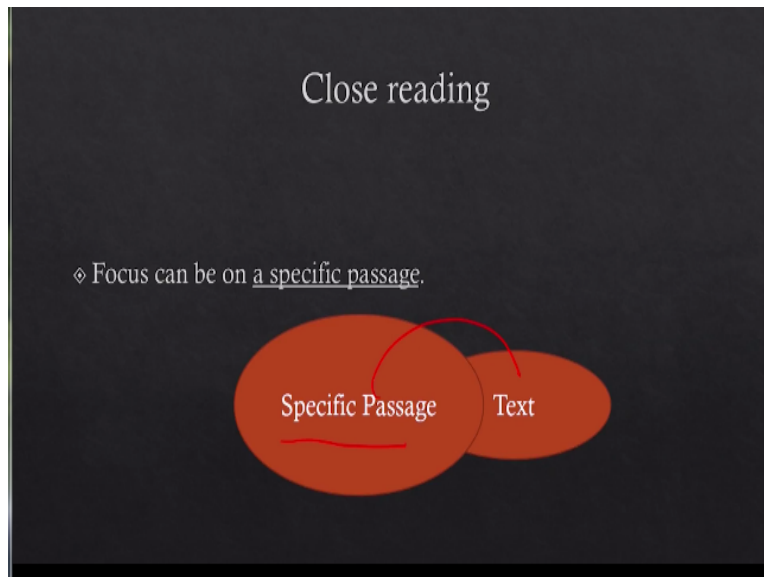


**Short Fiction in Indian Literature**  
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**Department of Humanities & Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology-Madras**

**Lecture-06**  
**Close reading Kamala Das' "Summer Vacation"**

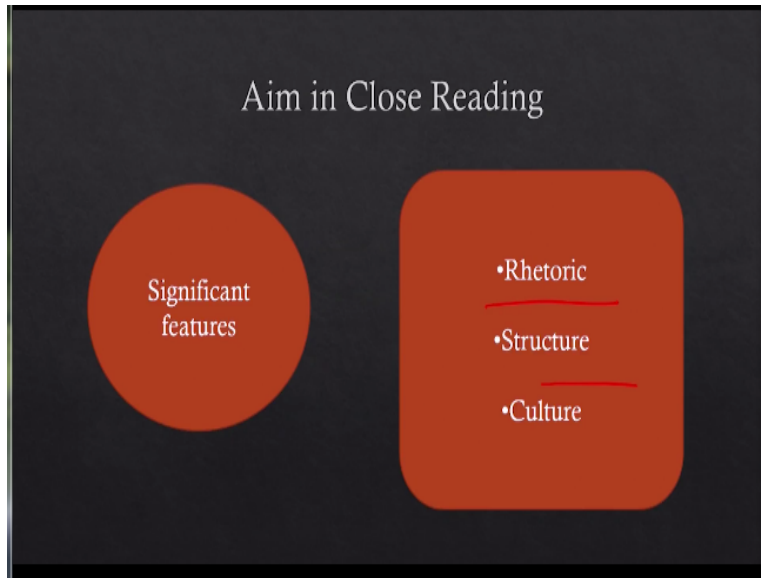
Hello and welcome to this lecture, I have titled this lecture close reading in Kamala Das's summer vacation. So, what I am going to do at the beginning is to offer a quick guideline on how to do close reading with the literary text.

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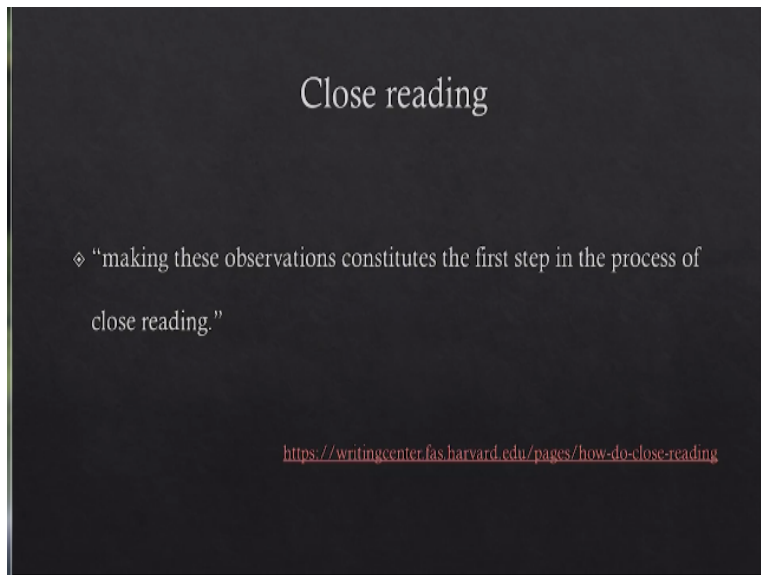
So, let me begin with offering some cues or guidelines as to how exactly to proceed with close reading. In close reading your focus can be on a specific passage and see how this specific passage relates to the text as a whole in terms of the major concerns that the work is trying to discuss and elaborate on. So, the specific attention could be on a particular passage or a particular set of passages as well. We can also look at the entire text really very closely but that is not usually done.

