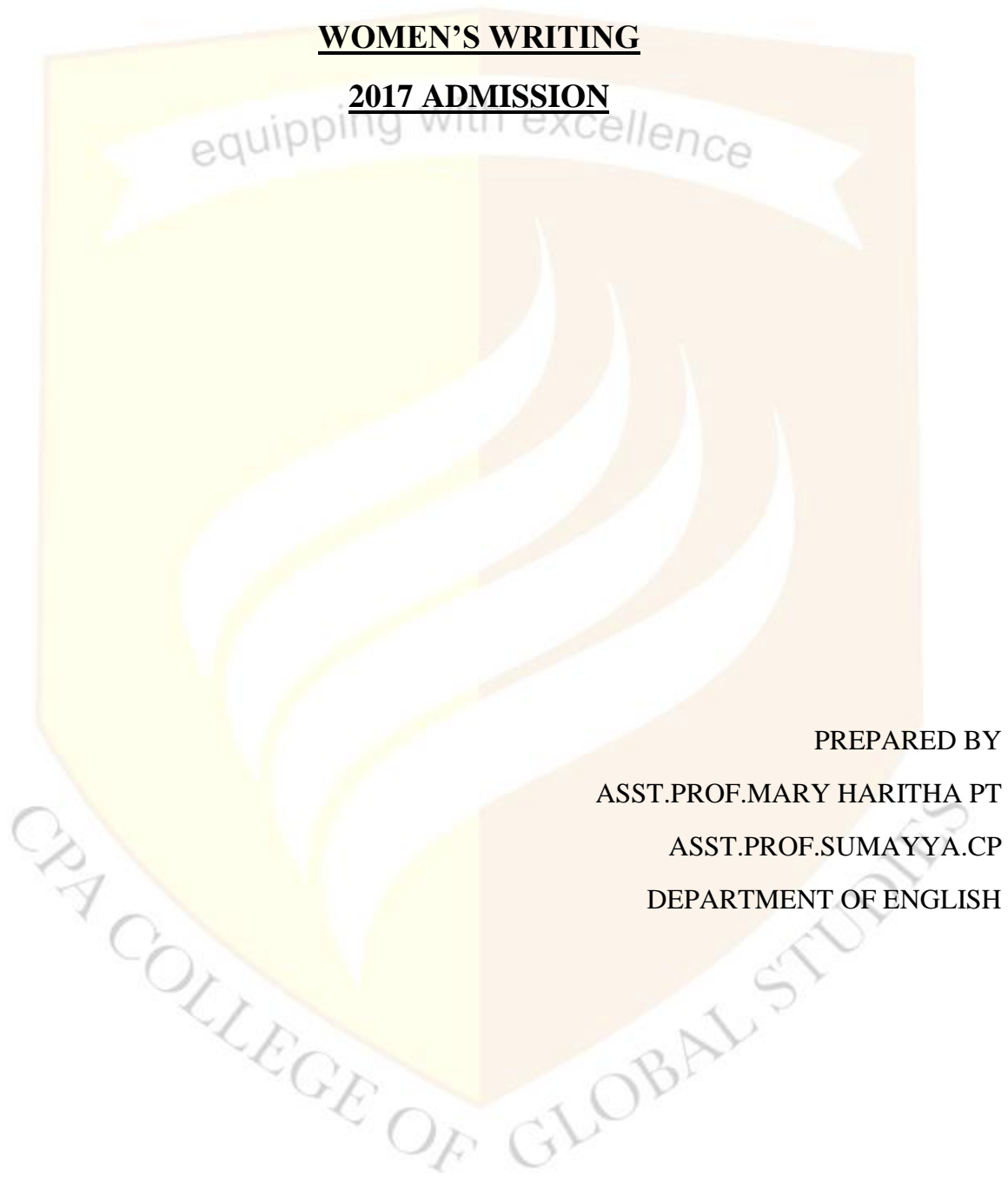


WOMEN'S WRITING

2017 ADMISSION



PREPARED BY

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

COURSE CODE : ENG6B03

TITLE OF THE COURSE : WOMEN'S WRITING

SEMESTER IN WHICH THE COURSE TO BE TAUGHT: 6

NO. OF CREDITS : 4

NO. OF CONTACT HOURS: 90 (5hrs/wk)

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:

- To introduce students to women's voices articulated in literature from various countries'
- To introduce them to the evolution of the feminist movement and to familiarise them with the various issues addressed by feminism.
- To sensitize them to issues like marginalization and subjugation of women.
- To motivate them to rethink and redefine literary canons.

COURSE OUTLINE

MODULE 1: ESSAYS

1. Shakespeare's Sister – Virginia Woolf

2. The Feminist Novelists

(from A Literature of Their Own: British Novelists from Bronte to Lessing)

Elain Showalter

MODULE 2: POETRY

3. An Introduction – Kamala Das

4. We Are Going – Noonuccal Oodgeroo

5. She Rose to His Requirements – Emily Dickinson

6. Aunt Jennifer's Tiger – Adrienne Riche

MODULE 3: SHORT FICTION

7. Girls – Mrinal Pande

8. The Garden Party – Katherine Mansfield

MODULE 4: DRAMA AND FILM REVIEW

9. Bayen - Mahasweta Devi
10. The Day I Became a Woman – Marzieh Meshkini
11. Mitr: My Friend - Revathy

MODULE 5: NOVEL

12. Wide Sargasso Sea – Jean Rhys

Module 1: Essays

Lesson 1: Shakespeare's Sister by Virginia Woolf

About the author:

- Virginia Woolf was an English writer, feminist, essayist, publisher, critic and one of the founders of modernist movement.
- Her Room of one's own is considered as the first major work in feminist criticism.
- Woolf analyses women's struggle as artists, their position in literary history and their need for independence.

