

5th SEM BA ENGLISH

CALICUT UNIVERSITY

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INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

2017 ADMISSION

Prepared by

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ENGB501: INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

COURSE CODE: ENGB 01

NO. OF CREDITS 5

NO. OF CONTACT HOURS 90 (5HRS/WK.)

INTERNAL: 20 MARKS

EXTERNAL: 80 MARKS

EXAMINATION 3 HOURS

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

- a. To provide an overview of the various phases of the evolution of Indian Writing in English.
- b. To introduce students to the thematic concerns, genre and trends of Indian Writing in English.
- c. To generate discussions on the constraints and challenges encountered in articulating Indian sensibility in English
- d. To expose students to the pluralistic aspects of Indian Culture and identity.

I. COURSE DETAILS

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Course: an overview of the history of Indian Writing in English, introducing -the different phases in its evolution – British Raj and the emergence of Indian writing in English, the National movement and its impacts, independence and post-independence periods and the new voices and trends. (This part of the course aims at giving a broad overview of the area. Questions for End- Semester Assessment are to be limited within the purview of the prescribed authors and the texts)

MODULE II – POETRY

1.Sarojini Naidu

The Quest

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|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2.Tagore | Breezy April |
| 3.Kamala Das | In Love |
| .Nissim Ezekiel | Good bye Party to Miss Pushpa T.S. |
| 5.A. K. Ramanujan | Looking for a Cousin on a Swing |
| 6.Agha Shahid Ali | Postcard from Kashmir |

MODULE III – FICTION

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|---------------------|--|
| 1.Shashi Desh Pande | Roots and Shadows(Chennai: Orient Longman, 1983) |
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MODULE IV- PROSE AND SHORT FICTION

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|---------------------|---|
| 1. Jawaharlal Nehru | Tryst with Destiny |
| 2. R.K Narayan | Mars in the Seventh House (Chapter 1X of My Days) |
| 3. Amrita Pritam | The Weed |

MODULE - V – DRAMA

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| 1. Girish Karnad | Naga-Mandala |
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MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION

- Indian English literature began as an interesting by-product of an eventual encounter in the late 18th century between a vigorous and enterprising Britain and a stagnant and chaotic India, and is now nearly two hundred years old, it is literature written originally in English by authors Indian by birth, ancestry or nationality. It is no part of English literature any more than American literature or Australian literature can be said to be a branch of English literature. It is legitimately a part of Indian literature, since its differentia is the expression in it of Indian ethos.
- Sahitya Akademi has accepted Indian English Literature as the most suitable appellation for this body of writing. The term emphasises two significant ideas: first that this literature constitutes one of the many streams that join the great ocean called Indian literature, which though written in different languages has an unmistakable unity: and secondly, that it is an inevitable product of the notarization of the English language to express the India sensibility.
- Indian Writing in English has a very recent history, which is one and half century old. Britishers ruled India for 150 years. Indian English Literature has passed through several phases such as Indo-Anglian, Indo-English, Indian Writing in English and recently Indian English literature.
- Many Indian writers have chosen English as a medium of expression and left a great impact on different forms of literature. For example Toru Dutt, Pandita Ramabai Saraswati, Sri Aurobindo, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Nissim Ezekiel, Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Das, Jayant Mahapatra, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Salman Rushdie etc.
- Indian Writing in English expresses a shared tradition, cultural experiences and Indian heritage.
- Raja Ram Mohan Roy an advocate of English education was the first Indian to write prose in English. Mahatma Gandhi's writing was marked by simplicity, pointedness, and clarity of thought, which are the essential attributes of a good prose.
- The history of Indian English poetry began in 1830 with Kashiprasad Ghosh. However, Henry Derozio (1827) was considered the earliest Indian English poet. His *The Shair*

and Other Poems (1830) found a place in literary history of India. Michael Madhusudan Dutt's (1824-1872) two long poems, *The Captive Lady* and *Vision of Past* (1849) are worth noting. Manmohan Ghose an elder brother of Sri. Aurobindo wrote his *Love Songs and Elegies* in 1898. Toru Dutt (1856-1877) is the first Indian poetess in English.