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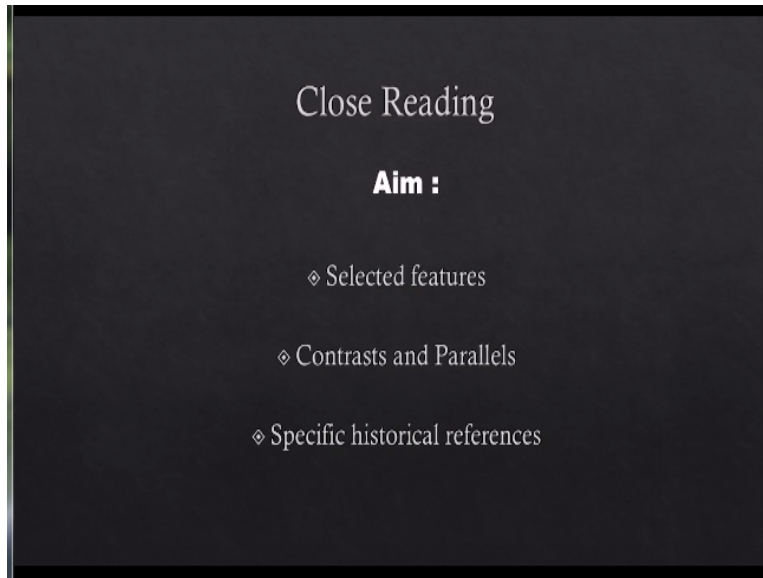
Now the aim in close reading is to look at significant features of a literary work, the significant features can include rhetoric, structural aspects and it can also refer to cultural references. So, one can look for details about all these elements in terms of the process of close reading.

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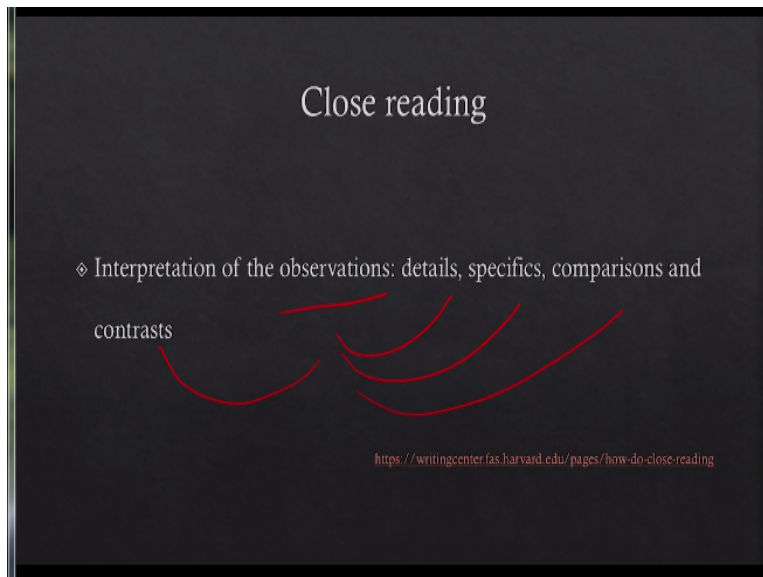
Making these observations, making these details collecting all these details constitutes the first step in the process of close reading. So, one has to gather all the important and specific features, one is interested in the process of close reading. And as I said one can pick up on the structural aspects say for example how plotting is done or how exactly a particular cultural event is referenced in a short story.

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Now in close reading the aim in terms of the aim with regard to this lecture features one can look at contrast and parallels and as I said specific historical references can also be studied closely in a particular passage.

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Now close reading does not simply involved collection of data, data in relation to elements of structure or elements of culture or history or Rhetoric. It involves an interpretation of close interpretation of the observations and these observations include all the details, the specifics, the comparisons and the contrast one is able to notice in a particular passage. So, once you collect all these details and specifics you need to interpret them, apply your mind and apply your rationale and see what they suggest in terms of the larger agenda of the text.

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Close reading

- ◇ “And, as with inductive reasoning, close reading requires careful gathering of data (your observations)
- ◇ and careful thinking about what these data add up to.”

Specifics to Broad Comments/ideas

<https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/how-do-close-reading>

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And as would inductive reasoning close reading requires casual gathering of data, your observations and the more important thing is casual thinking about what these data add up to. So, we need to process the information once they have been collected and what is the meaning of inductive reasoning and inductive reasoning we move from specifics, from specific information from specific detail to making broad comments coming up and brought ideas and making generalisations from these specific informations. So, close reading is crucial for us to make certain assumptions about a particular work of art.

