

IV BA/BSc/BTTM

**SPECTRUM**  
**LITERATURE AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES**

**2017 ADMISSION**

PREPARED BY

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ENG4 A06 SPECTRUM: Literature AND Contemporary issues

SEMESTER IN WHICH THE COURSE TO BE TAUGHT-4

NO.CREDITS -4

NO.OF CONTACT HOURS- 90(5hrs\wk)

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE**

- a) To make the learners aware of the humanist dimensions of literature and media in the contemporary world.
- b) To enable the learners to understand concepts like globalization, commercialization and Intellectual Property Right through new literatures.
- c) To inculcate the spirit of universal brotherhood by presenting critiques of race of xenophobia, war and national borders.
- d) To disseminate knowledge about the rights of minorities such as children, animals and the disabled and thus create a positive change in the societal perception of them.

### **II. COURSE DETAILS**

#### **Module 1: Literature and Media**

1. "Divided Times, Amanda Michalopoulou
2. Comala: Santhosh Eachikkanam

#### **Module2: Globalization and IPR**

1. The Big Fish: N. P. Hafis Mohammed
2. Manjal: Satchidanandan
3. What Work Is: Philip Levine

#### **Module 3: Nation and Its Boundaries**

1. Home: Warsan Shire
2. Love across the Salt Desert: K. N. Daruwalla
3. No men are Foreign: James Kirkup
4. Deals Fugue: Paul Celan
5. Jamaican Fragment: A. L. Hendricks

## **Module 4: The Marginalized and their Rights**

- I. UN Speech: Malala Yousafzai (July 12. 2003)
2. Caring for Animals: Jon Silkin
3. Average Waves in Unprotected Waters: Anne Tyler
4. Selections from *The Cry of the Gull*: Emmanuelle Laborit



## **MODULE: 1-LITERATURE AND MEDIA**

### **LESSON 1: DIVIDED TIMES: HOW LITERATURE TEACHES US TO UNDERSTAND ‘THE OTHER’**

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

- Amanda Michalopoulou was born in Athens, Greece, in 1966.
- She has published six novels, three short-story collections and many children's books.
- She has received the Revmata Award for her story “Life is Colorful outside” (1994) and the Diavazo Award for her highly acclaimed novel Jantes, Wishbone Memories (1996). The American translation of her book I'd Like won the International Literature Prize from the National Endowment for the Arts and also nominated for the “Best Translated Book Award” (University of Rochester).
- Her novels, stories and essays have been translated in ten languages. In 2013 her novel ‘Why I Killed my Best Friend’ was published by Open Letter, USA.
- This article is extracted from the opening speech of the second international literature festival of Odessa and translated from Greek by Karen Emmerich.

#### **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT:**

- Literature is generally defined as the reflection of society and what happened around us. Literature helps us to see the stories of others
- Literary works are viewed as the imagination of the dominant class. But since the age of classical literature, a hero was created, who was capable of challenging the perceptions of the dominant class.
- Once, four people decided to write a story each other to explain the human condition.
- There are marginalized heroes or antiheroes ‘Odysseus’ and ‘Hamlet’ are the classics, the characters in this books who see the heroes as lovers, rivals, servants, think what we have been taught to think.
- Amanda makes an attempt to re-read the classics of European literature such as Hamlet, Odyssey, Don Quixote and the Sorrows of Young Werther in her speech and present these texts with a new perspective. These heroes are modern because they are marginalized anti-heroes. They are still popular due to the universal nature of their characters.
- James Joyce's Stephen Dedalus in ‘Portrait of the Artist as a Young man’ shows the hero chooses to be a hero. He fights for his freedom.
- Fiction teaches us to think creatively and a novel teaches about persons and their experiences.
- Aristotle called tragedy as “the imitation of an action”. The literature changes imaginary fear and pity into positive actions. It tells us: the other is not what it seems.

## LESSON 2: COMALA

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- Santhosh Echikkanam is one of the most popular contemporary short story writer in Malayalam Literature.
- He was born in Kanhangad, Kasaragod district in Kerala. His stories are about the common people and their issues.
- He secured Kerala Sahitya Academy Award for his short story Komala (2008).
- He is also known as a script writer. He has scripted for films such as Idukki Gold which is an adaptation of his own short story in the same name, Annayum Rasoolum, Njan Steve Lopez, and Aby.