Summary:

- 'Shakespeare's Sister' is the third chapter of the book 'A Room of One's Own'.
- She analyses history systematically to find out the relationship between women and literature.
- Woolf shows the condition of women in the Elizabethan era in the beginning of her essay 'Shakespeare's Sister'.
- She admits that Elizabethan era is golden age of English literature but it had not produced one female writer, at least for namesake.
- So she started to analyse the history of women in the Elizabethan era. She took out Professor Trevelyan's 'History of England' for further reference.
- She could understand that the poor condition of women in the Elizabethan age.
- She forced to ask a series of questions to herself.
- She decided to create a sister to Shakespeare in imagination.
- She gives her the name 'Judith'
- Woolf presents a long list of the favourable conditions that Shakespeare has enjoyed. At the same time, his sister does not have any such opportunity.
- Woolf believes that women in general are belonged to the working class.

- Woolf concludes her essay by saying that women are not at all inferior to men but they do not get the same opportunities and privileged as men enjoy.
- ‘Shakespeare’s Sister’ becomes a classic on in the history of feminist literature.

Lesson 2 : The Feminist Novelists (from A Literature of Their Own: British Novelists from Bronte to Lessing) - Elaine Showalter

- Elaine Showalter was born on 21st January, 1941 in Boston, Massachusetts, US. She is an American literary critic, teacher and the founder mother of gynocriticism, a movement concerned with “woman as a writer with history, themes, genres and structures of literature by women”.
- developed her doctoral thesis into her first book, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (1977)
- Studied at Bryn Mawr College & University of California.
- Taught at various institutions including Rutgers University & Princeton University.
- Retired in 2003.
- most important works related to feminism: *A Literature of Their Own: Women Writers from Bronte Lessing*(1997); *Towards a Feminist Poetics*- a lecture delivered in 1978, an essay ; *Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness*(1981)
- according to Showalter feminist criticism falls into two categories: feminist critique (women as a reader) and gynocriticism (women as a writer)
- Feminist critique envisions woman as a reader- woman as the consumer of male produced literature and this aspect of feminist criticism is concerned with the stereotypical representations of women, fissures in male oriented literary theory and how patriarchy manipulated the female audience.
- Feminist critique is essentially political and polemical. The problem with feminist critique is that it is male oriented and studies the different stereotypes of women and the limited roles that women played. It never focuses on the real experiences of women, what they thought, felt
- Gynocritique focuses on woman as a writer- woman as the producer of textual meanings. It discusses the history, themes, genres, styles and structures of literature by woman.
- It eschews the male models and theories and discusses various subjects like the psychodynamics of female creativity, the problem of female language, the trajectory of individual and collective female literary career, literary history and analyses particular female writers and their works.
- It seeks a purely female model by constructing a female framework for the analysis of women’s literature and by developing new models based on the study of female experience instead of emulating female models.

- Showalter remarks “Gynocritics begin at a point when we free ourselves from the linear absolutes of male literary theory, stop trying to fit women between the lines of male tradition.”
- In the book ‘A Literature of Their Own’ Showalter discusses the patterns and phases in the evolution of female tradition.
- Showalter has divided woman’s writing into three stages; feminine, feminist and female.
- In the feminine (1840-1880) phase women wrote to equal the intellectual achievements of the male culture. They internalized the male aesthetic standards and identified themselves with the male culture. Writers like George Eliot, Currer Bell, Acton Bell and Ellis Bell made use of male pseudonyms because women were not allowed to write.
- Feminist Phase (1882-1920): In the feminist phase emerged the New Woman Movement. Women won the right to vote. Women began to reject and protest the stereotypical image of womanhood and used literature to dramatize the ordeals of wrong womanhood. Elizabeth Robins and Francis Trollope belong to this period.
- Female Phase (1920 onwards): The female phase witnessed a rejection of both imitation and protest which are two forms of dependency. Women writers began to see their experiences as a source of autonomous art and began to express their experiences which are individualistic. Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf began to think in terms of male and female sentences.
- In the work A Literature of Their Own Showalter traces a tradition of women’s literature in England by examining the works and lives of novelists from the 1840’s to the present. She deals with both major and minor writers placing them in their own social, political and cultural background.
- The chapter titled ‘The Feminist Novelists’ comes under the feminist phase when women wrote against patriarchal values and shows how women’s literature has evolved from 1880 till 1920.
- This is the period when the women’s suffrage movement was at its strongest and women won the right to vote.
- Launched a major new area of literary investigation the long but neglected tradition of women writers and the development of their fiction from 1800 onwards.
- It includes assessment of famous writers such as the Bronte, Virginia Woolf, George Eliot, Margaret Drabble and Doris Lessing.\

MODULE 2 POETRY

‘AN INTRODUCTION’ - KAMALA DAS

- Kamala Surayya (31 March 1934 – 31 May 2009) she was formerly known as Kamala Das. She was also known by her name Madhavikutty. Kamala Das is the Mother of

Modern English Indian Poetry. And she was one of the significant voices in Indian bilingual writers, at the same time a leading Malayalam author from Kerala, India.