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Close reading

- ◇ annotate the text when you read
- ◇ "Annotating" means underlining or highlighting key words and phrases

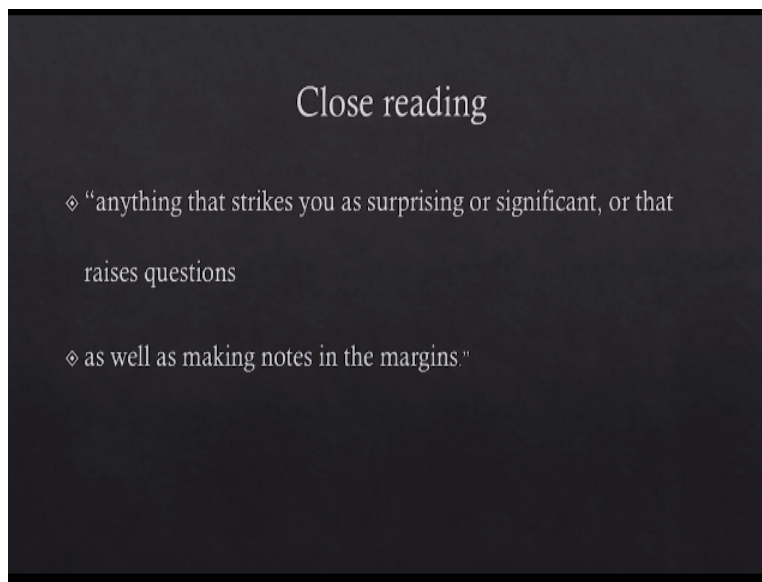
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Now what is the best way to go about in terms of close reading, please pick up a pencil and start annotating the text when you read it, what do we mean by annotating. Annotating means underlying or highlighting key words and phrases, so just mark these interesting or significant pieces of text that you come across in an extract. Because these will be the raw material with which you work in order to form larger opinions or ideas about that particular passage.

And then you will be able to connect that set of information to the larger text as a whole and its placement in the general society itself, if you want to do that.

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So, anything that strikes you as interesting or important or curious or anything that kind of puzzles you or makes you question it can be annotated. And we can also make certain notes in the margins our responses to certain events or to certain comments will also be helpful when we assess that particular passage that we are close reading and the entire text in which that passage occurs. Such a process of close reading for makes us pay really close attention to lines of text.

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## Close reading

- ◇ Such a process forces us to pay close attention
- ◇ but we also begin to think with the author about the evidence
- ◇ critical to the writing process

And we also began to think like an author what do we mean by that to begin to think like an author is to think about all the evidences that an author has in his or her mind to make certain comments. So, like an author we kind of make tracks to get and the basis the you know the evidence or the data that the author has come up with in order to make certain comments in the particular passage in a text.

And once you think like an author it also implies that you will also be thinking like a really good critical writer. Because you are always already thinking about the writing process too because when you start writing as I mention in one of my previous lectures. So, we need to come up with justifications or evidences to prove a point. So, we always already need to think about evidence that is behind certain claims or arguments in our text.

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## Close reading

◇ “Look for patterns in the things you've noticed about the text—  
repetitions, contradictions, similarities.”

The another important thing one that I particularly like is to look for patterns in the things you have noticed about in the text or in the particular passage that you are chosen for a close reading. Look for repetitions this is very interesting thus the same kind of colour get repeated or reference in a particular text or short story or novel do we get a lot of contradictions, contrary elements in a text .

For example the narrator make may make a claim about a particular character and you know and the reader who has bought this opinion of the narrator will be looking for justification of that particular understanding about a character within the novel or short story. And instead of that if we get totally contrary opinion then of course we will be surprise.

So, instead of then instead of the character performing what the narrator has told that he would perform. If he has perform something else there we have a contradiction as this similarities so to speak. And you can also look for similarities in terms of events or in terms of behaviour or in terms of characterisations. So, all these will help you to martial you know evidence in order to make a larger claim or thesis in your analytical process.

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## Close reading

◇ “Ask questions about the patterns you've noticed—especially how and why.”

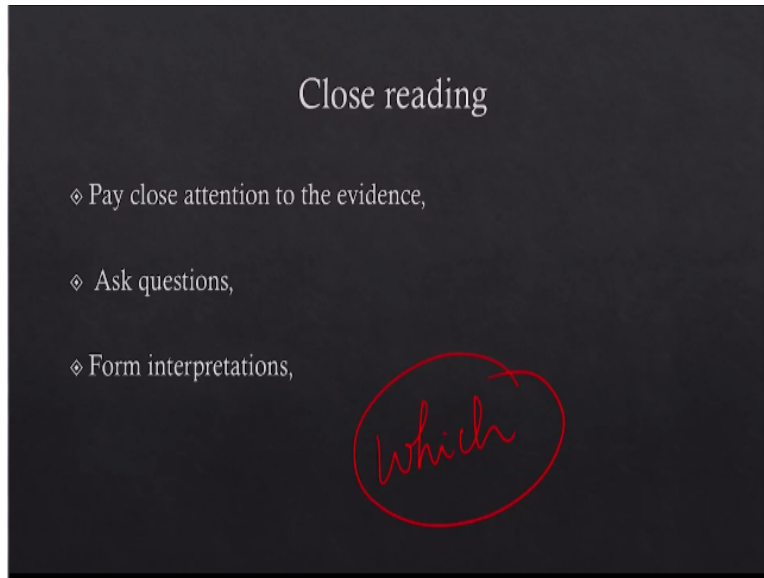
<https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/how-do-close-reading>

And the other important thing to do when you close read is to ask questions about the patterns that you are notice. So, asking questions is not an end in itself it is just the beginning of the process because we are trying to find out answers to these questions about interesting things that happen or appear in a story or a novel. And only when you find some answers to your questions, you will have formed full-fledged opinions, full-fledged arguments about a a particular short story or a particular character in a short story.