### SUMMARY OF THE TEXT:

- Comala, was written in the context of the rise of farmer's suicide in Kerala due to the economic crisis in the post- globalized period. In the story Comala, the author attempts to point out the inference between the commodification of media and the uncelebrated lives of common people, which often plunged into trouble by all these drama.
- The title of the story "Comala" is the name of the town of the dead in Juan Rulfo's novel "Pedro Parama". The novel draws the picture of an inhuman mob at the suffering of common people. The story which is rooted to the situation in Kerala, unveil the attitude of people, who have become selfish and self-centred as the dead people in the town of "Comala" So the title makes sense and meaning.
- The protagonist of the story is Kundoor Viswan , who hung a board in front of his house saying "owing to serve debt, we will commit suicide at the stroke of midnight on 15th August", that causes him to get attracted media attention.
- His friend Sudhakaran borrowed fifty thousand rupees with Viswan standing surety. Sudhakaran did not pay the money and Viswan was cheated. He was unfortunately called for a discussion in News hour along with Bank Secretary, a psychologist and an advocate. The discussion goes on with several aspects of the issue like whether Viswan has to die or not.
- The whole discussion goes absurd and it makes no difference in Viswan's life. After that, since he failed to find peace, he goes out.
- At the end of the story, he finds a man, met with an accident and he finds himself fortunate that he could serve the last drop of water to that person.
- That incident makes changes in his attitude towards life and makes him to realize the life is something valuable and it can find happiness and meaning in small things.
- His meaning of existence or his purpose of life was fulfilled by giving the last drop of water to a dying man. Then he goes back home and throws away that suicidal board.

## **MODULE: 2-GLOBALIZATION AND IPR**

### **LESSON 1: THE BIG FISH BY N.P. HAFIZ MOHAMAD**

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

- N P Hafiz Mohamad was born in 1956 in Calicut as the son of famous Malayalam writer.P. Muhammad, former President of Kerala Sahithya Academy.
- He is a sociologist, writer, illustrator, corporate trainer and family counsellor and received many awards including the Kendra Sahithya Academy Award for children's literature, The Edessery Award for Short Story Collection, and the State Sahithya Academy Award for Children's Literature".

#### **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT:**

- The theme of the story is the impact of Globalisation on local communities.
- The story is translated into English by Dr. K M Sherrif, the Head of the Department of English, Calicut University and one of the most renowned translators in Kerala.
- The implementation of New Economic Policy has been made drastic changes in Indian Economy. The policy which consisted of Globalization, Liberalization and Privatization was aiming at the integration of markets in the global economy. It led to the increased interconnectedness of national economies. However, what had actually happened was the small scale farmers and the small scale industries were completely wiped out by the new movement and India witnesses massive suicides of farmers and small scale producers
- The Big Fish is a translation of the short story entitled "Cheriyā Meenukalum Valiya Matsyavum" portrays how this new economic policies effect the life of ordinary people. It is a critique of Globalization and elucidates its offers of new prospects to the third world underprivileged people, but it in turn destroys their traditional systems and way of life.
- The story exposes the influence of globalization in the life style and in the food habit of the natives and shows how the critics of globalization are treated by the state and the police.
- Though a translation, the story 'Big Fish 'successfully retains all the traces of its localness along with its serious thematic focus.
- The big fish in the story symbolizes the Multi-National Companies who came to India after the implementation New Economic policy in 1991. The metaphor of the fish is a very original and competent one to explain the traps and tricks of globalization.



- The protagonist of the story Alassankutty owns a pond and has a preoccupation of chatting and feeding the little fishes in the pond. He is quite happy as he enjoyed what he did. One day an agent wearing a hat with the stars approaches him and explains the possibilities and profits of fish farming and suggests him to be wise.
- Mariyam his ambitious wife wants her daughter to be married in a good way, her son to be educated in a good college and live comfortably. She finds it more interesting and hopes that this new plan will definitely help her family to overcome their financial crisis. Finally after plenty of persuasion, the agent wins to convince his plan and Alassankutty decides to go on with the new plan of joining the fish growing collective.
- He cleans and disinfects the pond and put big fish in the pond. Slowly he finds that the small fishes are eaten by the big fish. The big fish is getting fatter by eating the small fishes.
- The story can be called as a metaphor of globalization. The big fish are the agents of globalization and the small fish in the pond are the poor people all over the world. It has been pointed out by many that globalization destroys the traditional systems and ways of life of the indigenous communities.