- Kamala Das was born at Punnayurkulam in southern Malabar and was educated mainly at home. Her poetry is noted for its powerful passion, a confessional strain and autobiographical themes. Most of her poems are remarkable for their power and raw truth.
- A bilingual writer, works: 'Summer in Calcutta' (1965), 'The Descendants' (1967), 'The old Playhouse and Other Poems' (1973), 'My Story' (1974), an autobiography.
- 'An Introduction' by Kamala Das is perhaps one of the most famous poems from her first anthology of poems 'Summer in Calcutta' (1965) written in a self-reflective and confessional tone. The poem is a potent critique on patriarchal society prevalent today and brings to light the pain, slavery, agony that the fairer sex suffered in the days.
- The poem **An Introduction** is an **autobiographical verse** of **Kamala Das** that throws light on the life of a woman in the patriarchal society.
- Kamala Das begins this poem by telling us, that although she does not know much about politics, she knows the names of those persons, beginning with Nehru, who have wielded political power in this country.
- She then describes herself as an Indian, of a very brown complexion, born in Malabar, having the ability to speak three languages, writing actually in two languages, and dreaming in the third. Next, she speaks sarcastically about the many relatives and friends who used to advise her not to write in English because English was not her mother tongue. In fact, she takes such advisers to task for having given her this advice because she claims the right to speak and write in any language she likes.
- Like most of the citizens of India, she is also capable of speaking three languages and writing in two probably the English and her native language. She says that she dreams of one because the world of dreams is common to all. In this world, every individual, male or female, uses the same universal language.
- The poet shows her ability in the educational sphere which is no access to most of the women.
- Tell us that, as she grew up from a child to an adult, her limbs swelled, and hair sprouted in one or two parts of her body. Then she asked for love, and what she got was a husband who performed the sexual act with her in the crudest possible manner. The husband's way of performing this act made her feel miserable.

- Everybody wanted to give some of the other advice to her. Her advisers urged her to do some embroidery of cooking and also to keep quarrelling with the servants. They told her not to pretend to be a split personality suffering from a psychological disorder, and not to become a nymphomaniac or a sex-crazy woman.
- What she also means to say is that she is no different from other human beings, which like every other human being she is sometimes sinful and sometimes pious, that she is sometimes loved and sometimes betrayed in love, that she has the same joys in life which others have, and that she suffers the same disappointment which others suffer.
- In this short poem, Kamala Das has given us a self-portrait and the anatomy of her mind, recounting the major incidents of her life and the experience which had affected her most till the time of her writing this poem.
- The poem is remarkable for its compression and for the compactness of its structure even though it contains a diversity of facts and circumstances.

‘WE ARE GOING’ - OODGEROO NOONUCCAL

- Oodgeroo Noonuccal, also called (until 1988) Kath Walker original Anglo-Australian name in full Kathleen Jean Mary Ruska, (born Nov. 3, 1920, Australia—died Sept. 16, 1993, Brisbane), Australian Aboriginal writer and political activist, considered the first of the modern-day Aboriginal protest writers.
- ‘We Are Going’ was published in her first collection of poetry, also called *We Are Going: Poems* (1964). This was the first volume of poetry to be published by an Aboriginal woman.
- We Are Going is a politically didactic poem that some critics have denied as being poetic, calling it instead propaganda. Even the most supportive critics have described this poem as technically imperfect, though it contains a clear and strong message. It is a political poem, giving an Aboriginal perspective on colonisation in Australia.
- Oodgeroo comments on the fears of Aborigines, and creates a voice that expresses the pain of dispossession. It is in simple language that is easy to understand, and has reached a wide readership, which was clearly Oodgeroo's aim.

- There is an absence of metaphor and simile, and the message is given priority over aesthetics. In this form, Oodgeroo has created a readily transmissible version of history.
- An Aboriginal presence is confirmed even as the poem mourns the passing of their old ways, laws and legends. 'The phrase we are going' is both the title and the last line of the poem. In each instance it is given a different inflection and context: in the title it suggests mobilisation, in the last line it suggests despair.
- We Are Going defines the Aboriginal connection with the land. While the poem laments that this link with nature is becoming weaker, it also asserts that because nature will never be destroyed, neither will Aboriginal people.
- The white men are compared to ants, as if their drone-like behaviour prevents them from even noticing the tribe's presence in town.
- Then raises questions within the reader's mind, Oodgeroo answers with: "We are strangers here now, but the white tribe are strangers," illustrating that the Indigenous forbearers may be physically and forcibly detached from the land, but the white people are spiritually disconnected from it: they neglect to see its spiritual value.
- Finally, the poem suggests that colonialism has also destroyed the land and natural world itself. British colonialism has resulted not only in the loss of the native people and their culture, but also in the loss of the animals that once inhabited the land.
- Ultimately, the poem suggests that Aboriginal Australia, their ways of life, and all that is beautiful in the land they inhabit will be lost forever if something doesn't change.
- The beginning of the poem shows a small group of Aboriginal people still remaining. But the title, "We Are Going," which repeats in the poem's last line, suggests that these last Aboriginal people will soon disappear from the land as well.

