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B.Com Honours

Semester I

Calicut University

Literatures in English or Communicative English

Course Code: AEC1 • Module 3 Notes

1. Literatures in English: Appreciating Poetry

Poetry is a form of literature that uses aesthetic and rhythmic qualities of language to evoke meanings beyond simple prose. Understanding poetry requires analyzing themes, imagery, and poetic devices. This module covers basic poetic devices and analyzes three classic poems: Rabindranath Tagore's "Where the Mind is Without Fear", Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Ulysses", and W.B. Yeats's "The Second Coming".

Common Poetic Devices

Figures of Speech

- **Simile & Metaphor:** Direct or implied comparisons between two unlike things (e.g., "life is a highway").
- **Personification:** Giving human qualities to non-human objects or abstract ideas.

Sound Devices

- **Alliteration:** Repetition of initial consonant sounds in close proximity.
- **Imagery:** Descriptive language that appeals to the physical senses (visual, auditory, tactile).

Selected Poem Analysis (Part 1)

"Where the Mind is Without Fear" (Tagore)

Written before India's independence, this poem is a prayer to God for a nation free from colonial rule. Tagore envisions a heaven of freedom where knowledge is free, truth reigns, and reason is not lost in dry habits.

"Ulysses" (Tennyson)

A dramatic monologue spoken by the mythological hero Ulysses (Odysseus). Ulysses expresses frustration at his quiet life in Ithaca, declaring his resolve "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" in perpetual exploration.

Selected Poem Analysis (Part 2)

"The Second Coming" by W.B. Yeats

Written in 1919 after the devastation of World War I, Yeats's poem utilizes dark imagery to describe a world falling into chaos and anarchy. It introduces his concept of the *Gyre* (historical cycles) and suggests that a monstrous revelation, rather than a peaceful return of Christ, is about to occur:

- *"Turning and turning in the widening gyre / The falcon cannot hear the falconer; / Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold..."*
- **Theme:** Cultural crisis, historical transition, and anxiety about the future of civilization.

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