in nature as it pleases, while the different caged bird suffers in captivity. Due to its profound suffering the caged bird sings, both to cope up with its circumstances and to express its longing for freedom.

ESSAY ON 'CAGED BIRD'

The opening stanza brings out the lyrical imagery the utmost happiness of a free bird has been singing for freedom. Its being carried away by the wind. There is a stream. The colours of the sky are intense. The wind is compared with the forces of a river sweeping downstream. At the end of the first stanza comes with the concept that such a freedom to fly gives the bird the confidence to dare "to claim the sky". The first stanza and the final stanza when the uncaged bird "names the sky his own". Here the speaker is making a comprehensible connection between freedom and power.

Then the comparison of the freedom of an uncaged bird with the imprisonment of a caged bird. The bird in the cage 'stalks' his bars of rage. Inside that cage his wings are clipped and his feet are tied. The third stanza openly asserts that the bird lives in fear as it is described as singing with a fearful voice. The bird is terrified because it has been caged and did not know the reason and can understand the desire of freedom. Behind the bars of the closed and locked cage, the owner of the bird has clipped its wings and tied its feet to provide another layer of protection against its escape from the cage. The singing of the caged bird is

illustrated. It is a sound infused with fear. It is a song which can be heard across long distance. It is a song about yearning to be free.

Then the poem comes back to the bird that is free. This bird longing not of freedom, but looks at the arrival of another strong wind and thinks about the big fat juicy worms to be eaten in the morning. The sky which he calls his own. The stanza thus becomes metaphorical illustration depicting the one who is affluent enough to enjoy its freedom. The caged bird is in fear and its voice is a “grave of dreams” and his song is a “nightmare scream”. The poem ends with a repetition of the imagery of clipped wings, tied feet and singing of a caged bird .

The concept of the poem speaks to the theme of persistent and prevalent racism in American society. Angelou feeds off the power of the poetic attack against racism. The central themes of this poem are freedom and confinement. Artistic expression as resistance and civil rights. Caged bird is concerned with both imprisonment and innate urge for freedom.

SHORT QUESTIONS

- 1.What is the implication of the title ‘Caged Bird’?
2. How does the caged bird sing?
- 3.Whom does caged bird refer to?
- 4.What is the desire of caged bird?
- 5.What are the central idea of the poem ‘Caged Bird’ ?

UNIT-II PROSE

1. Virginia Woolf –“The Androgynous Vision” from “A Room of One’s Own”
2. Sarojini Naidu-The Soul of India
3. Nadine Gordimer- The Essential Gesture: Writers and Responsibility

A ROOM OF ONE’S ONE

._VIRGINIA WOOLF

Introduction of “A Room of One's Own”

“A Room of One's Own” is the one of the seminal text of feminism in 20th century. Virginia Woolf’s Essay was the first literary history of women writers. At first Woolf gave a version of the essay as two talks at the women's college of Cambridge University, Newham and Girton. This essay is constructed as a partly-fictionalized narrative of the ideas that proceed her to write this essay. She describes that mental process in the character of an imaginary narrator. She is self educated woman in her father's Library, entered the university in 1928 to speak to young woman who had the opportunity to access higher education. Woolf had written the lecture in May 1929. Then she expanded that speech into essay and that is “A Room of One's Own”.

This essay was published in book form on October 24, 1929. Woolf skillfully used the setting of lecture. She visits Oxbridge, the fictional University is an amalgamation of England's prestigious Oxford and Cambridge universities. The comparison of luxurious male and mediocre female facilities of the Universities made her to write this essay. She also introduced some of the real people character in her essay. Woolf has applied a number of methodologies like historical and sociological analysis, philosophy and fictional hypothesis.

Author introduction

Virginia Woolf was born on January 26, 1882. She is the daughter of the eminent Victorian critic and scholar, Sir Leslie Stephen. She was one of the greatest women writers of the 20th century. Virginia started writing literary reviews in 1905. Her relationship with the Times Literary Supplement lasted more than thirty years. She also enthusiastically worked for a Bloomsbury Group, one of whose members was Lytton Strachey. She wrote many essays on the art of biography, which contains her achievements. In 1914 the First World War broke out, Virginia had a horrible and shattering experience. She became weak and feeble. She wrote numerous essays and novels. The important novels are *The Voyage Out*, *Jacob's Room*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *The Lighthouse*, etc.. Her notable essays are *Common Reader, First Series*, *A Room Of One's Own*, *Three Guineas* , *The Death Of the Moth And Other Essays*, *A Writer's Diary* etc. ,

Virginia Woolf had physical ailment and did not maintain her health after World War broke out. Her desire and will to do something to the society was spoiled by the outbreak of the war. On March 28th, 1941, she wanted to end her life in the river running near her home. She left her hat and walking stick on the bank and committed suicide by drowning in the river.