She Rose to His Requirements - Emily Dickinson

- Emily Dickinson, 'the Belle of Amherst' was an American poet and is considered one of the most original of 19th century American poets. She was born in Amherst, Massachusetts on December 10, 1830.
- Emily Dickinson's poems have many distinguishable features. The poet reflects her loneliness and the speakers of her poems generally live in a state of want. The major themes in her poetry include friends, nature, love and death.

- Adrienne Rich once said “Dickinson is the American poet whose work consisted in exploring states of psychic extremity”. Most of her love poems are psychological and autobiographical. Dickinson never married, but reading her poems we understand that she was in love at least one point in her life. She uses the syllogistic method of reasoning to describe the importance of love that she had in her life.
- The poem describes how women were in Dickinson’s time. When a woman meets a man and falls in love with him, or when a woman is married to a man she is to give up everything in her life just to make him happy.
- The poem depicts a woman about to be married and is in the process to shed all her personality and become another person. She drops the playthings of her life in order to take up the honourable responsibility of a wife. The playthings of woman include all her dreams, aspirations, skills, imagination and everything she possess. This may be mere playthings in a male dominated society, but for a woman they are serious things connected with her very being.
- The woman dropped all the playthings of her life in order to take up the honourable duty of a wife. Emily Dickinson is making a sarcastic remark of the society where rising to her husband’s requirement was considered an honourable job.
- The second stanza deals with the things that she loses once she takes up duty of a wife. She loses material, spiritual potential and gold. The society expects a complete submission on the part of the woman whereas, it neglects man’s role altogether. The woman wears a mask by fashioning herself to the norms of the society.
- The image of pearl and weed in the poem is significant. Her own dreams and desires are unmentioned as the sea develops pearl and weed. The woman’s virtues are compared to the pearls and weeds under the sea. The fathoms they abide are known to her husband alone. ‘Himself’ can mean husband or God. It is God alone who realizes the depth of her emotions and her silence.
- The poem is considered as a feminist text in which various themes connected with women’s lives are exposed. On the one hand, Emily Dickinson’s personal life, her rejection of various social institutions likes marriage and criticism of religious norms. On the other hand, the poem presents a weak and mild woman who has given up everything to please the patriarch. She can be treated as a ‘representative of home angels’ silenced by the male chauvinists who lost themselves and their playthings.

Aunt Jennifer’s Tiger - Adrienne Cecile Rich

- Adrienne Cecile Rich (1929 – 2012)
- A poet, essayist and a radical feminist Adrienne Rich has been called “one of the most widely read and influential poets of the second half of the 20th century.
- She talks about a woman’s experiences in her married life. She has tried to explore the inner feelings of a woman who is living under the dominance of men

- Rich was one of the most eloquent and provocative voices in America and spoke on various themes like the politics of sexuality, race, language, power and women's culture. Her collections include *Snapshots of a Daughter-in-law* (1963) and *Leaflets* (1969). She has also authored several nonfiction prose including *On Lies, Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose, 1966-1978* (1979), *What is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics* (1993), *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (1986) and *Arts of the Possible: Essays and Conversations* (2001)
- Rich's poem *Aunt Jennifer's Tiger* reflects the gender struggle prevailing in the male dominated society. It is a feminist poem which explores the alternative world created by Aunt Jennifer through sewing. The poem deals with the weight of marriage, the unhappy and submissive station of a woman in life and the stagnation of married life. Sewing becomes a metaphor of escape into another world, the world of art.
- *The poem* is a poem about an oppressed woman who escapes into an alternative world of embroidery and sewing, despite a heavy marriage to a terrifying man.
- She has suffered over the years and is looking for a positive way to express her artistic talents, before it's too late.
- The tigers which Aunt Jennifer creates are topaz in colour, that is wine-red, yellowy orange, and live in a green world where their majestic movements express fearlessness. So the tigers she creates will outlast her and become a symbol of freedom and independence.
- Aunt Jennifer's hands are 'terrified' because of the massive weight of household duties. She is dominated by her husband continuously. By mentioning that it is 'Uncle's wedding band', the poet suggests that Uncle owns Jennifer too and that as a female she is the property of her husband. The word 'massive' and 'heavily' suggest Aunt Jennifer lives a demanding sort of life in which she has to attend to her husband's needs and fulfil his commands.
- Aunt Jennifer is 'ringed', trapped in her marriage and controlled like an animal. Her husband is her master. Her wish to be like the tiger, 'proud and unafraid' also shows her fear in real life. Tigers are fierce, courageous and independent animals. They lead the life the way they want to. But Aunt Jennifer is just opposite to tigers. She is quiet, coward, and totally dependent on her husband.
- She can't go against the established pattern in life. She is pressed by 'the massive weight' of household work. Instead of pleasing herself, she tries to please her dominating husband. She lives a quiet and subdued life. But the tigers she imagined are just opposite to her. They are proud, active, fearless, determined and chivalric.
- The tigers in the poem represent Jennifer's innermost desire. She wants to be strong like the tigers that do not fear the men. Like the beautiful animals in the jungle, she wants to create precious pieces of art. The tiger stands for her unfulfilled wishes. She can't revolt against him on her own. In order to gain freedom she must be like her tigers that prance being proud and unafraid. Like them she wished if she did not fear the men.

