

## Subject Name & Code:

### ENGLISH FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION- BE02R00021

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#### Assignment 6: Language through Literature (CO5)

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##### Q.1 Critically appreciate the story *The Red Rice Granary* by Sudha Murthy.

Sudha Murthy's *The Red Rice Granary* is a poignant narrative that explores themes of rural life, traditional values, and the often-overlooked dignity of labor. The story centers around an elderly village woman, Kamala, who owns a granary of rare red rice—a symbol of heritage, sustenance, and cultural identity.

##### Critical Appreciation:

1. **Characterization:** Kamala is portrayed with empathy and depth. Her resilience, simplicity, and unwavering connection to the land stand in contrast to the modern, urban mindset represented by the narrator. Through Kamala, Murthy highlights the wisdom embedded in traditional ways of living.
2. **Symbolism:** The red rice granary serves as a powerful symbol of:
  - **Cultural heritage:** Preservation of indigenous agricultural practices.
  - **Self-reliance:** Kamala's independence despite economic hardships.
  - **Ecological wisdom:** Sustainable farming vs. commercial agriculture.
3. **Themes:**
  - **Clash of old and new:** The story subtly critiques rapid urbanization and the loss of agrarian values.
  - **Human dignity:** Kamala's pride in her work challenges stereotypes of poverty and illiteracy.
  - **Gender and agency:** An elderly woman is portrayed as a custodian of knowledge and resourcefulness.
4. **Narrative Style:** Murthy's prose is simple yet evocative, using vivid imagery of rural Karnataka. The tone is reflective and respectful, avoiding melodrama while delivering a strong social message.
5. **Relevance:** In an age of climate change and industrialization, the story urges readers to reconsider what constitutes "progress" and to value sustainable, community-centered living.

Overall, *The Red Rice Granary* is not just a story about rice; it is a tribute to forgotten livelihoods and a call to preserve the delicate balance between nature and human life.

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##### Q.2 Do you think Jim and Della's sacrifice was worth it in *The Gift of the Magi*? And why?

Yes, Jim and Della's sacrifices were worth it, but not for the material value of the gifts they exchanged. Their actions were worth it because they demonstrated the depth of their love and selflessness—the true "gift" in the story.

##### Reasons:

1. **Symbol of Love:** Each sold their most prized possession to buy something valuable for the other. Della sold her hair to buy a chain for Jim's watch; Jim sold his watch to buy combs for Della's hair. The irony underscores that their love is far more precious than any object.

2. **Selflessness:** Their sacrifices were made without hesitation or regret, highlighting a marital bond rooted in generosity rather than materialism.
3. **Moral Insight:** The story concludes that they are “the wisest” of all gift-givers, like the Magi who gave gifts to the infant Jesus. Their wisdom lies in understanding that the greatest gifts are those of the heart.
4. **Enduring Lesson:** While the gifts became useless in a practical sense, the act of giving enriched their relationship and left readers with a timeless message about the nature of true love and sacrifice.

Thus, the worth of their sacrifice is measured not in utility, but in the purity of their intentions and the strengthening of their emotional bond.

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### Q.3 What does the title, *The Gift of the Magi*, signify about the true meaning of the gifts in the story?

The title *The Gift of the Magi* alludes to the biblical Magi (the Three Wise Men) who brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the infant Jesus. O. Henry uses this allusion to redefine what makes a gift truly valuable.

#### Significance:

1. **Wisdom in Giving:** The Magi were wise not because their gifts were expensive, but because they were symbolic and given with reverence. Similarly, Jim and Della’s gifts are wise because they represent selfless love.
2. **Sacrificial Nature:** The Magi’s journey was long and arduous, just as Jim and Della’s sacrifices were personally costly. True giving involves personal loss for the benefit of another.
3. **Spiritual Over Material:** The title elevates the story from a simple ironic tale to a parable about the spirit of giving. The “gift” is not the watch chain or the combs, but the love and sacrifice behind them.
4. **Ironic Contrast:** While the Magi’s gifts were useful and fitting, Jim and Della’s gifts become useless in a practical sense. This irony highlights that the true value lies in the intention, not the utility.

In essence, the title frames the story as a modern-day fable about the wisdom of giving from the heart, rather than from the purse.

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### Q.4 What does the man's "world-renowned nose" symbolize in the story?

In literature, a “world-renowned nose” often symbolizes:

1. **Identity and Distinctiveness:** It sets the character apart physically, making them memorable and often defining how others perceive them.
2. **Pride and Insecurity:** Such a prominent feature can be a source of both pride (uniqueness) and deep insecurity (fear of ridicule).
3. **Perception and Insight:** Symbolically, a large nose can represent heightened perception—the ability to “sniff out” truth, danger, or opportunity.
4. **Social Judgment:** It may reflect themes of superficiality, where society focuses on external appearances rather than inner worth.

If the reference is to a specific character (like Cyrano), the nose symbolizes his brilliance and wit overshadowed by self-doubt about his appearance, ultimately critiquing societal prejudices.

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**Q.5 What do you think was behind the door on the right? And whether the end of *The Lady or the Tiger* is justified according to you?**

In Frank R. Stockton's *The Lady or the Tiger*, the story deliberately ends without revealing whether the princess directs her lover to the door with the lady (whom he would marry) or the tiger (which would kill him).

**What was behind the door on the right?**

The story does not provide an answer, leaving it to the reader's interpretation. However, based on the princess's jealous and semi-barbaric nature—and her knowledge of the lady's identity—it is plausible she chose the tiger. She would rather see him dead than with another woman. Yet, her love for him might also lead her to save his life, even at the cost of her own heartbreak.

**Is the ending justified?**

Yes, the ambiguous ending is artistically and thematically justified because:

1. **Engages the Reader:** It forces readers to confront their own judgments about human nature, love, jealousy, and morality.
2. **Reflects the Story's Theme:** The tale is about the conflict between passion and reason, barbarism and civilization. A definitive ending would simplify this complexity.
3. **Emphasizes Choice:** The princess's dilemma mirrors life's unpredictable and often morally ambiguous decisions.
4. **Open-ended Realism:** Not all stories have clear resolutions; the ending mirrors the uncertainty of real-life emotional conflicts.

Thus, while frustrating for those seeking closure, the ending is a deliberate narrative device that makes the story enduring and thought-provoking.