- Indian English drama dates from 1831 when Krishna Mohan Banerjee wrote *The Persecuted: or Dramatic Scenes Illustrative of the Present State of Hindoo Society* in Calcutta. *The First Parsi Baronet*, perhaps the earliest Indian English verse play was written by C. S. Nazir in 1866. Dharmavir Bharati, Badal Sirkar, Mohan Rakesh and Vijay Tendulkar are widely considered to be among the finest playwrights writing in Indian languages. They have experimented with remarkable innovations, techniques and themes.
- Indians possess the gift of storytelling from the time of Rig-Veda and Upanishad. There was *Thirty Two Tales of the Throne* dealing with King Vikramaditya or Somadeva's Kathasaritasager. In the beginning the translations of the western classics have appeared. Then translation took the form of adoption and summarization and finally the creation of the original works took place in the form of an imitation of the western models
- In the nineteenth century, with the publication of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) and Lal Behari Day's *Govind Samanta* (1874), Indian novel in English grew rapidly in respect of thematic variety and linguistic maturity.
- The impact of English education, national awakening and the influence of European models are the chief factors responsible for the rise and development of Indian novel in English.
- Indian novel in English has become thoroughly Indian in terms of themes, techniques and human values. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94) was the founder member of the modern school of Indian fiction. He was the first Indian to write a novel in English
- Three pillars of Indian novels in English Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao
- The new generation of Indian writers in English has handled the wide range of themes and the subject matters. Shashi Deshpande, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Chetan Bhagat, Arvind Adiga and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni have written on variety of themes. For these writers English is a medium of expression of their creative urge, through which they can reach to the international readers.

MODULE II – POETRY

CHAPTER 1: THE QUEST BY SAROJINI

NAIDU

- Sarojini Naidu, The Nightingale of India, was a child prodigy, Indian independence activist and poet.
- The first Indian woman to become the president of the Indian National Congress and the first woman to become the Governor of an Indian state. Besides being a poet
- A national worker who took part in the Indian Independence movement and took part in Mahatma Gandhi's Salt March to Dandi.
- The matriculation examination winning the first rank. She was proficient in English, Urdu, and Telugu.
- Sarojini Naidu's works include "The Golden Threshold" (1905), "The Bird of Time" (1912) and "The Burden Wing" (1917). She was awarded the title "Bharat Kokila" (the Nightingale of India) by Rabindranath Tagore.
- "The Quest" is from "The Feather of the Dawn" published after her death by her daughter Padmaja Naidu.
- The poem is about the incomparable love of Radha and Krishna
- Radha is searching for her beloved Kanhaya. She asked the wind, the forest and the grey colored tide about him. But she couldn't find him.
- . The waters, the wind and the woods remained dumb
- She carried her crying face in her arms. She kept weeping- where her Ghanashyam has gone.
- Her heart suddenly shook from top to bottom by his hidden laughter. He mocked her with the usual tricks of Krishna. Then he asks her why she is searching him in the wind, wave and the flowering valley.
- He said that he belongs to her. She can look into the mirror of her heart to see him.
- Her love for nature through the poem. In order to show her love towards nature, she carefully selects the words dawn, wind, forest glade, friendly shade, dove-grey tides etc.

- She uses two different names of Krishna, namely Kanhaya and Ghanashyam to express the divinity of his love.
- The theme with beautiful similes: 'like a boat that rocks from keel to the rapture/ my heart was shaken by thy hidden laughter', along with that she again uses a simile which compares his tender malice to the nectar bubbling from her heart.
- In The Quest, the nightingale of India sings about love which is imperishable