MODULE 3: SHORT FICTION

Girls – Mrinal Pande

- ‘Girls’ is a touching story which portrays the status of girls in an Indian society and the prejudice against them.
- The author has skilfully portrayed how discrimination pervades every stage of a girl’s life. The narrator’s mother, prefer male children to female, as they will carry on the family name. Further, girls are consistently discriminated when it comes to their share of food, education and health care. They are rebuked and every now and then, reminded to be submissive and taught from a very young age, the appropriateness and inappropriateness of their behaviour.
- In this story there are statements to describe the plight of a girl like, “Ah, a woman’s fate.....”; “Oh, three girls.....”, “All of us suffer like that, one just has to endure it”; “She was born only to plague my life”; and “What a temper for a girl to show!” The author has pointed out that whatever may be the collective voice of the society; the individual tone of families towards the girl-child has undergone very little
- The story tells us about the unjustified idolatry of the male child in an Indian society. Indian families always had in need of male children as they were supposed to be the bread winners and caretakers of the family. When a girl child is born, condolences are showered on the family whereas when a boy child is born ladoos are distributed in and outside the family.
- Indian society, despite all the modernization and progress, continues to victimize girl children and they are looked down as the inferior ‘other’. The author presents a middle class family where there is a compulsion to give birth to a boy to stop bearing children anymore.
- Girls in Indian families are told to bend and live and are not respected or even acknowledged as boys are. The story is told from a child’s perspective and it effectively brings out the actual feelings of a girl child when she is discriminated in her own home.
- For Ma, her children are always creating problems. Had they been sons and even if they had been naughty she would not have been angry, because sons are always considered as assets to the family. The little girl’s cry and anguish at the end of the story is the voice of all the girls in Indian society.
- One day worship of the girl child, one day viewing the girl as Devi shows the hypocritical nature of the rituals in our society. It is contrasted to the subjugation of girls happening every moment. Rituals in itself have become a formality. The whole story is a wake up cry of the narrator and the author, on behalf of all the girls in India, to realize the value of girls and the respect and care they need from their own home.

The Garden Party - Katherine Mansfield

- Katherine Mansfield Beauchamp Murry was born on 14th October 1888 in the colonial New Zealand. She was a prominent short fiction writer and wrote under the pen name Katherine Mansfield. She left for Britain in 1908 where she befriended DH Lawrence and Virginia Woolf.
- She died at the age of 34.
- Well known stories: The Garden Party, The Daughters of the Late Colonel and The Fly.
- The Garden Party was first published in 1922 in a collection entitled The Garden Party and Other Stories and it immediately became a success. Mansfield mainly deals with New Zealand, childhood, adulthood, social class, class conflict, innocence and experience.
- Katherine Mansfield's short story "The Garden Party" is about a garden party and protagonist Laura's idealism and sensitive nature.
- Written between 1920 and 1922, "The Garden Party" still stands as author Katherine Mansfield's best-known story.
- As the story begins, Laura's family is preparing for the party, introducing her shallow mother, Mrs Sheridan, her bossy sister, Jose, her business-minded father, and her brother, Laurie, who shares many of Laura's personality traits. When Laura hears that a worker who lives nearby has died, she feels that to host a party in light of a neighbour's demise is wrong, and tries to convince her family to cancel the garden party.
- First, Laura goes to Jose, who scolds Laura for wanting to cancel the party because cancelling it won't bring the worker back to life. Jose represents the Sheridan family's attitude toward the workers, whom they generally view as lower class, as evidenced by their hostile temperament toward them.
- Laura is hoping to find enough compassion to cancel the party. This is where Mansfield fleshes out Laura's relationship with her mother. Laura tries initially to copy her mother's attitude and mannerisms, but ultimately decides to distinguish herself from her mother.

- She gives Laura a black hat to wear for the party, and upon seeing her charming reflection with the hat, Laura decides not to plead with her family to cancel the party after all.
- Everything is going fine until Mr. Sheridan mentions an accident, and Laura is reminded of the dead worker. Mrs. Sheridan convinces a hesitant Laura to deliver leftover food from the garden party to the worker's widow, and insists Laura make this delivery in her party attire.
- Laura obeys her mother's wishes. The atmosphere is the opposite of the Sheridan estate--instead of light and cheerful, it is dark and oppressive. Laura feels she is dressed inappropriately for her errand and plans to drop the food off and return home as quickly as possible, but the widow's sister doesn't let her off the hook so easily.
- Against Mrs Sheridan's request, Laura allows herself to be led to the body of the deceased labourer after meeting the widow. She finds him serene and beautiful. Struck by the difference between her lifestyle and that of the labourers, Laura is immediately ashamed and begs forgiveness for her attire before fleeing the cottage, only to encounter her brother, Laurie.
- In "The Garden Party," the black hat Mrs Sheridan gives Laura is a symbol of their wealth and separation from the rest of the world that surrounds them.
- Themes of "The Garden Party" include the difference between innocence and experience, and dreams and reality. Laura journeys from innocence--thinking that her family would honour the dead, and then enjoying herself at the party--to experience, when she is made to deliver the leftover food and becomes embarrassed that she is dressed for a party when people are mourning and suffering. The veil of her dream--the happy atmosphere of home--is lifted when she travels to the cottages to deliver the food and experiences reality for the first time.
- At the end of the story, though Laurie commiserates with her, he also realizes there's nothing she can say to truly impart the feelings she had when making this journey.