So, you need to ask these questions such as how and why, why does a particular character behave in the ratio he does. How does a particular thing happen in the way it did happen why not in some other ways. So, always look for the rationale or the reasoning behind the or the motivations behind the characters behaviour.

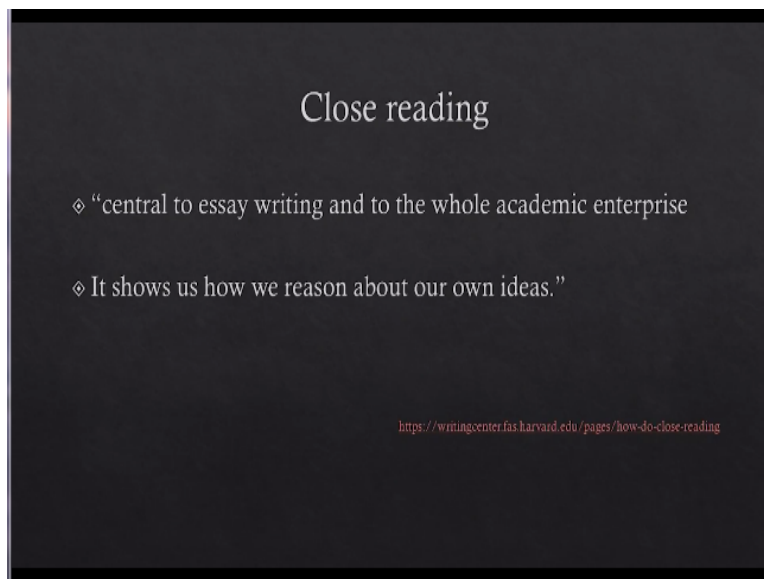
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Also once you have collected the evidence pay close attention to that and as I said ask questions about the evidence that you are gathered and try to come up with the different kinds of interpretations about the evidence that you are gathered. And see which one is the most likely interpretation which one is the most sound interpretation among the various judgements or analysis that you come up with and see which one is more full proof.

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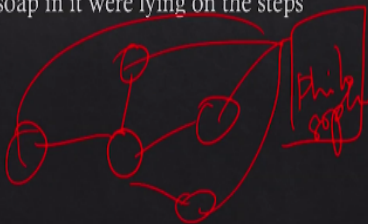
Close reading is very very important to this process of literary criticism and to the process of essay writing and in fact to the whole academic enterprise it kind of gives us a window into how we form opinions about her own how we form judgements about certain characters and text and novels and works of literature. So, the close reading is the work shop in which ideas are kind of

are kind of attracted and form and expressed. Now I want to apply these ideas about close reading to a particular passage from Kamaladas's summer vacation.

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Summer Vacation

◇ "Muthassi threw the dry leaf into the front verandah, and we went on to the bathing enclosure next to the pond. A towel and a red soap dish with a piece of soap in it were lying on the steps leading to the pond.



And see the various interpretations that come out of that process, so I am gonna take a brief passage at the beginning of the story and also make connections from this particular passage to other passages other incidents and other characters in the rest of the story. So, we can easily see how one thing leads to another and how all these points can be connected thematically and we can try to come up with a larger understanding of this fiction itself.

So, close reading of a particular passage is not an isolated process, it has as I said connections to various things, various ideas and all these ideas can be gathered into a larger understanding of the philosophy of this particular work of fiction okay.

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## Close reading

- ◊ Does not place the leaf carefully.
- ◊ 'I can use this as a strainer when I make oil out of scraped coconut kernel'
- ◊ The leaf is not precious commodity

Easily available;  
dispensable

So, I am going to read an excerpt that I am interested in, this excerpt seems very simple enough to begin with. But as you unpacked certain details from this passage you can see the connections to various incidents as I said. So, this is the point in the story when Muthassi who is the grandmother of Ammu and Ammu the 2 characters take a walk in the persons of the house.

And when they walk Muthassi notices gross like dry leaf and she picks it up and says that this leaf is going to be very useful for me to strain oil coconut oil, I think and she says that I am going to keep it. So, what happens the 2 characters they walk back to the house and Muthassi through the dry leaf into the front veranda and we went onto the bathing enclosure to the pond a towel and a red soap dish with a piece of soap in it will lying on the steps leading to the pond .

I am here in this particular couple of sentences, I am interested in this action of throwing the dry leaf. She does not place it carefully on the floor of the veranda, she just throws it and that I think is interesting. So, the fact that she does not throw keep the leaf carefully on the floor and this is the statement that I refer to earlier. She says that I can use this leaf as a strainer, assistive when I make oil out of scraped coconut kernel.