## **LESSON 2: TURMERIC BY K. SACHIDANANDAN**

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

- K. Sachidanandan is one of the prominent literary figures in Malayalam literature. He is popular as a poet, critic, editor and a matchless orator. He started his career as professor of English and joined Sahitya Academy as the editor of the literary journal Indian Literature. He has 21 collections of poetry in Malayalam, 16 collections of world poetry in translation and 23 collections of critical essays and interviews.
- His writings are noted for social commitment. Most of his writings are in favour of secularism, human rights and environmental conservation.

### **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT:**

- The poem Turmeric originally written in Malayalam under the title Manjal and later translated into English under the title Turmeric.
- The poem is a vehement criticism of globalization. Globalization which started with an intention to establish the concept of global village has turned out to be a tool of exploitation in the hands of corporates and capitalist nations. Globalization has no human or cultural considerations. The multinational companies and corporates consider third world nations either as possible markets or as rich sources of spices and natural resources. For imposing their market strategies they started

destroying cultural values and traditional beliefs. Gradually it became another mode of colonization.

- The poem Turmeric discusses the theme of globalization in connection with Kerala's cultural tradition and history. Since having many medicinal properties turmeric was always dear and precious to people across the globe. For Kerala's turmeric was very much connected to our culture but globalization has eyes only in the medicinal and beauty enhancement qualities of turmeric.
- Imagery and regional words in the poem are cultural specific. The poet begins the poem by addressing turmeric as Unniyarcha of the subsoil. Here it means that turmeric was one of the heroes of Kerala in ancient days as it has got an elite position among all spices. But all these cultural ritualistic medicinal properties of turmeric is now trapped in tubes and sold in supermarkets as a mere cosmetic products and globalization ruined all the good days of turmeric.
- Globalization though offered a global reach for turmeric we are now ignorant about its cultural importance and it becomes a readymade product with artificial preservatives and colour. Thereby losing all the pride and dignity of turmeric.
- Though the poem is very short, each of the lines speaks about the respective qualities of the turmeric and civilization.

### **LESSON 3: WHAT WORK IS BY PHILIP LEVINE**

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

- Philip Levine was one of the leading American poets of his age. He admired not only people who struggled for freedom and spoke for the voiceless people. Most of his poems were autobiographical in nature, focusing on his distorted childhood and the many tedious jobs that he was forced to do.
- He was appointed as the poet laureate of America from 2011 to 2012. He died of pancreatic cancer on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2015. The economic and social life of 20<sup>th</sup> C Detroit is one of the major subjects of Levin's work. His first work on the poetry was On the Edge.
- Contemporary critics call him a 'working class poet', describing his writing as working class words. Levin's poetry illustrate one of the basic tenets of Marxist theory that is class antagonism comprise all of human history.

#### **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT:**

- What Work Is, the title poem of Levine's collection of poems published in 1991. According to David Baker this collection of poetry one of the most important books of poetry of our time.
- In this poem Levine talks about the miserable conditions of manual labourers. The poem speaks about the loneliness, helplessness, poverty and desperation of the workers. The poem "What Work



Is” is mostly autobiographical, which reflects the miseries he had undergone while he worked in the factories.

- Levine addresses the terrible conditions of the workers and shows how this industrialized world represses the ‘manual labour’. The famous critic Herbert Leibowitz commented on Levin’s poetry: “Levine has returned again and again in his poems to the lives of factory workers trapped by poverty and the drudgery of the assembly line, which breaks the body and scars the spirit.”
- The poem begins with the first person plural ‘We’, indicates the universality of the sufferings of the working class. It also shows the collective nature and solidarity of the workers.
- The poem begins with people the poor workers standing in line for work at Ford Highland Park. They don’t have permanent job and every day they have to wait in front of the factory to be called for work. The worst part is that when their turn comes the owner of the factory might say there is no work on that day.
- Levin portrays that work is only to get money to support people’s families and that work or should be your entire life.
- According to Phoebe Pettingaell, “the ‘work’ referred to is something that civilized literary society too often represses as a subject: manual labour. Thus he speaks of the men and women perform endlessly repetitive tasks on automobile assembly line... those who ‘stand in the rain in a long line waiting at Ford Highland Park, for work”.
- Throughout the poem the poet focuses on the person reading the poem. He creates empathy to the readers towards the workers. The poet states that people only understand the life of workers when they experienced at least once the hardships and miseries of the poor workers and go through the dehumanising task of waiting in a line for work.
- In this poem Levine expresses the struggles between the working class and the upper middle class. The narrator’s brother can’t find time to practice singing opera because he is busy with searching and doing all kinds of jobs to support and feed his family.
- The ton of the poem resembles the tone of that whole great depression era of the 1930s. The poem itself embodies the loneliness, desperation, helplessness and the boundaries felt by every man in poverty during that time. Levine truly has accomplished his goal in speaking for the voiceless worker.

