

K.N.G.ARTS COLLEGE FOR WOMEN (A), THANJAVUR

I MA SOUTH ASIAN LITERATURE Sub.code:18KP2EELE2

UNIT 1

Poetry Detailed

1. Aimee Nezhukumathathil- The woman who turned down a date with e
cherry
farmer
2. Zulfikar Ghose- - Decomposition
3. Michael Ontanjee - To a sad Daughter

Poetry Non-detailed

4. E.V.Ramakrishnan - Terms of seeing
5. Sujatha Butt - A Different History

1. The Woman Who Turned Down a Date with a Cherry Farmer

Of course I regret it. I mean there I was under umbrellas of fruit
so red they *had* to be borne of summer, and no other season.
Flip-flops and fishhooks. Ice cubes made of lemonade and sprigs
of mint to slip in blue glasses of tea. I was dusty, my ponytail
all askew and the tips of my fingers ran, of course, *red*
from the fruit-wounds of cherries I plunked into my bucket
and still—he must have seen some small bit of loveliness
in walking his orchard with me. He pointed out which trees
were sweetest, which ones bore double seeds—puffing out
the flesh and oh the surprise on your tongue with two tiny stones

(a twin spit), making a small gun of your mouth. Did I mention
my favorite color is red? His jeans were worn and twisty
around the tops of his boot; his hands thick but careful,
nimble enough to pull fruit from his trees without tearing
the thin skin; the cherry dust and fingerprints on his eyeglasses.

I just know when he stuffed his hands in his pockets, said
Okay. Couldn't hurt to try? and shuffled back to his roadside stand
to arrange his jelly jars and stacks of buckets, I had made
a terrible mistake. I just know my summer would've been
full of pies, tartlets, turnovers—so much jubilee.

---Aimee Nezhukumathathi

Summary of the poem

This poem examines the regret of opportunities missed during the summer. Within this colourful summer, a cherry farmer approaches the unnamed speaker for a date, receiving what must have been a gentle rejection.

This delicate poem that is what it says on the tin, with lovely imagery of the cherry farm. The poem is full of the kind of the subtle, selectively chosen descriptive details that paints a vivid scene concentrated on a small area of setting..

The poet makes us enjoy through her personal experience and taste. It makes us enjoy the scene like the snippet of memories transferred between the character and us. The drenched summer season is beautifully matched with the serving of delicate ice mint and rose-petal-laced tea. The author plunked the cherry fruit into a basket.

The cherry farmer accompanied the author in the cherry orchard. He pointed out the trees that taste sweet and the trees that bore fleshy cherry with twin seeds. The cherry farmer wore a worn jeans that was twisted above his boots. His hands were very strong but careful to squeeze the fleshy fruit without tearing the skin of the fruit, The poem makes us feel of the dust and taste of the cherry juice

The language here is so lush that we understand the speaker's deep regret, even though the farmer is a perfect stranger, offering up a tour of his orchard, to perhaps someone who is on a New York vacation.

Nezhukumatathil turns down the query of a cherry farmer and immediately regrets it:

"I just know my summer would've been

/ full of pies, tartlets, turnovers—so much jubilee."

.What a mistake that was, the narrator admits, looking back.

About the Author

Nezhukumatathil is a poet of natural and common jubilees: mosquitoes, oysters, the names given to people and things. Her work has

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appeared in the 2015 and 2018 *Best American Poetry* series, *The American Poetry Review* and *New England Review*, and she is currently an English professor specializing in creative writing and environmental literature at the University of Mississippi, where she was the 2016-17 Grisham Writer-in-Residence.

With her children and Dustin Parsons, her husband and fellow writer-in-residence, in tow, Nezhukumatathil has returned to Chautauqua Institution as poet-in-residence at the Chautauqua Writers' Center for Week Six. She will give her Brown Bag lecture, "Who Said Nights Were for Sleep: The Power of Aubades and Nocturnes," at 12:15 p.m. Tuesday, July 30 on the porch of the Literary Arts Center at Alumni Hall.

It is around those liminal moments — just after the sun sets and before it rises — that Nezhukumatathil finds the time to "still (her) mind and write."

Critical appreciation of the poem

Nezhukumatathil's poetry is felicitously rendered, and has a musical texture that threads her lines together.

Take for instance, the lines:

"he must have seen some small bit of loveliness in walking his orchard with me.

He pointed out which trees were sweetest, which ones bore double seeds."

Here, Nezhukumatathil employs alliteration of the "s" sound, first in "seen some small" and later in "sweetest" and "seeds." We also get assonance in "seen," "me," "trees," "sweetest, and "seeds," as well as consonance in "must," "bit," "pointed," "out," and "sweetest." Such sonic clusters are unique in this poem.

In one of her interviews she says,

"Dusk and dawn are two times of day where the natural world comes alive; as a writer of the outdoors, it serves as a rich backdrop for my own source material and writing," she said.

