

TOPIC: CRITICAL APPRECIATION

**COURSE TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO
WRITING/ CRITICAL APPRECIATION**

PAPER: GE 4

UNIT: SECTION B2

SEMESTER: 4

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DEPARTMENT: ENGLISH

IN MY LAST LESSON I EXPLAINED HOW TO
START WORKING ON CRITICAL
APPRECIATION OF POETRY AND PROSE.
THIS LESSON IS MEANT TO TAKE YOU

THROUGH THE DOS AND DON'TS WITH REFERENCE TO POETRY AND PROSE. THE GENERAL RULES ARE THE SAME FOR BOTH POETRY AND PROSE. I WILL POINT OUT HOW TO CONSIDER POETRY AND PROSE IN PARTICULAR.

PROSE

- WHEN YOU ARE GIVEN A PROSE PASSAGE THE FIRST TASK IS TO READ IT AND MAKE MENTAL NOTES OF THE CENTRAL IDEA. THAT IS, YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE AUTHOR WANTS TO CONVEY THROUGH HER/HIS WRITING. (PASSAGES MEANT FOR CRITICAL APPRECIATION ARE GENERALLY NOT LIKE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WHICH ARE FULL OF INFORMATION ABOUT CURRENT AFFAIRS.)
- AFTER MAKING A NOTE OF THE CENTRAL IDEA, LOOK OUT FOR THE

WAYS IN WHICH THE AUTHOR ELABORATES AND ILLUSTRATES HER/HIS IDEA. FOR EXAMPLE, LOOK AT PARTICULAR WORDS, IMAGES, FIGURES OF SPEECH WHICH THE AUTHOR USES TO EXPLAIN AND ELABORATE HER/HIS IDEA. MAKE A NOTE OF THESE AND CRITICALLY ASK WHETHER THESE WORDS, IMAGES AND FIGURES OF SPEECH REALLY HELP IN UNDERSTANDING THE PASSAGE OR WHETHER THEY ARE USELESS ORNAMENTS THAT COULD BE LEFT OUT.

- LOOK AT THE PASSAGE AND CONSIDER THE CLARITY. HOW FAR IS THE AUTHOR SUCCESSFUL IN CLEARLY STATING THE SUBJECT? DOES THE LANGUAGE MAINTAIN A COHERENT PATTERN? IS THE AUTHOR CONSISTENT OR DOES THE AUTHOR CONTRADICT HERSELF/HIMSELF?

- NEXT, CONSIDER THE LENGTH OF THE PASSAGE AND ASK IF THE AUTHOR USES TOO MANY WORDS OR ONLY A FEW WORDS TO CONVEY HER/HIS IDEA. IS THE AUTHOR REPETITIVE? IS THE AUTHOR CRYPTIC? ***CRYPTIC- USES FEW WORDS TO COHERENTLY CONVEY THE SUBJECT MATTER.**
- NEXT, DOES THE PASSAGE REMIND YOU OF A SIMILAR PROSE OR POETRY YOU HAVE READ? YOU COULD HAVE COME ACROSS SIMILAR IDEAS IN OTHER LANGUAGES TOO. MAKE A NOTE OF THIS IF YOU FIND ANY AND MENTION THAT AS A CROSS REFERENCE.

LET US LOOK AT A SHORT PROSE PIECE WHICH I HAVE WRITTEN FOR YOU AS AN EXAMPLE. *

“THE TRADITION OF VENERATING THE DEPARTED ANCESTORS AMONG HINDUS IS

NOT UNIQUE. OTHER CULTURES, INCLUDING THE CELTIC- GAELIC PAGANS, CHINESE TAOISTS AND BUDDHISTS, JAPANESE BUDDHISTS, MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS ALL OVER THE WORLD, HAVE ONE WAY OR THE OTHER TO PAY OBEISANCES TO THE DEPARTED. SEVERAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ALSO MUST BE HAVING THEIR OWN WAYS OF DOING THE SAME.