## MODULE: 3-THE MARGINALIZED AND THEIR RIGHTS

### LESSON 1-HOME WARSAN SHIRE

- Warsan Shire, born in 1988 to Somali parents in Kenya and lives in London. She is a British-Somali poet, editor and teacher. Shire, who defined poetry as a healing agent for the trauma of exile and suffering.
- At the age of 24 she was named the first Young Poet Laureate for London in 2014.
- The poem “Home” is a revised version of the prose poem “Conversations about a home (at a deportation centre)” from the collection Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth (2011).
- Shire wrote Conversations about home (at a deportation centre) in 2009, a piece inspired by a visit she made to the abandoned Somali Embassy in Rome which some refugees had turned into their home.
- In an interview, she told the reporter that “the night before she visited, a young Somali had jumped to his death off the roof”. The encounter opened her eyes to the harsh realities of living as an undocumented refugee in Europe: “I wrote the poem for them, for my family and for anyone who has experienced or lived around grief and trauma in that way”.
- This poem became the basis for “Home”. It has been shared widely across the media and has been read in a range of public. “Home” has touched a nerve among people, that it has offered a way to give voice to refugees and to provide some authentic understanding of the crisis.
- The poem talks about the harsh reality which forces many people to leave their homeland. The homeland is so unliveable that people are forced to migrate to other lands. The poem begins with the speaker asserting that no one wants to leave home unless home has become too dangerous of a place to continue living in. Throughout the poem the speaker personifies the abstract concept of home in order to emphasize the fact that people still feel an undeniable connection to their homes even when their homes threaten their livelihoods.
- Home” is a poem about migration, and the traumas and complexities that define it. It explores the forces that drive people to leave their homes—forces that are often deeply misconstrued and misunderstood. It explores the pain that defines many migrant experiences. It also explores the ways that migrants are received in the countries in which they are seeking refuge.
- In the first four stanzas, the speaker details the violence and trauma that often lead migrants to leave their homes, making it clear that migration is not a choice for the migrants who flee war-torn countries.

- In stanza five, the speaker begins to address the reader, urging them to understand that no one would flee their home and put themselves as well as their family into the dangerous and humiliating situation of becoming a refugee unless the alternative was far worse.
- The poem allows us to gaze upon the terror that immigrants face while escaping the dangers of their home.

## **LESSON 2-LOVE ACROSS THE SALT DESERT BY JAMES KIRKUP**

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

- Keki N. Daruwalla is an Indian poet, short story writer and novelist who writes in English.
- His first collection of poems Under Onion was published in 1970. He has published several collections of poems such as Apparition in April (1971), Winter Poems (1980), The Keeper of the Dead (1982), Crossing of Rivers (1985). He has published three novels so far: For Pepper and Christ (2010), Ancestral Affairs (2015), and swerving to Solitude: Letters to Mama (2018). His collections of short stories include Love across the Salt Desert: Selected Short Stories (2011) and Islands: Short Stories (2014).
- He was awarded Sahitya Akademi Award in 1984 for The Keeper of the Dead, a collection of poetry. He was awarded Padma Shri in 2014.

### **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT:**

- The short story “Love across the Salt Desert” was first published in 1979 in a collection called Sword and Abyss.
- In this story, Keki N. Daruwalla narrates the adventurous journey that a man undertakes for his beloved.
- Najab, the man in the story defies his father, and the international border between India and Pakistan, and fights adverse conditions in the salt desert to be with Fathima, who he was deeply in love with.
- The story is set in the Rann of Kutch, a vast, lonely desert which is very impossible to cross. It had been drought for three consecutive years in Kutch and there were no signs of rain.
- Fatimah was the daughter of a spice-seller across the border and Najab Hussain would do anything for her
- Najab had accompanied his father or an old smuggler each time he crossed the border. They sold tendu leaves across the border for a higher price. During one of those journeys they had stayed with Kaley Shah, the spice-seller.