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Aimee Nezhukumatathil's poetry has been a delight to read. Her poem has a witty and often has a funky edge.

Answer the following:

1. Write a short note about the author AimeeNezhu Kumathathil.
2. Where did the author go?
- 3, Describe the appearance of the cherry farmer.
4. Why did the poet regret at the end?
5. Write a note on the use of alliteration and assonance in the poem.

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2. Decomposition - Zulfikar Ghose

I have a picture I took in Bombay
of a beggar asleep on the pavement
grey-haired, wearing shorts and a
his shadow thrown aside like a blanket.
His arms and legs could be cracks in the stone
routes for the ants' journeys, the flies' descents
Brain-washed by the sun into exhaustion,
he lies veined into stone, a fossil man
Behind him there is a crowd passingly
bemused by a pavement trickster and quite
indifferent to this very common sight
of an old man asleep on the pavement.
I thought it then a good composition
and glibly called it "The Man in the Street,"
remarking how typical it was of
India that the man in the street lived there.

His head in the posture of one weeping
into a pillow chides me now for my
presumption at attempting to compose
art of his hunger and solitude.

Summary of the poem

Zulfikar Ghose writes the poem Decomposition in the first person narrating form and also in a thought-provoking manner. The poem tells the readers about Ghose's personal experience of a photograph he took during his visits in India. The photograph pictures an elderly beggar man who lives on the street of Bombay. The picture gets engraved in his heart and by its impression he writes the poem to make an alarm to the society.

The title is a negative connotation of decomposing or dying. The poet uses the same content in explaining the condition of the beggar. The old beggar man is asleep on the pavement: grey-haired, wearing shorts and a dirty shirt. The important motive for the poet is to bring out the pathetic condition of the beggar man who is living with a permanent poverty. The beggar man has permanent poverty in his life because he is not only getting money but also the considerable kindness, love and affection from the people.

As a human being the narrator concerns very much for another human being's poor condition. He feels sad for the beggar man's condition because he is lying like cracks in a stone. He is looking just like lines in the ground. The line is becoming "routes for the ant's journeys, the flies' descents". The line describes is an individual's life which is marginalised by the whole society. He is becoming a "fossil" and a dead impression for the future history of the country. The poet has used the word "fossil" very particularly in the poem to describe the beggar man's condition. He is going to remain like a prehistoric animal that has hardened into the society which is like a rock. The old beggar is becoming hardened day by day in the selfish mankind. He is creating a dead impression for the future history of the country.

People just walk on by him not having any thought to help the poor man or to bring a positive change in his life. The poet regrets not only for the beggar man but also for the people who do not have the basic human quality. All the people who walk around the beggar man do not think that they are seeing another person like them with sufferings.

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The author painfully states the beggar is poor without money but the people around him have all the health and wealth in their life but still they are poor without the basic human quality.

In concluding the poem, the poet pictures the beggar's posture as "His head in the posture of one weeping", which makes the poet think the beggar is like a child longing for little kindness from the people who move around him. The beggar feels marginalized because he is poor considered to be low social status and viewed as being less human than others.

The Tourist and the Artist Zulfikar Ghose takes the photograph in a tourist point of view and with the artistic nature the poet composes art out of hunger and solitude. When he notices that the elderly beggar is undergoing with a crucial pain and distress in his life. He feels guilty for making art out of pain and suffering of a person.

The poem opens the reader's eyes and has given an important thought that one should never allow ourselves to become callous and immune to the suffering of the others. The poet at last stresses that everybody deserves to be treated with respect.

About the poet

This poem has been written by Zulfikar Ghose, he is a Pakistan born American national. He is a novelist, short story writer, literary critic, essayist and a poet.

About the poem

Ghose had written this poem when he visited Bombay, there he saw a beggar in poor condition. "Decomposition", the title of the poem conveys a dismal and depressing meaning. The poet specifically identifies this beggar with a common Indian man "how typical it was of India" and in general he portrays the picture of a common man of South East Asia, and third world countries. The poem also gives us glimpses of uncouth, uncaring, uncompassionate behaviors of society towards its fellow beings.

Critical appreciation of the poem

The title of the poem "Decomposition" suggests decadence, disintegration and degeneration, not only of an individual but of a system, society, community and human ideals.

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Especially in first four stanzas, the tone is quite depressing, a sense of helplessness prevails. The diction of the poem presents a grim picture; the pen sketch of beggar himself propounds miseries and sense of helplessness of a common man.

The main theme of the poem is deterioration and break down, this rotting has been presented at individual and collective level of society. On surface level, it is putridity of a person, an individual, a beggar, but at deeper level it is the festering of society, break down of social norms and decomposition of human values of empathy, sympathy, and compassion. The poet delineates that marginalization of common man results in debarment of significant contribution to society and reduces them to “routes for the ants Journey “and “the flies’ descents”.