So, this is particular incident tells us this particular information tells us that she is a person who is constantly very productive if you notice the actions of Muthassi in the story, she is constantly

doing things. She will be picking up staffs she will be making wigs for oil lamps and here she is planning ahead as to what she is going to make with coconut kernels.

So, she has an use for everything that she notices around her, but she does not carefully save this leaf which tells us that this leaf is not a precious commodity, dry grass like leaves probably 10 or penny in the household of Muthassi. So, these leaves are easily available because the house is surrounded by trees that are references to plenty of trees around the house.

So, since it is easily available, it is also easily dispensable Muthassi is not going to be terribly worried of the leaf goes missing. So, the idea here is that something that is easily available is not carefully preserved and the attitude is what I want you to pay attention to because this attitude, the same attitude has connections with probably Muthassi's behaviour to Nani Amma when she frequently comes by the house asking for work .

The very that this Nani Amma is easily available you know to get this work done, to get this work of pounding rice done Muthassi's attitude towards her is slightly flip it in annoyed and other things.

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As I said I draw attention to Muthassi's behaviour the careless manner in which she talks to Nani Amma the condescending manner in which she behaves to Nani Amma because she comes by

the house often asking for rice to be pounded. So, that she will get some benefit out of that work is very very interesting see very simple thing as dry leaf and person who kind of relates to the leaf in a particular way can make us think about other things and characters in this work of fiction. Now let us go back to that extract and Muthassi and this little girl are in that bathing enclosure and on seeing the soap dish Muthassi exclaimed, I forgot that I had left that soap here.

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I am lucky the crow did not steal it. So, this is a very interesting statement in these here because there are 2 thing, 1 is to say I am lucky because the crow did not steal it probably because it is slightly difficult to get hold of it is soap or perhaps because Muthassi does not want to lose this commodity before it has been completely used. The other thing is the idea of stealing.

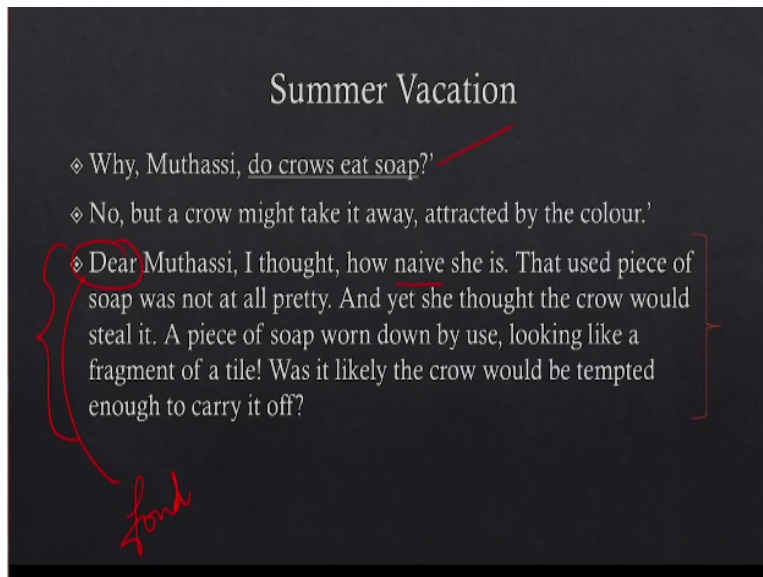
So, we have this element of foreshadowing mentioned here, foreshadowing is literary device that kinds of gives us a hint about the things that are going to happen later on in a text or work. So, the foreshadowing here is about the thieving, the stealing that Nani Amma would do later on in the story. So, the crow's stealing the probable stealing of the soap dish is an indication of the other more serious kind of stealing that Nani Amma would do later on in the story.

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So, again the idea of stealing and thieving reminds us as I said of the thieving of tamarinds from the vadakinni from the northern hall of Muthassi's house. So, there is a sort of connection here drawn between these 2 creatures within coats.

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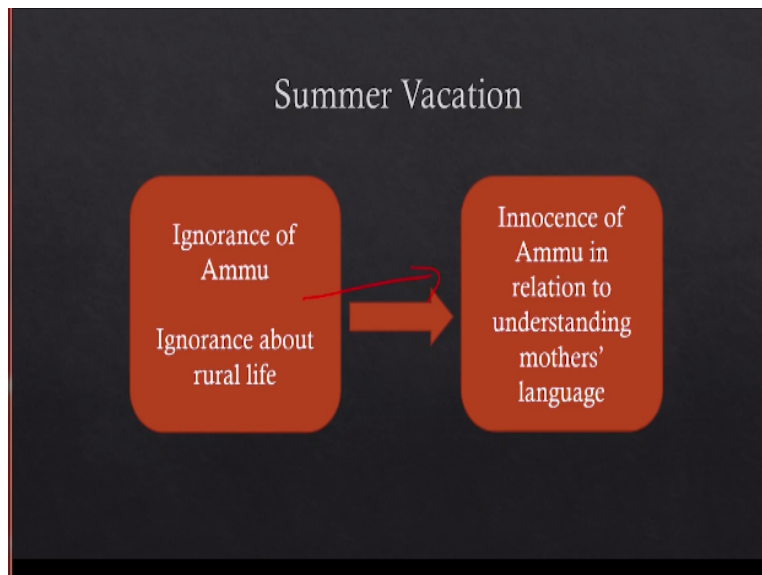