Essay on “A Room of One's own” -chapter –VI-“The Androgynous Vision”

Woolf starts the essay by accepting that thinking of gender differences has given her so much of pain and strain. This theme is her main focus in this chapter. It was October morning the narrator has look out of the window and see what London was doing in the morning of October 26th 1928. According to the narrator, the London was wholly indifferent to literature. They have never admired literature. Then she watches a young man and woman get into a taxi. The unity of two people getting into a cab gives her satisfaction. She wonders that she had been

thinking these past two days about one sex is distinct from the other is an effort. The unity of man and woman is evident when the two live in harmony together, a kind of spiritual co-operation. This unity, she observes is what S.T. Coleridge, the poet was illustrating a great mind is androgynous. It was a mind that has any special sympathy with women and devotes itself to their interpretation. Hence the androgynous mind is less apt to make these distinctions than single-sex mind. S.T. Coleridge said that the androgynous mind is resonant and the porous and it transmits emotion without impediment. He says thus “the androgynous mind is naturally creative, incandescent and undivided”. He did not mean that the androgynous mind never favours women in any women.

Then Virginia Woolf as mentioned the writings of Shakespeare and describes Shakespeare’s mind as the type of androgynous which means man-womanly mind, though it would be difficult to illustrate what Shakespeare thought of woman. But the fact, it is of the tokens of the fully developed mind and it did not think specially or separately of sex. But it is very hard to find current examples in this “stridently sex-conscious age”. She accepts the surface campaign for the women’s vote induced men’s defensiveness over their own sex. After reading the novel by well-respected writer, she contends, for the male writer, it is fatal to focus only on the main manly side of their nature.

His writing is good, clear and strong, exhibits a free mind, but she later notices that he protests “against the equality of other sex by asserting his own superiority” and this is so harmful. At this point she has been insisting only the androgynous mind can foster “perpetual life” in its readers mind. The narrator complains both sexes for bringing about this self-consciousness of gender. She also evaluates the androgyny of various famous writers, like Keats, Sterne, Cowper, Lamb, Shelley, Milton, Ben Jonson, Wordsworth and Tolstoy and observes: if a writer’s mind is purely of male or female, if there is not total

freedom of thought, then the writing will not be fertilised.

Woolf now respond to a couple of objections of the narrator. She says that no opinion has been expressed upon the comparative merits of the sexes even as writers. That was done purposely. She does not believe in such a valuation is possible or acceptable. Second, her readers may think that the narrator gives too much importance on material things. The Mind should be able to come across poverty and lack of privacy. She has given the reference of the top poets of the last century. In that the three were well educated and all but Keats who were well-off. According to her the intellectual freedom depends upon material things. Poetry depends upon intellectual freedom and women have always been poor since the beginning of the time. Women not yet written great poetry. That is the reason Virginia Woolf has laid so much stress on Money and A Room of One's Own. She uses the idea only to promote the necessity of financial independence for Women along with their need of privacy.

Virginia Woolf concludes this essay with a reference to Shakespeare's sister (Judith Shakespeare) lives in the heart of all women. If women are provided with money and privacy in the future again Judith Shakespeare will be given rebirth.

Short Question:

1. Why did Virginia Woolf call the University as Oxbridge?
2. What is the message conveyed by Virginia Woolf in her essay?
3. What is androgyny?
4. Who has used the word androgyny mind in his writing?
5. How does Virginia Woolf feel, when she look at the union of man and woman?

The Essential Gestures: Writers and Responsibility

-Nadine Gordimer

Introduction.

Nadine Gordimer was born in 20th, November 1923 at springs, Transvaal, Union of South Africa. She was a South African writer and political activists. She received two prestigious awards that is the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1991 and Booker Prize in 1974. She belonged to a period of apartheid-era, South Africa. Her writing mainly focused on morality, gender issues, and racial discrimination in South Africa. She wrote novels and plays. Her important works are ‘ My Son's Story’, ‘The Conservationist’, ‘Burger’s Daughter’, ‘July’s People’ etc ., The central themes of her works are exile, alienation and apartheid .She died on 13th, July 2014 at age of 90 in Johannesburg.