- Fatimah was under pressure to get married to someone in the village who is not liked by many people. Najab promised to return for Fatimah.
- One morning, Aftab, Najab's father was woken up by the news that Najab was missing. Najab's father found out that his mother knew about Najab's trip as she had given her jewellery for him to purchase cloves from the spice-seller.
- Najab finally reached Fatimah's house in the middle of the night and was given shelter by her.
- Najab had illegally entered the territory. Kaley Shah was angry to know that Najab had come unannounced and that too without anything to sell. But Najab said he was interested in buying cloves. Kaley Shah soon got busy arranging the cloves and also taking care of Najab's camel.
- In the night when, Najab slipped into Fatimah's room and decided to go.
- The next morning itself they set off for Najab's village. As they were nearing the village there were signs of rains. When they reached home, it started raining heavily, making drought a distant memory.

### **LESSON-3 NO MEN ARE FOREIGN BY JAMES KIRKUP**

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

- He was born in Durham, in England, in 1918.
- Inborn sense of deep solitude and apartness.
- He openly declared his opposition against WWII.
- He was a homosexual and anti- establishmentarian.
- He died in 2009.

#### **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT:**

- The world saw many wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- A war is caused because two countries differ in colour, creed, geography or languages.
- We should remember that no men are strange and no countries are foreign.
- Beneath the uniforms, everybody breaths like us.
- The land on which our brothers walk are like our land.
- They have eyes like ours that wake or sleep.
- Remember that no men are foreign and no countries strange.

### **LESSON 4-DEATH FUGUE BY PAUL CELAN**

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

- Paul Antschel, who later adopted the penname Celan.
- He was born in Romania in 1920.
- His parents were German-s speaking Jews.
- His famous poem 'Death Fugue' was written in 1948.
- His first collection of poems was "Sand and the Urns".



### **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT:**

- ‘Holocaust’ which means “sacrifice by fire” is one of the worst event in world history.
- The poem is modernist in sensibility.
- The speaker of the poem is ‘we’ standing for the Jews who were imprisoned in the concentration camps doing various jobs like digging graves and executed in the end.
- The mood is dark and tragic and it is set by the haunting refrain “Black milk of daybreak we drink it at nightfall”.
- The title of the poem refers to the music played by some Jews while others did their forced labour.
- A fugue is a melody and successively taken up by others and developed by adding other parts.
- A guard in the house is playing with the serpents.
- As the stars glittering in the sky, he walks and whistles his dogs up and his Jews out and orders them to dig a grave on the earth.
- The mention of serpent brings out all kinds of negative connotations like betrayal, cruelty and deceit.
- Death comes as a master from Germany.
- They will have graves in the clouds with plenty of space.

### **LESSON 5: JAMAICAN FRAGMENT BY A.L. HENDRICKS**

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

- Arthur L. Hendricks (1922 – 1992) was born in Kingston, Jamaica.
- His father was Jamaican and mother French.
- He joined the family business after his college education.
- But he was bored with it.
- Then he became a poet, writer and broadcasting director.
- Most of his poems gave a clear evocation of the human mind and natural aspects of the Caribbean natives.

#### **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT:**

- Racism is a major problem of the present –day world.
- It is a fact that the black – skinned and brown – skinned people are discriminated in most continents.
- There are myths of white supremacy.
- ‘Jamaican Fragment’ is a description of events taking place on two continuous days.



- The essay deals with the internal suspicions of a Jamaican regarding racial inferiority in his home land.
- As he walks one morning, he notices a young black boy and a young white boy playing in a garden.
- On keenly observing them, he found that the white boy is dominant over the black one, who submitted himself to the other.
- The Jamaican's faith in his people was shaken.
- He did not know why the black boy was submitting to the white boy without resistance.
- Here prejudices coming from colour, race and sex are revealed.
- To his surprise, the Jamaican saw the boys playing after shifting their roles the next day.
- Then the Jamaican comes to know that the boys were the sons of a white man married to a Jamaican Black women.
- Now he feels proud of his Jamaican community.