I will come back to that in a minute and the little girl asks why Muthassi, do crows eat soap? no, but a crow might take it away, attracted by the colour. This is a very interesting question on the part of a girl a city bred girl we can remember she goes to school in Calcutta. So, this question is slightly jarring in terms of the context of the girl and she says no, the crow might be attracted by it is colour and so it might take it away.

And this is reflection on the part of Ammu she does not spell this or she does not speak this out her grandmother she just thinks a certain things about the nature of Muthassi. She says dear Muthassi, so she is very fond of her even in her mentor recollection we can get a sense of that. So, this is suggest that she is very fond of her older grandmother.

Dear Muthassi I thought how naive she has, naive means innocent that used piece of soap was not at all pretty and yet she thought the crow would steal it, a piece of soap worn down by use looking like fragment of a tile was it likely the crow would be tempted in after carried out. So, she is surprised when her grandmother says that the crow might be tempted to carry of this piece of soap. Because it does not look attractive to Ammu, as I said this question the crows eat soap.

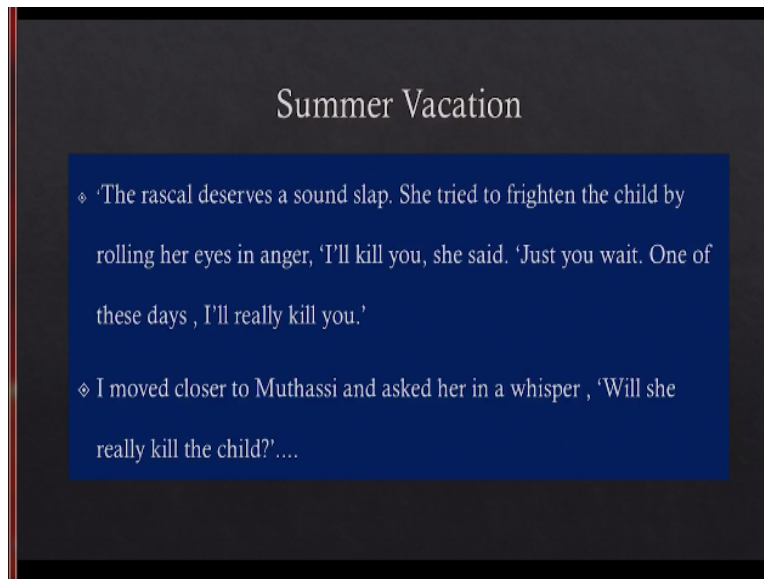
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That is very innocent ignorant question to ask by Ammu and it tells her a it helps ask that she is quite ignorant about the rural way of life, she is quite ignorant about the natural aspects. So, she is not very sure if crows would eat soap and this can be extrapolated to have connections with other areas where Ammu is innocent too. And we can think about and a very interesting incident where she is quite ignorant about how mother's would relates to their children.

And her innocence and ignorance comes through in that particular scene when she is totally clueless about the exaggerated scolding of a mother. So, this is the scene that I am talking about if you remember the scene.

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We have a group of village women who have come to visit Muthassi because they know that this girl from the city is there and probably they are coming by to welcome the girl. And they also together in a group and have a chat conversation and while that is happening one of the women has a baby and the baby starts crying and Muthassi says perhaps the baby is hungry.

And the mother says no, no he has just had a feed you know he is simply being difficult and the mother this is the quotation spoken by the mother. The mother says the rascal deserves a sound slap to try to frighten the child by rolling her eyes in anger, I will kill you she said just you await one of these days I will really kill you and Ammu she does not realise or notice the exaggeration in that you know in her manner in the way she threatens her little child.

So, she is slightly frighten and she moved closer to Muthassi and asked her in a whisper will she really kill the child. So, it is interesting to see that Ammu takes everything at face value here and that the point that I am trying to make that she is really innocent in certain areas.

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## Summer Vacation

- ◇ 'Will she kill that child?' I repeated.
- ◇ 'Who are you talking about?'
- ◇ 'That child's mother.'
- ◇ Muthassi burst out laughing...

No experience of  
mother's  
exaggerated  
usage of words  
while playing a  
child

And Muthassi does not understand Ammu's question so Ammu repeats will she kill that child, who are talking about asks Muthassi. The child's mother and Muthassi as soon as she understands Ammu is apprehension she burst out laughing. This is a very touching scene as well on 1 level it is very funny because she does not understand the truth behind the exaggerated words of the mother.

The mother is just trying to have some fun and Ammu does not understand that on another sense that she is this scene is very touching too. Because she has no clue as to have mother's would be have with their children. So, having this lack of experience is the reason for her set of questions. So, no experience of mother's exaggerated use of words while playing with her child. This information is the really shocking as well as moving because of the lack of a mother's love that Ammu receives.