. The theme of decomposition is to emphasize with different words, like “exhaustion “and “a fossil man”, then he relates it to common man, whom he calls “ man in street” .He uses this phrase twice in this poem to emphasize the poor pledge of Common man in street. In first stanza the attitude of society de-humanizes the “man” to the level of an object, “pavement sticker”.

In the fourth stanza poet considers “it” “good composition”. This style of poet represents the thoughtless, insensitive, and callous attitude of society towards the suffering of fellow human beings.

In the last stanza, the beggar was humanized as the poet felt it wrong to compose his affliction as piece of art.

The tone of the poet is this poem is doleful . Sound devices Sound devices refer to the resources which the poets use to convey the meaning of poetry through the apt use of sounds. Sound devices such as accent, alliteration, assonance, consonance, cacophony, dissonance, euphony, internal rhyme, modulation, near rhyme, phonetic symbolism, resonance, rhyme and rhythm are few examples. Sound devices which are used in “Decomposition” areas follows;

. In this poem the poet has used several figures of speech to convey his intended message across. The poem is without rhyme and meter, it is free verse, written in Quatrain.

In the first stanza, in fourth line, the poet has used “shadow” as simile “shadow thrown aside like a blanket”, which explains the pitiable condition of the man.

In second stanza, the poet has used visual imagery, to present a clear picture before his readers that how people like the beggar, used to live in abject poverty, without any hope for future. In the second and third stanza, he has used metaphors “cracks in the stone” and “pavement sticker” to intensify the agony of a person who has been reduced to non-entity due to selfish, thoughtless, inconsiderate attitudes of society and the state. We can also identify an interior monologue keep on working throughout the poem. The poet has also mapped between “decomposition” and “composition” by using the device of parallelis,

Answer the following:

1. How old would do you think the beggar is?
2. Name the figure of speech used in the poem and discuss its effectiveness
3. What does stanza three tell us about human nature?
4. How has the speaker come to interpret his actions in stanza four and what excuse does he provide?
5. When does the speaker have his realisation? What words show us that it is at a different time to the rest of the poem?
- 6 Discuss the various shades of meaning of the title of the poem.

3. To a sad daughter –Michael ontanjee

Summary of the poem

The message, or the advice, passed down from father to daughter is the central issue, and occurs anywhere at any time.

The setting for this poem stems simply from knowing that Ondaatje writes mainly from real-life experiences .

“The father in “To a Sad Daughter” surely knows that his child will face more than “angry goalies” and “creatures with webbed feet” when she grows up and leaves home, and he wants her to be prepared to face everything— including war, drugs, and disease—with her eyes wide open.

In light of the “wild” and dangerous society she will become a part of, he wants her not only to accept the challenges of it, but also to look deep

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inside it, to search out whatever good she may find hidden beneath the chaos. He wants her to understand that even a "goalie / in his frightening mask / dreams perhaps / of gentleness."

The poet presents a subject—a girl who can, and does, take her freedom and her self-confidence for granted. She does not appear to have any concerns over or struggles with "liberation" because she does not know what it's like not to be liberated. She has no qualms about pursuing interests typically sought by boys and men, and if she prefers reading the sports page over the society section and would rather watch horror films instead of love stories, so be it and she is being brought up in a home where her aspirations are apparently respected. The father does not attempt to turn his daughter into a "little lady," but rather eggs on her free spirit by encouraging her to "want everything."

In the final stanza, the poet employs his "knowing and surprise" once again in advising his daughter about death:

If I speak of death, which you fear now, greatly, it is without answers, except that each one we know is in our blood. Don't recall graves.

This mixture of lengthy and brief lines in the poem is an appealing addition to an already intriguing work.

About the poet

Michael Ondaatje is widely accepted as a writer of reality, but how he defines reality is a recurring theme within his work. Most often, the world he describes is chaotic, and the typical human response to it is panic. But at the center of the chaos, and, therefore, the center of the panic, lies a good reason for both: ambiguity. Very little is clear-cut in this poet's world.

About the poem

The poet's daughter turned out to be not what he was "expecting," but rather something he likes even more. Her own life is full of turmoil and uncertainty, easily attributed to the fact that she's a teenager, but, even so, she is not the "usual" adolescent girl.

Critical appreciation of the poem

“To a Sad Daughter” is an 85-line poem with eight stanzas written in free verse.

Time and place are not essential in Michael Ondaatje’s “To a Sad Daughter. The images that portray her qualities, her emotions, her likes and dislikes to note a type of self-inflicted chaos: belligerent goalies, threats, cuts and wounds, purple moods.. The only confirmation of that in the poem is the reference to items and events that were not prevalent or not available earlier, tracksuits and the National Hockey League, for instance.

The poem takes place when color motion pictures have been common for many years since the 16-year-old feels “superior” to black and white movies.. Another clue is the mention of the cereal “Alpen,” a popular breakfast food in northern Europe and Canada, though not a household name in America and that his “family” poems are primarily creative nonfiction. Given that, “To a Sad Daughter” probably takes place in Ontario, Canada, sometime during the early 1980s.

