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B.Com Honours

Semester I

Calicut University

Literatures in English or Communicative English

Course Code: AEC1 • Module 4 Notes

1. Literatures in English: Appreciating Prose and Short Fiction

Prose and short stories use straightforward language to construct complex narratives, build characters, and explore social themes. This final module outlines the elements of narrative style and analyzes three classic works: George Orwell's essay "Shooting an Elephant", R.K. Narayan's "An Astrologer's Day", and Guy de Maupassant's "The Necklace".

Elements of Narrative Fiction

When analyzing prose, scholars look at five key elements:

- **Setting:** The time and location in which the story takes place.
- **Plot:** The sequence of events (exposition, rising action, climax, resolution).
- **Characterization:** How authors develop characters through dialogue, actions, and inner thoughts.
- **Point of View:** First-person ("I") vs. third-person ("he/she/they") narration.
- **Theme:** The underlying message or moral of the story.

Analysis of Selected Prose Works

Work & Author	Core Theme	Plot Summary & Key Conflict
"Shooting an Elephant" (George Orwell)	The corrupting nature of imperialism.	Orwell, a police officer in colonial Burma, is forced to shoot an elephant against his will to avoid appearing foolish before a crowd of local citizens.
"An Astrologer's Day" (R.K. Narayan)	Irony, fate, and redemption.	An astrologer in a busy market is confronted by a man he once stabbed and left for dead. Using his wits and disguise, the astrologer escapes retribution.
"The Necklace" (Guy de Maupassant)	Pride, vanity, and social class.	Madame Loisel borrows a diamond necklace for a ball and loses it. She and her husband ruin their lives financially for ten years to replace it, only to discover the original was fake.

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