MODULE 4: DRAMA AND FILM REVIEW

BAYEN - MAHESWETA DEVI

- Mahashweta Devi, the eminent Indian Bengali writer, poet and novelist who wrote under the pseudonym Jubanashwa. Her first book Jhansir Rani (The Queen of Jhansi) was published in 1956 which marked the beginning of her prolific literary career.
- She has been the recipient of several literary awards like the Sahitya Academy award (1979), the Jnanpith, India's highest literary award (1995), Magsaysay award (1997) and the Padma Vibhushan(2006). Presently she is known better as an activist who fights for the welfare of tribal people in Bihar, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal. In most of her fictional works she themes the brutality and the oppression faced by the Dalits, women and other marginalized communities at the hands of upper elite Indian society.
- The play Bayen presents a moving account of the cruel reality that a woman had to face in rural India.
- Chandidasi belongs to Gangaputta and Gangadasi cult. After her father's death, she continued her ancestral job till she got married and gave birth to a child.
- The society ostracized Chandidasi by labeling her Bayen, a woman who breastfeeds dead children and has the ability to curse others. She lived in a little hut near the rail tracks.
- Chandidasi was labeled Bayen when many of the children in the village died of many diseases.
- The play opens with the entry of Bayen. She is barred from entering the mainstream society. She wears a filthy saree, her hair is disheveled, and she puts on no jewellery at all.
- Bayen is shown singing a song to an unseen child. She is also followed by an unseen dog, Jhumra.
- Bayen was given ration on Saturdays. That too; a little rice and salt, all mixed with dirt and worms in the lentil. She tells it to Malindar and his son Bhagirath.
- When Malinder threatened her that he will strike her, she became afraid and left the place.

- Once she went away, Malinder regretted his actions. He reveals how she became a Bayen. The story moves twelve years back.
- After marriage they were leading a happy life. Then Bhagirath was born. Before his birth she didn't have any difficulty in burying children. But after his birth she feels very bad when she buries children under the banyan tree.
- Besides, some children died due to some diseases. People began to feel that she has an evil eye.
- It was while all this happenings that Tukni, Shashi's and Pakhi's daughter died of some illness. They were Malinder's sister and brother-in-law. The whole blame of the death was put on Chandidasi as a result of which she denied to bury Tukni.
- When they pleaded before her she replied that would be her final burial. Chandidasi had almost turned mad by then.
- Malinder misunderstood her and proclaimed through a drum beating that his wife has turned a Bayen.
- Then the story moves to present, Malinder tells Bhagirath that ever since his mother had been a Bayen not a witch. No one will kill a Bayen thinking of the curse that may befall them.
- Then Bhagirath meets his mother. He looked her shadow in the pond and talked to her. Bhagirath used to go to the railway tracks and hear her crying every evening. He asked her the reason for her crying.
- Chandidasi told him to go back home.
- Chandidasi saw some of the men in the village placing bamboos on the rail tracks to make an accident so that they can loot the train.
- She waves her hands to make the train stop. At last the train stops, but she was killed by the train.
- The authorities were thinking of awarding her posthumously for her bravery. They wanted to hand over the body to her kith and kin and Bhagirath came forward to give all the explanations regarding her. At last he cried "She's not a Bayen. She is my mother."

THE DAY I BECAME A WOMAN (Roozi ke zan shodam) FILM REVIEW

- Marzieh Meshkini is an Iranian cinematographer, film director and writer. She was married to film director Mohsen Makhmalbaf, who wrote the script for her debut film *The Day I Became a Woman* (Roozi ke zan shodam). It attended the Critics Week Category in the 2000 Venice Film Festival.
- ABOUT THE FILM *The Day I Became a Woman* (Roozi Khe Zan Shodam) is a 2000 award winning Iranian movie directed by Marzieh Meshkini.
- The movie grew out of a small film school started by her husband, the acclaimed Iranian film maker Mohsen Makhmalbaf. It deals with the most important issue faced by Iranian women.
- It gives voices to the pathetic condition of women in the Middle East. The film which is episodic in nature deals with woman's struggle for identity in Iran.
- Three stories are told each depicting different stages in the lives of Iranian women; from young to the elderly.
- The first part takes us to the morning of Havva's ninth birthday. In the first part of the film, the mother and the grandmother of the nine year old Havva keeps her from playing with her childhood play mate Hassan. Because Havva girl turns nine years old. Playing with boys in the street is considered a sin from that day on. But Havva pleads to her mother and grandmother to allow her play till noontime.
- This story of Havva tells us about the end of innocence of a girl child in an Iranian society.
- The second tale revolves around a young woman Ahoo who decides to participate in a bicycle race by the seashore and who is all the way pursued by her angry husband on a horse back. The film shows lots of women clad in burqas speeding on the bicycle, peddling on and on towards their goal.
- The threatening words of her husband and all other people are ignored by her; as she, an embodiment of the new woman, moves on and on.
- The third part shows us an old woman Hoorah who has some money and who is adamant on purchasing all the materials that she desired. Now she has become a free woman and spends wads of money and is also free to do what she wishes
- Hoorah floats out on a waiting ship, free from the bonds of womanhood, she is watched by both Havva and Ahoo. Both of them may be looking at their own possible future.
- The three stories tell us about the power of female characters and they wanted to face the challenges in the male dominated society.