Many of the lines in “To a Sad Daughter” are quite prosy, detracting from the assonance and consonance that would otherwise be more prevalent.

A good flow of sound in such instances as the repetition of the “p” in “... reading the sports page over the Alpen/ as another player ...”; the repetition of the “ah” sound in “When I thought of daughters / I wasn’t ...”; the various uses of “s” in “... I’ll come swimming / beside your ship or someone will / and if you hear the siren / listen ...”; the “s” sound again in “You were sitting / at the desk where I now write this / Forsythia outside the window / and sun spilled over you ...”; and even the near-rhyme at the end of the poem with the use of “mask” and “perhaps.”

What keeps the alliteration in this poem from seeming forced and unnatural is that it is cloaked within casual verbiage, giving the words more of a prose cadence than a poetic one. While these short lines, however, do string together into complete sentences throughout the poem, Ondaatje includes an element of surprise by shifting suddenly to abrupt short phrases that startle us both with their message and their exactness.

For example, the first two “sentences” of the third stanza, read as such, are followed by a four-word statement that suddenly rings of doom.

One day, I’ll come swimming beside your ship, or someone will, and if you hear the siren, listen to it. For if you close your ears, only nothing happens. *You will never change.*

In the seventh stanza, an even more poignant message appears in only two words, preceded by a longer sentence:

‘You step delicately into the wild world and the real prize will be the frantic’

While Ondaatje does not rely on any overt poetic devices here, a close look does reveal considerable use of alliteration, as well as a strategy fairly common and always remarkable in this poet’s work—his ability to sharply define a message with brief, surprising statements.

Answer the following

- 1 .What is the message given to the daughter by the father?
2. Describe the setting of the poem
3. Write a note on Michael Ondaatje.

TERMS OF SEEING-E.V.RAMAKRISHNAN

On our way home from school
We often spent hours in that abandoned
Orchard of mango, cashewnut
And tamarind trees, where each season had
Its fruit and each fruit tasted different.

There we raided the hidden hideouts
Of bootleggers, and broke their buried
Mud-pots. The crematorium in the corner
Revealed an occasional roasted vertebra.
Once we went further and discovered

A disused well, and peeped into its

Vaporous depths: the water smelt like freshly
Distilled alcohol. Through the clotted branches
Of close-knit shadows floated white
Turtles with glazed, metallic shells.

Moving with monastic grace, they looked
Knowledgeable, like much travelled witchcraft
Doctors. If they cast a spell, it was
Unintentional. As we bent down, their
Shaven heads rose and met a shaft of sudden

Sunlight at an angle, tilting the sun
Into the sea. Still, the light lingered over the hill
Like an intimate whisper of something
Forbidden. By this time, the terms of seeing
Were reset: the well was watching us now.

Its riveted gaze pierced us and even went
Beyond us. In the dark cornea of the well
The white turtles moved like exposed optic nerves.
And as if a word was spoken, we stepped
Back into the world of gravity, in silence.

Summary of the poem

This poem "Terms of Seeing" problematize the act of seeing. The author along with his friends on his way back from school spent hours in the abandoned mango orchard. They tasted the tamarind and cashews in that orchard of all seasons.

They stamped the mud-pots buried by the boot-leggers. They saw a crematorium where a roasted vertebra was seen .Out of curiosity they moved deep, where they saw a disused well. The water smelt of alcohol and turtles were seen moving among the clotted branches. Their movement were like witchcraft doctors.

The author and his friends looked deep into the well and marred by the sudden movement of the shaven heads of the turtles .A forbidden voice that whispered from the distant made them alarm.

Now the same well seemed to be gazing at the poet and his friends .The white turtles moved like white optic nerves in the corneas of the well. The poet with his friends, moved out of the eerie place in utter silence.

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About the Author

E.V. RAMAKRISHNAN is a bilingual writer who has published poetry and criticism in English and Malayalam. His poems evidence a deep disquiet that is pointer to the times we live in. He captures the vulnerability of our socio-political frameworks in understatements, self-reflexive comments, casual observations and graphic images. He would rather allow the poem to speak than comment himself. He is a bilingual writer and a translator.

Critical appreciation of the poem

Terms of Seeing, displays different perspectives of seeing socio-economic and environmental problems. Quite an expert, he describes things in understatements and self-reflexive comments, winning over the reader's heart through his well-crafted images.

Terms of Seeing, gives us a peep into the poet's masterly skill in handling the images and seeing the world from different perspectives. The first three paragraphs take us back to the poet's school days. Then a serious note is ushered in with the turtles moving with 'monastic grace'. A shaft of sudden light "falls at an angle on their shaven heads, tilting the sun into the sea. Further in the dark cornea of the well/the white turtles moved like exposed optic nerves".