## **MODULE IV-THE MARGINALIZED AND THEIR RIGHTS**

### **LESSON 1:U.N. SPEECH BY MALALA YOUSAFZAI**

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

- She is a Pakistani education advocate, who, at the age of 17, became the youngest person to win the Nobel Prize for Peace after surviving an assassination attempt.
- Born on July 12, 1997 in Mingora, Swat Valley.
- In 2009, she started blogging for the BBC about living under threats from the Taliban and used name Gul Makai to hide her identity.
- She was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize by Desmond Tutu and was awarded Pakistan's National Youth Peace Prize in the year 2011.
- Yousafzai became an advocate for girl's education even as a child and this resulted in issuing a death threat against her by the Taliban.
- On October 9, 2012, Malala and two other girls were shot by a Taliban gunman, on their way back home from school.
- The attack on her was universally condemned by political leaders, artists and liberals across the globe.
- She survived and continued to speak out on the importance of education.
- In 2013, she gave a speech to the United Nations and published her first book I am Malala : The Girl Who stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban.

### **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT:**

- Malala's speech was about education and women's rights.
- She asked nations to act against illiteracy, poverty and terrorism.
- In 2007 in Swat Valley, Taliban banned girls from attending school.
- By 2008, the Taliban extremists destroyed 400 schools.
- It was Malala who spoke against these inhuman laws.
- So they tried to kill her.
- She was shot in the forehead but miraculously she escaped.
- The Taliban bullets could not silence her and she became more vocal in her protests against them.
- She calls for nations to work for peace, for the removal of illiteracy and ignorance and to bring prosperity to the world.
- Her main focus is education of girls and the rights of women.
- In her honour the day on which she made the speech in the UN was named Malala Day.

## **LESSON 2: CARING FOR ANIMALS BY JON SILKIN**

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

- Jon Silkin (1930-1997), a British poet, critic and editor was born in London to a Jewish immigrant family.
- In 1958, he was appointed as the fellow in poetry at Leeds University, but spend much of his time editing Stand a literary magazine which he had founded in 1957.
- His first poetry collection, The Peaceable Kingdom, was published in 1954. Silkin's other important works are: The Two Freedoms (1958), Living Voices (1960), The Re-Ordering of the Stones (1961), Flower Poems(1964), Nature with Man (1965) etc.

### **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT:**

- The poem "Caring for Animal" was published in Silkin's poetry collection,"The Peaceable Kingdom".
- The poet brought the sufferings of animals and expresses his concern over the need of protecting them from the cruelties of human beings.
- The poet begins by abruptly posing a question with regard to the necessity of protecting Animals.
- In search for an answer to this basic question he raised it before the sky, water and the entire universe, but failed finally to get an answer.
- The poet portrays how the animals and birds are leading a death in life existence under the nose of his so called master 'Man'. The poet raises the question: "Whether we must be concerned about this"? He conveys his opinion that the holy land and the rearing green land should be kindlier than this.

- He gently reminds us that caring for animals will make us realize that we too are human animals in need of love and care. He concludes the poem by stating that when your kindness and love towards animals are growing up, your love towards all fellow beings are also growing up.

### **LESSON 3: AVERAGE WANES IN UNPROTECTED WATERS BY ANNE TYLER**

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

- Anne Phyllis Tyler, born on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1941 at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- She is an American novelist, short story writer and literary critic.
- She received The Sunday Times Award for fiction Literary Excellence in 2012.
- Tyler has occasionally been classified as a 'southern author' or a 'modern American author.'
- Tyler simply writes for the sake of story- telling and large questions that emerge in her novels are only 'accidental'.

#### **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT:**

- The narrative of mental illness have become a new trope of literary studies.
- Mentally retarded peoples' basic human rights are often violated by a society which traditionally perceived the disease as a curse of God or a punishment of parents' sin.
- Memory connects and disconnects.
- Family also plays a contradictory function.
- Autistic children are often abandoned their parents or sent to asylums.
- Sometimes one of the parents abandons the partner.
- Then the one left with the sick child finds hard to manage.
- Memory plays an important role in almost all of Tyler's fiction.
- In this story also memory is a disconnecting as well as a connecting force, both the characters to make discoveries about themselves and serving as a means of alienation.
- Bet Blevin marries Avery at an early age against the wishes of her parents.
- She was hoping that she will have a happy life away from the home of her parents.
- But things do not work out the way she wants.