MITR: MY FRIEND FILM REVIEW

- Mitr, My Friend is an Indian movie, directed by the Indian actress Revathi. Set partly in India and the US, Mitr, My Friend was Revathi's debut directorial venture. The film was also noted for having an all women crew. The movie won the Best English Film of the year award at the 49th National film awards. The film speaks about the plight of a woman who put their families first to the extent of ignoring their lives.
- The cultural difference experienced by a village girl on moving to a new environment is vividly portrayed. The film opens with the marriage proceedings of a south Indian marriage between Lakshmi and Prithvi. Lakshmi is typical south Indian girl from Chidamparam; Prithvi is a software engineer working in California. After the wedding, they move to the USA where Lakshmi gradually tries to fit into her new surroundings
- The movie talks about dismal struggle of women. Lakshmi struggles in her own family to establish herself when she had sacrificed a lot for her family. When she becomes smart with the help of her chatting friend, her husband misunderstands her and misreads her actions and even talking to her seemed to be pointless for him. And he walks out. He realises that Lakshmi would have undergone drecheroy of domesticity and justifies himself that he had tried himself to make her feel better.
- The movie highlights the identity crisis of a woman as a wife and as a mother. The film Mitr: My friend is a perfect example for the women's who is trying to get self-identity by sacrificing everything for family. The film portrays the realistic mind set of a woman who leads the life of love, care and sacrifice without sacrificing self-confidence. A woman is like a sunshine she spreads the rays of love, care and affection but sometimes she missing love and care of her husband and family.
- Mitr my friend is such a film which picturizes the plight of Indian woman named Lakshmi who marries an NRI man named Prithvi. After their marriage they move to California she desperately accepts the culture of western without get rid from the culture of India.
- In the beginning of the film the couples lead a happy playful life but after few years the scene changes. They had a daughter named Divya. When she grows up, she wished a follow the culture of America and she never obeys the mother's advice. Lakshmi tries to impose the moral culture of India. But Divya wish to follow the modern crazy life of California. Lakshmi have no right to hurt Divya, because she is not civilized in her career.
- The husband also supports Divya by mocking Lakshmi. The gap between mother and daughter is one of important main situation in this film. It also affects in the mind of Lakshmi. She acts as a machine to cook, to clean the house and she has no courage to go outside of the house. It may be because of her limited knowledge about that place.
- The gap between husband and wife is also takes place in Lakshmi's life. Her husband never shows the love and affection towards Lakshmi. He is busy with his job and responsibility. They separate each other in terms of love, sex and affection. So only

Lakshmi find out a friend through cyber chatting. The development of social network also plays an important role in this film.

- And story reveals how a women changes after getting a good friendship also. Lakshmi continued her chatting without knowing whether the friend is a man or a woman. But later she comes to know that it is a man. Both are unknowingly chats together.
- The real twist of the film happened at the end. If the Lakshmi surprisingly knows that the invisible friend is her own husband. If she tried to get any job may be she can lead an emancipate life, but she never tried to get a job. Lakshmi's neighbour is another friend who helped Lakshmi very much but her daughter Divya felt doubt about her mother. But at the end Divya realizes the real value of a mother by understanding that 'a mother may be educated or uneducated, she is the best guide line when we fall in our life'.

MODULE 5: NOVEL

Wide Sargasso Sea - Jean Rhys

- Jean Rhys, a writer of post-modern and Post-Colonial period, associated with the second wave feminism. She was born and grew up the Caribbean island of Dominica. Her mother was a Dominican woman and her father was a British. She started writing in 1924, under the influence of English writer Ford Madox Ford. It was Ford who suggested changing her name from Ella Williams to Jean Rhys.
- The novel was written in 1950s. First version of Part 1 was published in 1964; completed novel was published in 1966.
- **Genre:** Postcolonial and Post Modern novel; Revisionist and Reinterpretation novel; Feminist Bildungsroman.
- **Source:** It is a feminist and anticolonial response to Charlotte Bronte's novel '*Jane Eyre*' (1847). Written from the point of view of Mr Rochester's mad wife Antoinette Cosway, a Creole heiress. While Bronte's novel depicts the young Jane's encounter with a mysterious yet fascinating Rochester, Rhys enables the reader to read into his role in driving his wife into madness.
- **Title:** The title of the novel refers to the Sargasso Sea, a vast area of the Northern Atlantic Ocean. The title invites the reader to consider how the characters can be thought of as trapped in their own Sargasso Sea.
- **Setting:** 1830s to 1840 in colonized Jamaica and England. In the context of French and British colonization in the Caribbean.
- **Themes:** Colonialism; Postmodernism (Otherness and Alienation); Slavery and Freedom; Feminism; The complexity of racial identity (Racism).
- The novel is divided into three parts. Part 1 is set on the family estate in the early 19th century – Coulibri in Jamaica. Jamaica was a Spanish colony in 16th and 17th centuries, but was invaded by English forces in 1655. The British abolished the slave

trade in 1807, but slavery was not outlawed within the empire until 1834. At the start of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette's family and their neighbour are reeling from the loss of labour and Coulibri estate has fallen into disrepair.