The reader comes across abundance of intensity of feelings that makes the poem lovable. It has a rich galaxy of images. It won't be out of place to quote Keki N.Daruwalla in his forward to the collection, "Because of its striking images, its unique perspectives and the unusual way he goes about transacting his poetic business, this volume of Ramakrishnan should leave a lasting impression on the reader's mind."

4. A Different History- Sujatha Bhatt

Summary of the poem

The poem talks about different cultures, mainly Indian and the colonisation of India. As Bhatt has experienced three different cultures; the Indian culture, the American culture and the German culture, the poem reflects on the differences in cultures and delves into mainly the Indian culture. The poem explores how the poet has evolved while moving from country to country and even delving into other religions.

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The poet addresses the movement of culture across the globe in the very first line, by mentioning the Greek God Pan. She talks about cultures moving with people and lifestyles by implying that the [God](#) Pan has not seized to exist but simply moved to India

The poet says that the gods in India roam disguised as snakes and monkeys. By this she indicates that all the elements of nature, flora and fauna, are worshipped here.

Bhatt also sheds light on the fact that Indian culture is very deep rooted. She shifts her attention from worship of animals and nature to reverence and respect in India. She talks about customs and behaviour by mentioning trees being treated as sacred in India and how it is a sin to treat books shabbily.

While talking about Indian customs and traditions, Sujata Bhatt uses a book as an example. She keeps repeating that it is a sin to treat books without respect, slam them down on a table or touch one with the foot or toss it around.

Sujata Bhatt reveals how it is very important in India to be careful, and not disturb the Goddess who resides in books, "Saraswati".

She indicates how religion is dominant in the region by describing the Indian attitude towards something as common as a book. She talks about the need for Indians to respect books so that they would not offend the tree sacrificed to make the paper. In conclusion we can say that

__ In this second stanza Sujata Bhatt addresses a number of key issues through rhetoric. Using language as strain of culture and a representative of the [people](#), she asks the reader to understand and identify with the fact that people across the globe at some time or the other have been oppressors or the oppressed.

She goes on to hint at the influence of foreigners in the region by referring to the freedom struggle as the period of torture. Bhatt asks the reader to try and analyse and find a rational explanation as to why after the damage of invasion the foreign culture continues to linger in India. She personifies India as having a face and a soul, and refers to colonization and injustice as a long scythe.

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In conclusion, we can say that Bhatt has written this poem after a lot of thought, making references to different cultures and her own past. This poem is written in such a way that it is almost as though Bhatt is sharing her own story with us making the poem more engaging.

About the poet.

Sujata Bhatt's multicultural perspectives on language, culture, art and history surely originate in her own life experiences. Born in India in 1956, her mother tongue Gujarati, she has studied in Britain and the USA (at the famed Iowa Writers Workshop), taught in Canada, travelled widely, and now lives and works in Germany. She was born in Ahmedabad in 1956 • Grew up in Pune until 1968 • 1968 – Emigrated to the USA with her family at the age of 12 • Many of Bhatt's poems have themes of love and violence. • She explores issues such as racism and the interaction between Asian, European, and North American culture.

About the poem

The poem 'A different History', written by Sujata Bhatt is written post the British colonisation of India. The poem is based on Indian religion and a bit of Greek mythology. . As a child, Bhatt had to move from country to country and may be reminiscing about how life would have been if she had never left India. A history different to the one she had experienced. The poem contains 29 lines and is therefore not a sonnet..

Critical Appreciation of the poem

The title relates to the poem in the way that it can be said to be about different histories, different cultural backgrounds but also about Sujata Bhatt's own past. In another context, it could also be said to be about history itself, relating to Greek mythology and Indian religion that is centuries old. The first line is a metaphor. The effect of this is to make an emphatic point to the reader that the God Pan is not dead

. The tone is very informal and casual as though it is only in India that gods have freedom. The fact the Bhatt does not capitalise the 'g' in gods' shows that she does not want to use a very serious or formal style of writing.

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She makes it seem as though the gods are common people and not powerful entities. "Roam freely," is another kinesthetic imagery which is not area bound.

The comma at the end suggests a continuation. "disguised as snakes or monkeys;" This simile gives the readers a vivid image of the Gods being snakes or monkeys. The theme of nature is seen here. right way. Again the semi-colon indicates a continuation. "every tree is sacred" In this line Bhatt uses the formal word "sacred" to create a sense of respect as paper is made from trees and we get books and knowledge from paper.

She speaks of how one cannot be insulting towards books because when insulting books you are also insulting the goddess, Sarasvati. Again, one is also insulting knowledge, which Bhatt holds very dear to her having been brought up without much money and being taught to value education. She uses the word "sin" to lay emphasis on how it is important to not disrespect books. "

It is a sin to shove a book aside, with your foot" To touch something with 'your foot', the object would have to be very inferior to other objects. Bhatt is expressing the fact that she believes that a book deserves the utmost respect possible. Between the lines, she also means that the goddess, Sarasvati, must be treated with the utmost respect. a sin to slam books down, hard on the table "a sin to toss one carelessly across a room. " These sentences have a serious and reprimanding tones much like someone going on a rant.