CHAPTER 2: BREEZY APRIL

- Rabindranath Tagore was a Bengali writer who reshaped his region's literature and music. Author of Gitanjali and its "profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse", he became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913.
- He was highly influential in introducing the best of Indian culture to the West and vice versa, and he is generally regarded as the outstanding creative artist of modern South Asia.
- Rabindranath Tagore is the first writer who brought the Nobel Prize for literature to India. He was born as the youngest son of Maharshi Debendranath. Even though he belonged to an aristocratic family, he did not do regular schooling. His visit to England helped him to improve his talent.
- His writings were influenced by the works of Shelly, Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson, Browning and Shakespeare.
- In 1913 he received Nobel Prize for Gitanjali.
- As an exponent of the Bengal Renaissance, he advanced a vast canon that comprised paintings, sketches and doodles, hundreds of texts, and some two thousand songs; his legacy endures also in the institution he founded, Visva-Bharati University.
- The poem is addressed to the month April. The speaker in the poem makes a request to the month to rock him with its music. By the touch of the breeze, he gets thrilled.
- The breeze awakens him from his sleep. The mood of the breeze is fantastic. But the same time it courts and teases him.
- The poet says that he knows the whole fancies of breezy April.
- With the blowing of the breeze, all the branches are filled with blossoms. They enjoy the breath and whisper of the breeze.

- The leaves surrender in front of the breeze with its kiss.

CHAPTER 3: IN LOVE

- Kamala Suraiyya (born Kamala Das; 31 March 1934 – 31 May 2009)
- a major Indian English poet and literature
- In English, written under the name Kamala Das, is noted for the fiery poems and explicit autobiography.
- Her open and honest treatment of female sexuality, free from any sense of guilt, infused her writings with power, but also marked her as an iconoclast in her generation.
- In love is taken from "Summer in Calcutta"
- In the poem In Love Kamala Das shares the sexual experience of a woman.
- She begins the poem by referring to the sun and the atmosphere.
- Sun burns reminds her about her lover.
- She compared him as a carnivorous plant with unending sexual desire.
- She describes their meeting as a mechanical one.
- She is silent while he enjoys her as a triumphant.
- At noon time she is used to watch the crows flying like they are carrying poison in their wings. At night she listens to the sounds of the corpse carriers calling 'Bol Hari Bol'. She loses her sleep and she walks through the veranda at night sleepless.
- Millions of questions comes to her mind at that time. All the questions are about him. She never can call his presence love since he is a 'skin-communicated thing' for her. She finds that he is a person whose actions are merely based on lust.

CHAPTER 4: GOODBYE PARTY FOR MISS PUSHPA TS BY NISSIM EZEKIEL

- Nissim Ezekiel, one of the major poets in Indian English Literature was born in 1924.
- He had his education from Bombay and London.
- Poems serious and quite difficult to understand.
- Ezekiel has the place in Indian English literature as one of the writers who had made a deviation from the inflated style of writing.

- His poetry collections are Hymns in Darkness, Sixty Poems, A Time to Change, The Exact Time etc.
- Ezekiel's first book, The Bad Day, appeared in 1952. He published another volume of Poems, The Deadly Man in 1960. After working as an advertising copywriter and general manager of a picture frame company (1954–59), he co-founded the literary monthly Jumbo, in 1961. He became art critic of The Names of India (1964–66) and edited Poetry India (1966–67).
- His poems are used in NCERT and ICSE English textbooks. He got Padmashri award in 1988 and the Sahitya Academy
- The poem Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T S is a representation of the influence of mother tongue over English language used by the Indian speakers. He explains the idiomatic expressions introduced by the Gujarati people as an example of the whole Indians. He portrays the way in which the tenses and words are used in wrong places.
- The poem deals with a farewell function of Miss Pushpa organized by her nearer ones.
- The poem is written in the first person narrative in which a person gives the description of Miss Pushpa.
- The poem starts with the speaker addressing all his friends. He tells them that Miss Pushpa is going abroad in two or three days. He states that they have gathered there to wish her bon voyage.
- The character of Miss Pushpa: she is a very sweet personality. She always smiles for no reason, which shows her cheerful nature. Her nature can induce the same feeling in others too.
- About her family: from a well-known family. Her father is a renowned advocate.
- Eventually the speaker's memories travel in its own path and he shares his experience of staying at his uncle's friend's home many years before.
- After this deviation from the actual matter, the speaker returns to the description of Miss Pushpa.