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## Summer Vacation

◆ The fat woman asked me in a horrified voice, 'Ammu, would mothers ever kill their own children? No one loves a child more than its own mother does.'

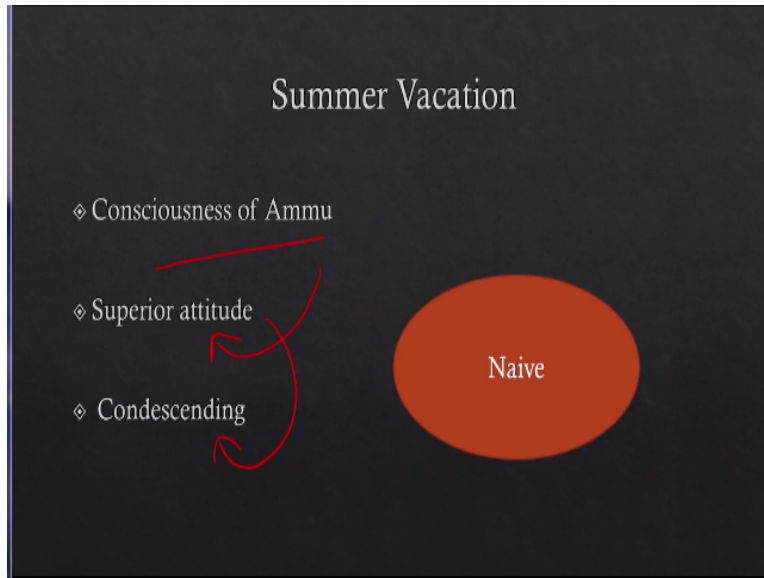
*Ammu*  
"Poor child! How can she know?"

Reinforced by an older woman

The fat women asked me how horrified voice Ammu would mothers ever kill their own children? No one loves a child more than it is own mother does. So, the women after she understands Ammu's questioning she is horrified just horrified to learn that Ammu will think that she was murder her child, her own children and she says no mother would do that no one loves child more than it is own mother.

And we all know that where why Ammu asks this question and of the other women who is the groups says poor child making a reference to Ammu, poor child how can she know because she has no experience. So, this lack of mothers love and the ignorance cost by that is reinforced in this particular scene and as well as by this older women who asks this question.

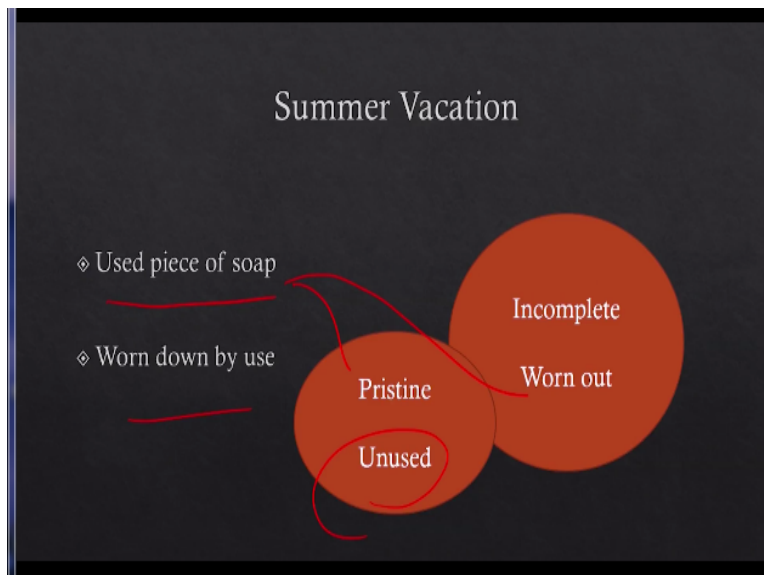
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Now this let me go back to that earlier ignorance I was talking about the ignorance and innocence that she reveals when she talks about does when she talks about does the crow eat soap and because it tells you that the naivety that she talks about in terms of a grandmother is actually her own naivety that she is revealing there and this consciousness of Ammu that we see in that short extract reveals Ammu's superior attitude.

And attitude probably stemming from her city life and it also tells of that she is very condescending as well when she asses Muthassi character and understanding when she talks about the potential theft of a soap in the bathing enclosure.

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Now I want to go back again to that extract and do a little bit disclosed reading again the soap there in that soap dish is an used is a used piece of soap. And it is worn down by use, so these are 2 interesting characters takes about the objects there. The other in other words they are not pristine and they are worn out okay. So, if it is unused it would be pristine and the point that I am trying to make here is that the soap has been used.

The soap is incomplete and the soap is worn out in other words it is not pristine and Ammu is wondering why a crow would steal something which is not pristine and something which is has been used. And it is interesting to see the she is applying human logic here to the crows behaviour.