She uses informal words like "shove" , "slam", "toss", to show how inappreciative people can be towards books and knowledge. These words are also visual imagery. By the repetition of the words "a sin" the author wants to emphasise on what a great sin it is to be disrespectful to books which are sources of knowledge. At this point, there is finally a full stop, an indication that the poet has made her point. The atmosphere changes and the reader can feel she is going to change the subject. Bhatt is, in the end, giving the impression that nothing, however inanimate or lifeless, must be treated without utmost respect. "

This is very close to what Sujata Bhatt has described when writing her poems on numerous occasions. The anaphora used in these lines makes emphasis on the point to not be rude to books so as to not offend sarasvati or the tree.

An imperative tone is used here. "from whose wood the paper was made" again a reference is made trees and that paper is made from trees and thus should be respected.. ,

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The alliteration used in “long scythe swooping” lays emphasis on the ‘s’ sound and creates an auditory, visual and kinesthetic imagery of a devil-like British person whipping out a long scythe to crop out a helpless Indian’s soul.

.Answer the following;

1. How does Bhatt use words and phrases to convey how sacred trees and books are?
2. How effective do you find the final two lines of the poem? Do you find anything amusing in the poem?
3. Explore how Bhatt critically conveys her ideas of language and culture in the poem A Different History.
4. Explore how Bhatt powerfully communicates the culture of India and loss of language in the poem A Different History

UNIT 2 PROSE

1. Harish Trivedi- South Asian It reflections in a confluence
2. Namita Gokhale- Beyond borders across boundaries
3. Ashis Sengupta- Staging diaspora-South Asian American theatres today

1 Harish Trivedi- South Asian It reflections in a confluence

AUTHOR

Harish Trivedi is a Professor in the Department of English, Delhi University, Delhi. He is a widely known scholar of Postcolonialism and translation studies. He was a Commonwealth scholar in the University of Wales, Bangor U.K., Honorary Research Fellow in University of Birmingham U.K. in the year 1985 to 1998. He was also a Visiting International Scholar at the University of Georgia, the U.S.A. in the year 1997.

Prof. Harish Trivedi has got many respectable positions at various international associations. He was a secretary and the Vice -President of the Indian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies in the year 1993 and 1999 respectively.

He was also the Vice Chairperson of association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies from the year 2002 to 2004. He was the visiting Professor at University Of Chicago U.S.A. and School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London in the year 2002. He has also delivered various lectures at various prestigious Universities such as the University of Georgia at Athens,

Majorworks

He has written Colonial Transactions: English Literature and India in Calcutta 1993. He has co-edited The Nation across the World: Postcolonial Literary Representations, Literature, and Nation Britain and India 1800-1990, Colonial Transactions: English Literature and India, Interdisciplinary Alter-natives in Comparative Literature.

Summary of the Text

South Asian Literature and ‘Sahitya Academy’

Contribution of the Sahitya Akademi, formed after post- colonial age and its involvements of Indian literature as South Asian Literature./Success to left their heads to look across the fence and enable to make better relation with them in comparison to western literature

Naya zamana bus aane vala hai shaayad- yani vahi guzra zamana’ indicating the upcoming generation of the literature not bound in world, but deface far of world literature./Disagree with the name of common wealth literature; Third world Literature, Post-colonial Literature, and this are embossed as hegemony.

Feature of South Asian Literature

One thing is commonly accepted by South Asian and Western; All are reminder of colonial history, and they are reflecting such truth in writing pattern./South Asian is containing not only Colonial and Postcolonial but to very past i.e. Sanskrit, tamil, pali and Persian, and entering to a radical new departure ./It is also align ourselves to our geography and connect us to rest of the part of world.

Reflections

Geography, culture, myths and beliefs / South Asian have shared mode/culture, idiom and accepted as its our sanskar;/Highly devotee with God! Even with Hindus or Muslim society (They are still believing with GOD); Aarati, Tilaka and Angavastram was the symbolic idioms of the great attachment with the beliefs of God that they are not ignoring myths too.

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In same kind a believe of Rishkawala, Khuda sab kuchh janta Hai was another expression of the beliefs of God./Esteem with meet to similar identity, Mai bhi Muslim and Aap bhi Muslim the voice of Rishkawala

Facts, content scenarios and styles of writing/Indian literature is dominating other rest part of south Asia as big brother sense./Even in today, A diasporic is writing about us better than we write./Highly attachment with the nature and they are creating even today an art in the natural seen as a thematic value the literature.

2 .Beyond borders across boundaries

Amita Gokhale (born 26 January 1956) is an Indian writer, publisher and festival director, and the author of twenty books including ten works of fiction. Her recent novel *Jaipur Journals* was set against the backdrop of the vibrant Jaipur Literature Festival, of which Gokhale is a founder-director. Her forthcoming books include *Betrayed by Hope: A Play on the Life of Michael Madhusudan Dutt* and a new novel *The Blind Matriarch*.