MAN'S URGE TO RATIONALIZE LIFE, DEATH AND AFTER-LIFE, SPECULATE UPON THE CREDIBILITY OF SOUL AND KARMA HAS PROMPTED THEM TO CHART UNKNOWN TERRITORIES OF CULTURE(S)."

(AUTHOR: ANURADHA MUKHERJEE)

1. WHAT IS THE CENTRAL IDEA OF THIS PASSAGE?

THE TRADITION OF VENERATING THE DEAD OR DEPARTED IS COMMON TO MOST PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD.
PAYING RESPECT TO THE DEAD

COMES FROM OUR URGE TO RATIONALIZE DEATH AND AFTER-LIFE.

2. HOW HAVE I ELABORATED MY IDEA IN THIS PASSAGE? YOU CAN SEE I HAVE USED VERY FEW WORDS TO CONVEY MY IDEA. I HAVE NAMED SEVERAL RELIGIOUS GROUPS TO INDICATE THAT ALL THESE PEOPLE HAVE THE TRADITION OF PAYING RESPECT TO THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIED. YOU MUST HAVE NOTED THAT I HAVE **NOT** MENTIONED THAT PEOPLE USUALLY PAY RESPECT TO THE ELDERS IN THE FAMILY WHEN THEY DIE. WHY DID I **NOT** MENTION THIS ELABORATELY? BECAUSE I USED THE WORD **ANCESTOR AND** IT IMPLIES ONE'S OWN FAMILY LINE. I EXPECT MY READERS TO UNDERSTAND THAT WHEN I AM TALKING ABOUT PAYING RESPECT

TO THE DEPARTED, I MEAN **THOSE PEOPLE WHOM I HAVE LOST**. I DO NOT PERFORM RITUALS TO PAY RESPECT FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT RELATED TO ME, ALTHOUGH DEATHS CAN MAKE ME SAD AND MOURN FOR SUCH LOSSES. SO HERE, YOU CAN CRITICALLY COMMENT ON MY PROSE STYLE AND POINT OUT THAT MY STYLE IS **CRYPTIC**.

3. YOU MAY HAVE NOTED THAT I HAVE USED THE TERM "**CULTURES**" INSTEAD OF "**RELIGIOUS GROUPS**" ALTHOUGH THE CONTENT IS ABOUT RELIGIOUS PRACTICES. DO YOU THINK I COULD HAVE USED "RELIGIOUS GROUPS" INSTEAD OF "CULTURES"? THIS IS WHERE YOU CAN POINT OUT WHETHER I HAVE MADE A WRONG OR RIGHT CHOICE OF WORDS AS A WRITER. (I CAN GIVE YOU THE **REASON WHY I CHOSE TO USE THE**

TERM “CULTURES” INSTEAD OF “RELIGIOUS” GROUPS.)

4. CONSIDER THE TONE OF THE PASSAGE. IS IT DIDACTIC OR INSTRUCTIVE OR FANTASY OR POLITICAL OR PHILOSOPHICAL? OR IS IT MERELY A REFLECTION OF THE MIND? IS THE LANGUAGE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND? HAVE I USED AN ORNAMENTAL STYLE? HOW DOES THE PASSAGE END? IS IT TOO SHORT AND ABRUPT? GIVE YOUR REASONS FOR YOUR VIEW. REMEMBER, YOU **HAVE TO BE CRITICAL** BUT YOU **CANNOT PERSONAL** WHILE DOING CRITICAL APPRECIATION.
5. SOMETIMES YOU MIGHT BE LUCKY TO FIND A PROSE PASSAGE THAT YOU HAVE ALREADY READ. **IDENTIFY THE AUTHOR!** IT GIVES YOU A BONUS POINT AND USE YOUR RESOURCES TO COMMENT AT LENGTH ABOUT THE

STYLE BECAUSE YOU ARE ALREADY
FAMILIAR WITH THE AUTHOR.