- She is popular among women as well as men. The speaker begins to shower the wrong usages of English. But what he is trying to say is that Miss Pushpa is a good spirited girl. She is ready to do any kind of duties.
- The poem ends in the usual way of putting an end to a meeting. The speaker asks others to share their memories with Miss Pushpa and also asks her to sum up with her remarks.

CHAPTER 5: LOOKING FOR A COUSIN ON A SWING BY A K RAMANUJAN

- Attipate Krishnaswami Ramanujan (March 16, 1929 – July 13, 1993) a scholar of Indian literature who wrote in both English and Kannada. Ramanujan was an Indian poet, scholar and author, a philologist, folklorist, translator, poet and playwright. His academic research ranged across five languages: Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Sanskrit, and English.
- His famous works are The Interior Landscape: Love Poems from a Classical Tamil Anthology, Speaking of Siva, The Literatures of India, Hymns for the Drowning, Poems of Love and War, Folktales from India, Oral Tales from Twenty Indian Languages, "Is There an Indian Way of Thinking?", When God Is a Customer.
- The poem starts with the reference to the village life of the narrator in his childhood.
- He says that he and his girlfriend sat together on a village swing when she was four or five years old. He was her cousin. He was six or seven years old. She felt him with every movement of swing.
- After swinging they climbed on a tree. The tree was not tall at all. It was full of leaves like a fig tree, but they were unaware about it.
- Then the poet narrates their experience of being adults. Both of them enjoyed swinging
- When they pushed the swing, their bodies came into contact and she felt his closeness. That feeling remains in her even after growing up.
- The end of the poem, the girl has grown up and recaptures the feelings she had at her childhood. She remembers the swinging and the movements which made her happy. She fails to find out a single swing in the city where she lives.

- The poet refers to her sexual desire for her childhood friend
- The poem is in the form of memories and thoughts narrated by a woman. She describes her unforgettable days in a village during her childhood. She narrates her childhood experience of swinging with her male cousin when she was four or five years old.

CHAPTER 6: POSTCARD FROM KASHMIR BY AGHA SHAHID ALI

- Agha Shahid Ali's collections include A Walk through the Yellow Pages, The Half-Inch Himalayas, A Nostalgist's Map of America, The Country without a Post Office, Rooms Are Never Finished.
- Agha Shahid Ali was educated at the University of Kashmir and the Hindu College, University of Delhi. He earned a Ph.D. in English
- Ali expressed his love and concern for his people in The Country without a Post Office, written with the Kashmir conflict as backdrop.
- He died of brain cancer in December 2001.
- The poem is in the first person narration. Here the poet describes his nostalgia of his home land.
- He says that entire Kashmir shrinks into the mailbox within a four by six inch sized post card. It brings his home close to him.
- He is so overexposed towards his homeland.
- There was a period in the world history, when the people used letters as a means to exchange their idea, news and wishes. Technology has almost replaced letters sent through the post offices. Here the poet describes the nostalgia about his homeland.
- Postcard as an image used by the poet to portray what a person who lives in Diaspora feels.
- "Postcard from Kashmir" is a nostalgic poem containing the elements of Diaspora.

MODULE III – FICTION

NOVEL: ROOTS AND SHADOWS BY SHASHI DESHPANDE

- Shashi Deshpande is one of the eminent novelists of contemporary Indian literature in English. Shashi Deshpande was born in southern India and educated in Bombay (now Mumbai) and Bangalore. She published her first collection of short stories in 1978. She is a winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award for the novel, That Long Silence.