- In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, published in 1966, Jean Rhys tells the story of Bertha Mason (née Antoinette Cosway), Rochester's West Indian first wife in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). The daughter of a Welsh father and a Creole Dominican mother, Rhys sought to provide a fictional life for a character that, though of the utmost importance for the development of Brontë's narrative, exists only peripherally, confined as she is to both madness and seclusion in the attic of Rochester's mansion.

Part 1

- Part 1 describes the childhood of Antoinette Mason. The voice of Antoinette tells the reader of her life as young Antoinette, a young girl, who lives on a ruined estate Coulibri, near Spanish town, Jamaica. Her mother, Annette is described as a beautiful Creole woman from the island of Martinique.
- The novel is set around the year 1834 when the slaves received emancipation but Jamaica witnessed large scale social turmoil owing to the new social dynamics emerging between former slaves and owners.
- When Cosway dies he leaves the family and estate impoverished. Then, Annette devotes most of her time and energy to Pierre, Antoinette's brother (having difficulty in walking and talking). The other members of the household are Christophine, a black woman, who was a wedding gift from Cosway to Annette. The blacks in the village were afraid of her because she was believed to practice the black art of obeah.
- Young Antoinette is left very much on her own. Her childhood is poor and lonely. People in the town refer to them as 'white cockroaches'. Since she doesn't have any friends Christophine arranges for Antoinette to play with a black child, Tia. One day they have a bet doing somersaults and although Antoinette does them they quarrel about money and Tia goes off wearing Antoinette's dress and taking all her pennies.
- After the fight with Tia, Antoinette no longer has any friends but she finds company in nature saying "it's better than people". Soon, Annette marries Mr Mason, an extremely wealthy widower. While Annette and Mr. Mason are on honeymoon, Antoinette stays with Aunt Cora.
- They were hardly accepted by the locals and faced gossip and hostility everywhere. Annette grows more and more restless and worried about her children but her appeals fall on deaf ears. One day, however their house is targeted by angry slaves and Pierre is fatally injured. Seeing her son suffocate to death, Annette loses her mental balance and attacks Mr. Mason. Antoinette is sent to a convent school by Aunt Cora.
- Annette dies one day and the novel ends with young Antoinette reflecting the things that had happened and the death of her mother.

Part 2

- Part 2 is the longest section of the book. The voice in this part is mainly Rochester's (the character from *Jane Eyre*) although his name is never actually mentioned.

- The marriage between Antoinette and Rochester has already taken place; they are on honeymoon in Windward Island. Antoinette wasn't too happy with the sudden marriage and had wanted to back out but the prospect of money made Rochester convince her to go ahead.
- However he is hardly the most sincere husband. Even before the honeymoon begins she is being attracted to Amalie a servant girl accompanying them. He thinks of her as a creature not a person. On the walk to the honeymoon house Rochester thinks of himself as having been trapped into a horrible mistake whom ironically it was he who was eager for the marriage.
- Rochester doesn't feel any tenderness or love toward Antoinette. He describes himself as one consumed by an animal passion. Soon he receives a letter from her illegitimate brother, warning him of the madness that runs in the family. Rochester believes what he reads. He begins to view Antoinette with suspicion and his attitude towards her changes.
- She begs her former nurse, Christophine to use black magic to make him love her again. Christophine initially refuses but when she hears that under the English law all of Antoinette's money now belongs to Rochester she gives her a powder.
- Soon, Rochester secretly meets Daniel Cosway. When he returns Antoinette questions him and is shocked by the accusations made against her. She begins to explain her family history to him but in doing so becomes very emotional and angry.
- As revenge, he seduces Amalie even while his wife was in the next room and could hear them.
- Antoinette leaves the house.
- The oppressive nature of his manhood is revealed when he is simultaneously disgusted by Antoinette and at the same time doesn't want her to flourish her own. Rochester decides to take Antoinette with him to England for medical treatment.
- Part 2 ends with the two of them leaving the island. Rochester vows Antoinette would never return to the Caribbean.

Part 3

- Part 3 opens with Grace Poole describing the state of affairs in Rochester's household in England. Antoinette is locked away in the Attic. Rochester has inherited the mansion after the death of both his father and mother.
- It is not clear how Antoinette has been confined in the attic. She is not able to distinguish between reality and nightmares. She envisions herself burning down the Thornfield Hall. She imagines jumping from the roof to the cold stones down and ending her life. Her dreams get mixed up with the fire that destroyed Coulibri, the burning parrot, her old friend Tia. She grabs a candle in preparation to torch Thornfield Hall, just as Bertha Mason does in Jane Eyre.
- Rhys reflects the changing status of woman and portrays Antoinette's struggle for identity within herself and within the confines of a patriarchal society, leaving her constrained and ultimately jumping to her death.