Namita Gokhale was conferred the Centenary National Award for Literature by the Assam Sahitya Sabha "for her literary contributions as well as her service to the nation in supporting and showcasing literary talents and creating a literary environment in the country". □

Summary of the text

A distinct South Asian literary identity, drawn from interconnecting languages, culture, food, music and oral heritage is emerging in modern South Asian fiction and in cultural trends seen in social media. It cuts across the boundaries of religion and ideology and stretches the limits of static political maps. Be it the commonality of Urdu through much of Pakistan, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, or Bangla along the shores of the Padma river, or Tamil – one of the classical Indian languages, prevalent through Tamil Nadu in India and Sri Lanka, South Asian literatures present an intricate web of interdependency. This complex linguistic arrangement is further complicated by the addition of the merging and blending dialects of spoken languages. Whether it is Saraiki, Multani and Sindhi across India, Pakistan and the Sindhi diaspora, or Maithili featuring as the second language in Nepal and the official language of Bihar, or the fact that Nepali is itself one of the twenty-two official Indian languages with a numerically larger base in India than in Nepal, the linguistic and literary topography of South Asian countries have a common imprint of tradition and creative imagination.

Such an interlinked pattern in the region makes it difficult to study this phenomenon from a 'western' pedagogical model which inscribes hierarchies between the oral and the scripted, the epical and the modern, English and 'other' languages.

It is perhaps worth remembering that the word 'India' harks back to the 'Indies', for in the imagination of Portuguese and Spanish seafarers India was conceived only in the plural. The name 'Indies' (to describe the region) is derived from the river Indus and was used to connote parts of Asia that came under Indian cultural influence. Ancient languages transit into newer forms, as evolving cultural practices create ever-changing contexts, and power structures determine which language groups are given prominence. Hence, we see that the literary imagination of South Asia gets interpreted through a variety of perspectives as the 'Indies' of old yields to a flux of new political identities. We see today a constant straining for self-definition in each of the nation states of South Asia even though the common threads of the past tug at the expediencies of the present.

It is often observed that whatever one may say of India, the opposite is equally true. Linguistic groups and literary traditions collide and coexist with a tangled thread of connectivity described as 'many languages and one literature.' We need not enter into a discussion on Indian writing in English, the scope, accomplishments and aspirations of which are copiously documented. We may look instead at the other languages that porously inhabit each other across the political borders of South Asia.

The Urdu tradition, in the footsteps of Saadat Hasan Manto and Faiz Ahmed Faiz, mirrored both a determined social commitment and a strong sense of comic subversion. Pre-partition Urdu was a secular, agnostic language, one capable of both the most brutal irony and the loftiest romanticism. Post partition Hindi, the new national language of India, was shorn of its Urdu and Hindustani traces and influences, and was immensely the poorer for this loss. During the 1950s, as Pakistan entered into cycles of politico-military dominance, restrictions on free expression led to a heightened use of symbol and metaphor thereby avoiding direct conflict with repressive forces. Across the border, in India, Urdu stayed alive in Punjabi writing. Today, its ethos is alive in Hindi cinema in terms of settings, character, lyrics and music. In the field of literature, it is flourishing in both prose and poetry and in translation as well.

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Pakistan today is witnessing a literary liberation, a brilliant blossoming of talent in its highly visible international English language writers. In the words of novelist Kamila Shamsie, ‘Pakistani writing is like the new fast bowler on the scene.’ There is vital interaction among Urdu writers across the border of Pakistan and India and a finer understanding of a nuanced past.

Other national literatures common to both India and Pakistan, such as Sindhi, have retained a distinct voice despite being marginalized for various political reasons. Among the retrievals of neglected languages one may also list Multani and Saraiki, both considered ‘regional’ in character and yet claiming a rich literary corpus.

A comparable weave of plurality is visible in Nepal. Like other South Asian literatures, Nepal too has its enduring epic, transmitted through versions of orality and now popularized as *Muna Madan* by Laxmi Prasad Devkota. Literary continuities in Nepal have been severely hindered by political upheavals. Writers have been vocal about this; therefore views of the country from within and outside are refracted through both Nepali and English.

Bhutan too carries the same double-edged relationship between English and the native tongue, Dzongkha that was declared the official national language in the 1960s. Religious texts, Buddhist hagiographies and classical commentary are still written in the sonorous Dzongkha, a language based on old Tibetan, and now compulsorily studied in schools.

The diverse and polyphonic expression of literary identity in modern-day India is both daunting and inspiring. This country has 22 official national languages, 122 regional languages, four classical languages, 1726 mother tongues and countless dialects. Although colonization and the imposition of English stifled the vitality and outreach of many Indian languages, today, after decades of suppression, writers are returning to their own tongues with new creativity and inspiration. Grassroots writers in the many languages have both a contemporary voice and an enduring connection with classical traditions – here it is essential to mention the Hindi, Bangla, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Marathi, Odiya, Assamiya, Punjabi, Gujarati, Bhojpuri and Urdu traditions. Novels, short fiction, poetry and experimental writing are flourishing in each of these, along with a robust practice of literary criticism.