- Shashi Deshpande's *Roots and shadows* explore and expose the struggle of the protagonist, Indu, an educated middle-class woman, in a male-dominated tradition bound society.
- Indu symbolizes the New Woman, who is educated and who lives in close association with society rushing aside all its narrow conventions.
- The novel also deals with the unfulfilled desires and unhappy marriages of women.
- Maharashtrian Brahmin household. It is apparently the story of the triumph and tragedy of a family that is bound up in its conditioned patriarchal self.
- It tells the story not of an individual but of the institution of marriage, which is threatened by the forces of change and faces dissolution.
- The novel presents a typical facet of deprived womanhood through the character of Akka, who is the youngest sister of Indu's grandfather. Akka returns to her parental home as a rich widow after the death of her husband and starts looking after her nephews and nieces with the care and attention of a truly compassionate mother. She becomes the presiding deity of the family who confers peace and security.
- The novel describes the break-up of a joint family, held together by the money and authority of an old aunt, a childless widow. When she dies, she leaves her money to the heroine, Indu, a rebel. Indu left home as a teenager to study in the big city, and is now a journalist; she has married the man of her choice. But she realizes that her freedom is illusory; she has exchanged the orthodoxy of the village home for the conventions of the "smart young set" of the city, where material well-being has to be assured by sacrificing principles, if necessary. Indu returns to the house when her great-aunt dies after more than 12 years' absence. As she attempts to take charge of her legacy, she comes to realize the strength and the resilience of the village women she had previously dismissed as weak.

MODULE IV- PROSE AND SHORT FICTION

CHAPTER 1: TRYST WITH DESTINY

- Jawaharlal Nehru, born on 14 November 1889, was the first Prime Minister of India and a central figure in Indian politics for much of the 20th century.
- Nehru is considered to be the architect of the modern Indian nation-state; a sovereign, socialist, secular, and democratic republic.

- He passed away on 27 May 1964
- Jawaharlal Nehru came forward with the “Tryst with Destiny” speech, to the Indian Constituent Assembly in The Parliament.
- This speech took place on the eve of India’s Independence, at the hour of midnight on 14 August 1947.
- This great speech focuses on the aspects that transcend the history of India.
- This speech shows the essence of Indian triumph over British colonial rule.

CHAPTER 2: MARS IN THE SEVENTH HOUSE WRITTEN BY R.K.NARAYAN

- R. K. Narayan (10 October 1906 – 13 May 2001), full name Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami, was an Indian writer, best known for his works set in the fictional South Indian town of Malgudi. R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao were the three leading figures of early Indian literature in English. Narayan’s works include the semi-autobiographical trilogy: Swami and Friends, The Bachelor of Arts and The English Teacher. Narayan’s works also include The Financial Expert, hailed as one of the most original works of 1951, and The Guide for which he won the Sahitya Academy Award.
- R K Narayan was born in an orthodox Brahmin family. He grew up in a society where the girls and the boys were not allowed to mingle each other.
- When he became a young man, he began to search for a lover who will match him. But he never could talk to any girl in the society. He found the girls unapproachable. But he fell in love with girl in green sari who had an oval face. But his love for her disappeared.
- Then he found a stout girl who was drying her hair on the terrace. She too could not keep his interest for a long time. The last one in the serial love stories of R K Narayan was an English girl. He fell really in love with the girl in the year 1933, whom he married.
- According to the astrologers, the horoscopes were incompatible for their marriage. So the proposal was rejected. Narayan became a tragic hero and left taking food. At last he married her. Narayan’s father was bed-ridden because of stroke. Hence his wife Rajam had to take the charge of the kitchen. She had to take care of his younger brothers.
- The Justice, published from Madras. The propaganda of this newspaper was against the Brahmins. Even then they appointed Narayan. The work was hectic. Most of the news

collected by Narayan was unimportant and was not published.

- Narayan was interested in reporting murders and he used the word alleged to mention that. He was familiar to the police officers and prominent figures in the society. He was able to earn thirty rupees a month.
- He enjoyed his work but had to leave the job since he was kicked off from the payment for three months. Financial crisis began and he had to manage family expenses along with the needs of his wife. When Narayan received a cable from his friend Purna who was at Oxford, his work with *The Justice* came to an end.
- His novel *Swami and Friends* was rejected by many publishers and rejected Narayan's second novel *The Bachelor of Arts* since *Swami and Friends* was not a financially successful one. It was Nelson who published *The Bachelor of Arts*. Narayan's father passed away in 1937. He had not saved much money then.
- But with the birth of his daughter his second novel was published and he was pleased with his life. He wrote humorous articles in "Merry Magazine" and started his work on his third novel *The Dark Room*. *The Dark Room* dealt with the story of a woman in an orthodox Indian society. It was published by Macmillan in 1938 with the approval of Graham Greene.