Responsibility of a Writer

This is a lecture delivered by Nadine Gordimer at the University of Michigan on 18th october 1984. The central idea of this lecture is responsibility of a writer. According to Gordimer ‘responsibility is what awaits outside the Eden of creativity’. Because creative act is not pure, for this history has its evidence, ideology has demanded it and society also proved it. When writers have begun to lose their responsibility and write accordingly. They must realize that they are answerable to the society. So they will lose the beautiful garden of Eden, that is creativity. The writer is held responsible, he is held before he begins by the claims of different concept of mortality ,such as –artistic, linguistic, ideological, national, political ,religions declared upon him.

Essential Gesture as a Social Being

Roland Barthes wrote that language is a corpus of prescription and a habit common to all the writers of a period (Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*). He also wrote that writers 'enterprise' - his work - his 'essential gesture as a social being' between these two statements Gordimer has found out the importance of writers responsibility. Language as a transformation of thought into written words in any language - is not only 'a' but 'the' corpus common to all writers in the contemporary period.

Nadine Gordimer has observed thus that essential gesture is individual and with it writer quits the commune of the corpus. But with it he enters the commonality of society, the world of other beings who are not writers. He and his fellow writers are at once isolated from one another far and wide by the varying concepts in different societies. For example Saul Bellow, Kurt Vonnegut, Susan Sontag, Toni Morrison or John Berger to write on a particular theme that would result that would result under a ban, banished due to internal exile or detained in jail. But in countries like Soviet Union, South Africa, Iran, Vietnam, Taiwan and certain Latin American and other countries, this is the kind of demand that responsible for social significance of writer exacts: a double demand, the first from the oppressed, to act as spokesperson for them, the second from the state, to take the punishment for the act. Loyalty is an emotion, integrity a conviction adhered to out moral values. Therefore. She has spoken not of loyalties but integrities, in her recognition of society's right to make demands on the writer as equal to that of the writer's commitment to his artistic vision, the source of conflict is what demands are made and how they be met.

South African Writers voice out their problems

Gordimer praised the strength of her own such country ,South Africa ,among some black writers. In African writers, she glorified the two of Africa's most important writers, Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. They became more than writers in their country Nigeria and voice out the crisis of civil war .Both were sacrificed for some years the energy of their creativity to the demands of activism, which included, for Soyinka, imprisonment, but it is out of being more than a writer that many black men and women in South Africa begin to write. For these writers, there were no opposition of inner and outer demands. In spite of these problems , they were writing, they were political activists in the concrete sense, teaching, proselytizing , organizing. “ Africa, my beginning... Africa my end” these lines of epic poem (banned in South Africa) written by Ngoapele Madingoane epitomize this synthesis of creativity and social responsibility. What moves him, and the way it moves him or perfectly at one with his society's demands. Without those demands he's not a poet.

Attitude of White Writers

Nadine Gordimer has discussed on the imposition of orthodoxy is a white interpretation.The impulse came from within to discard the lantern of artistic truth that reveals human worth through human ambiguity. The writer tries to gain his freedom so that the writer must give up his freedom. This kind of impulse came from within, without or both for the black South African writer it became an imperative to attempt that salvation. It remains so, but in the 1980s many black writers of quality have come into conflict with the demand from without responsibility as orthodoxy and have begun to negotiate the right to their own,

inner interpretation of essential gesture by which they are part of the black struggle.

The white writer who has declared himself answerable to the oppressed people is not expected by them to be ‘ more than a writer’. Since his historical position is not seen as allowing him to be central to the black struggle. A writer is black or white, in South Africa the essential gesture by which he enters the brotherhood of man -white is the only definition of society that has any permanent validity is a revolutionary gesture.

Problems faced by Black Writers

South African writers who are ‘only writers’ are sometime reproached by those black and white, who are in practical revolutionary terms ‘more than writers’.As for as black writers are concerned, even though the humiliation and a deprivation of daily life under apartheid enjoin them. White writers who are only writers are open to related reproach for stealing the lives of black as good material.

Conclusion

At last the writer is eternally in search of self-realization and self-determination in his relation to his society. Everywhere in the world, he needs to be left alone. At the same time to have a vital connection with others. He needs artistic freedom and feels the two presences within- creative self-absorption and a conscionable awareness.

Short Questions

1. When did Nadine Gordimer deliver the lecture “The Essential Gesture: Writers and Responsibility”?
2. What is the responsibility of a writer, according to Gordimer?
3. What is Roland Bathes comment on ‘essential gesture’?
4. Who are the African - American writers mentioned by Nadine Gordimer?
5. How does Nadine Gordimer bring out the theme of apartheid in her essay?
6. What are the problems faced by the black writers?