Mythology remains a constant on Indian bestseller lists. The passionate exploration and reinterpretation of epics within different languages and genres is

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often surprising to western academia which tends to categorize myth as a static area of study. The entire South Asian region revels in its peculiar versions of the *Ramayana* binding it in a narrative fabric where the main strands are recognizable and lend themselves to a vast number of sub-narratives within the larger one. The *Mahabharata* likewise gives infinite range in imagining the possibility of developing narratives where the Pandavas spent their years of exile and specially the period of *agyatvasa*. Languages, geographies and epics all coalesce into dramatizing a timeless cultural trope, that of good versus evil.

Groups that have been historically marginalized – whether they are women, Dalits or writers from linguistic and cultural minorities – are standing their ground and upholding their literary identity, not wanting to blend into an undifferentiated homogeneity. Consequently, Dalit writers have emerged as a distinct group protesting their rejection by mainstream Indian literature and are now asserting their sensibility. They are, in a sense, the conscience keepers of a democratic India. Where many feel so passionately about the country's multiple literatures, it is crucial that common spaces must be available for society to share its problems – and anger is an important part of the process. In a similar strand, women writers today are vociferous in protesting against inequities that are legacies of a social schema no longer acceptable in a global modernity.

South Asian literature, in its many voices, languages and avatars, retains an underlying warp and woof of cultural connectivity. India is, and always has been, a *bahubhashit* multilingual society. The Vedas, the earliest remembered expression of our literary culture, urges invoking the Gods in many languages. Over the years, an unprecedented interest in South Asian literature and its increasing articulation have fuelled a need for vigorous interpretation of the contradictory, often conflicting realities of the subcontinent. Engaged levels of debate on literature and society in these regions, which are fractured by political and cultural identities and connected by linguistic legacies are flourishing in public forums and private settings alike.

U.R. Ananthamurthy captures this diversity: 'There are at least three languages in our lives: one is the home language, the other is the street language, the third is the upstairs language.' ... 'I cannot live in only one language. I live in English, I live in Kannada, I live in Sanskrit, and so many translations.'

The connections and conjunctions of this 'upstairs, downstairs, inside-outside' are mirrored in an array of over seventy literary festivals that have found voice and value across South Asia in the last decade.

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The inspirational Jaipur Literature Festival, now the largest free literature festival in the world, has created a platform and a model of multilingual literary celebration across languages, and the class and community divides that come with them in this part of the world. Literary festivals in Karachi and Lahore, Kathmandu and Thimphu, Galle and Yangon, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, are spaces that present continuity and change. The challenges of modernity are reflected through the emerging narratives in the cinematic, visual and literary arts. In an environment where writers and thinkers are butchered and hounded simply for the act of thinking and writing, these platforms are witness to the new roots and wings of literary experience across South Asia.

3 .South Asian American theatres today

This essay attempts to show how contemporary South Asian American theater deals with a wide range of South Asian American experience and in so doing has created a "new aesthetic" within American theater.

The South Asian American experience is a diaspora experience, but in the contemporary wider sense of the term. The plays under study are about the old and new home, about people assimilating into the mainstream or navigating between two cultures or even negotiating a transnational identity.

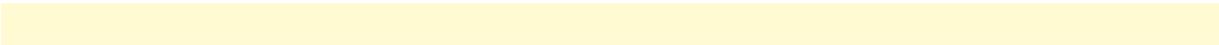
They deal with contested ideas of nation, nationality and allegiance, and also explore the South Asian female body in the new culture. Central to the study are the works of emerging South Asian American playwrights. The author says that he has carefully chosen a full-length play by each of them, two only in the case of short plays, and paired them under separate rubrics in such a way as to argue how they represent the diverse yet connected, changing yet pervasive, historical, cultural and psychological tropes of the South Asian American diaspora.

The essay, however, does not claim that the body of work chosen for the current essay — or the rubrics, for that matter — fully expresses "South Asian America" or its theater.

The creation of a South Asian American aesthetic.. South Asian diasporic theatre in the Americas, unlike its counterparts in other regions such as the UK, has only recently begun to develop its own aesthetic voice and tradition of dramatic literature and theatrical production.

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This essay examines the landmark play, Shishir Kurup's *Merchant on Venice* and its premiere production in Chicago in 2007, in order to initiate a historical discussion of South Asian American theatre history. Through an examination of this adaptation of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, its relationship to the original together with its distinctive literary qualities and a consideration of its performative manifestation, this essay argues that Kurup's play heralds the coming of a South Asian American theatre aesthetic through engagements with language and inclusion of South Asian American cultural and historical specificity into the American theatre.



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