CHAPTER 3: WEED

- Amrita Pritam: Poet, essayist and novelist, is one of the most prominent women writers in Indian literature.
- Known as the most important voice for the women in Punjabi literature, in 1956, she became the first woman to win the Sahitya Akademi Award for her magnum opus, a long poem, *Sunehe* (Messages).
- **The Weed:** A story is about marriage and love. In the exposition, Angoori is a young, innocent, girl who marries an old servant. "The Weed" is a beautiful short story of a rustic girl. Angoori, the protagonist, is a typical Indian village girl, black, young and beautiful. Simple, uneducated and superstitious, she was married as the second wife of an old man.
- A victim of the patriarchal society and forced to marry by parental choice, Angoori believes it is 'the weed' given by a man that makes a girl fall in love, which is a sin. At the end, she realizes that she herself is a victim of 'the weed', the natural inclination of a girl for the man she loves.
- The story is based on the author's own observation of the typical Indian rural society and

the customs and traditions associated with it. Through the character of Angoori the author has portrayed the position of a common woman in the Indian society and also the role played by the society in attributing the femininity to her.

MODULE: V- DRAMA

CHAPTER 1:NAGAMANDALA

- **About the author:** Girish Raghunath Karnad was an Indian actor, film director, writer, playwright, and a Rhodes Scholar, with prominent work in South Indian and Hindi cinema. He was the recipient of the 1998 Jnanpith Award, the highest literary honour conferred in India, and was also bestowed with Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan by the Government of India, along with a few Filmfare Awards.
- **About the play:** Nagamandala is based on the two oral stories from Karnataka.
- Karnad through the play exposes the exploitation and incarceration of women that occurs through the institution of marriage and how myths display the fears of men in society and are thus inherently patriarchal and are used in order to control and restrict the actions of women. The play also mocks the idea of chastity and aims at the emancipation and empowerment of women.
- The play is based on a rural setting and centred on the life of Rani, who is the everyday submissive rural Indian woman who is married off to a man by her parents, who arrange the marriage without taking into consideration her wishes. .
- Rani comes across Kurudava who offers her a mystical root which if she feeds Appanna, will lead to him forgetting about his mistress and being completely devoted to her. Upon cooking the root, the potion takes a horrible red color and she disposes of it in a nearby ant hill where a Naga (snake) drinks it. The snake falls in love with Rani due to the potion and takes the form of Appanna at night, praises her long hair and talks a lot about her parents and listens to her attentively. He also fulfills Rani's sexual needs and soon she falls in love with the Appanna.
- Soon, Rani becomes pregnant which angers Appanna who calls her a harlot when she says that the child is his and she has done nothing wrong. She is taken to the village panchayat, where she must undergo a chastity test in order to prove her innocence.. Her test consists of her having to put her hand in a snake pit – if deemed pure, the snake would not bite her and if guilty of adultery, she would be poisoned by the very snake.
- The Naga goes into the pit and makes an umbrella with his hood over her head and

moves over her shoulder to make a garland. In an ironic situation, her infidelity comes to her aid in proving that she is a faithful wife. Thus, the anxious, scared woman finds within herself, courage and confidence and gains social respectability as she emerges victorious from the public trial, by the same public trial that was meant to condemn her. There are multiple ends given by Karnad that talk of the fate of the snake. The most accepted is the case where the snake strangles himself to death upon seeing Rani reconcile with Appanna.

- Girish Karnad implies that as long as the existing material reality of women is not changed, where they are forced to be reliant on the closest patriarch in their life, they can only attain freedom and respect by becoming god-like