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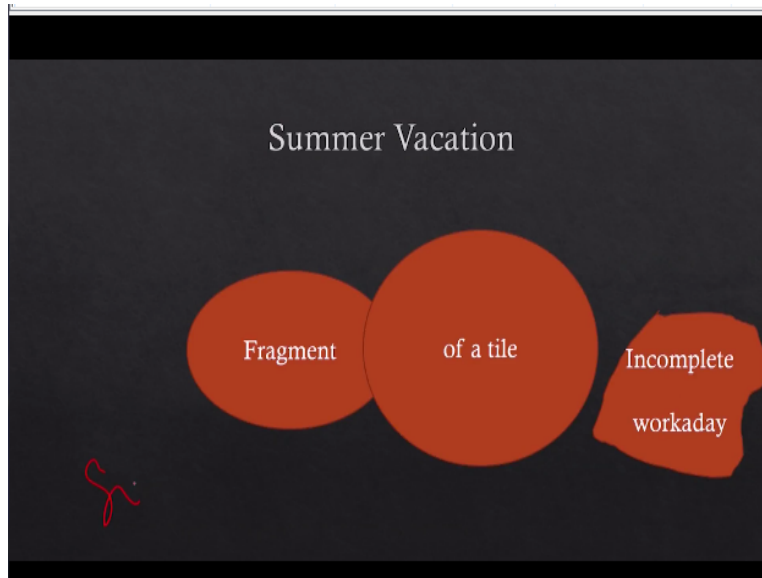
Summer Vacation

- ◆ And yet she thought the crow would steal it.
- ◆ Was it likely the crow would be tempted enough to carry it off?

Ammu: Subjective assessment  
Her view =others' view

And yet she thought the crow would steal it and she cannot understand that how Muthassi would think a crow would steal this incomplete used piece of soap was it likely that the crow would be tempted enough to carried this soap off. So, here we can see a very subjective assessment of the scene here, her view is one that does not take into consideration, others views that is something we should know Ammu does not care about the logic of the crow. But she all cares and has experience of is that the soap is not attractive, it has been used, so it cannot possibly be attractive to a creature.

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Now the other thing to notice about that extract is that soap is compared the used piece of soap is compared to a fragment of a tile . And she says and it is not even a complete tile, fragment, a bit of tile that is used for perhaps for flooring or sometimes used in groves. So, it is broken and again the idea that it is not complete it is not pristine, it has been used, it has been worn down, worn out.

So, even the comparison there we enforces our perception of Ammu's understanding of something that has been used. So, it is incomplete it is work the day in other words it is ordinary, so that is what and that is what and that makes it less attractive to Ammu and therefore she thinks probably to the crow as itself. And she thinks that her grandmother Muthassi is wrong to think that a crow would steal it.

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## Summer Vacation

- ◊ Nani Amma's theiving has one dimension for Ammu.
- ◊ Nani Amma offers her another dimension

Rich and the Poor

Crime becomes  
complicated

Now we can extrapolate Ammu's assessment of this scene in the bathing enclosure to another scene in this story when she judges Nani Amma's thieving. So, Ammu has just one perception about that particular incident, she has 1 particular dimension for the theft that Nani Amma commence in her grandmother's house. However when Ammu pushes this women into a corner and offers harsh comments she constantly if you remember this scene attracts Nani Amma.

And says that you are just a petty thief you probably should not come back to the house at all. And words to that effect when pushed Nani Amma offers another dimension to the thieving that she does. In that household that another dimension is that there are rich, there are poor in the world something that Ammu does not seem to realise and with these 2 categories, polar categories at play in society. Then time itself becomes complicated, it becomes multidimensional with such inequities in society, so that seems to be hinted in that scene.

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## Summer Vacation

- ◊ 'So Muthassi, you think the crow knows what is pretty?'
- ◊ 'Of course. Is there any doubt? The crow has a keen eye for beauty. Otherwise why does it carry off the small oil bowls? Ammu, birds are very intelligent. They have more common sense and knowledge than human beings.'

Close Reading

So, let us go back to that extract again I am what I am trying to do here and what I hope that you are following is that I am making certain connections from this bit of close reading that I am doing on a passage and I am making connections to other incident and other characterisations through this particular passage. And that will tell you how a passage can have a global significance in connection with the text that one is reading.

So, to follow on with that extract, so Ammu asks. So, Muthassi, you think the crow know what is pretty? Of course, is there any doubt? The crow has a keen eye for beauty. Otherwise why does it carry of this small oil bowls, Ammu birds are very intelligent they have more common sense and knowledge than human beings. So, the grandmother here offers not only her opinion but also her evidence for that opinion.

And here we see a kind of a closed reading examples, so it is speak because the opinion is being justified with specific evidence and that Muthassi has gathered through her experience while living in this household.

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### Summer Vacation

◇ So Muthassi, you think the crow knows what is pretty?

Doesn't think highly of her grandmother's judgement

Queries about the quality of the other's knowledge

Crow + Other

So, **so** Muthassi you think the crow knows what is pretty and that question itself is very very interesting. Because there are 2 things, 1 is it shows us that Ammu does not think highly of her grandmother's judgment there is a slight condescended there in that question. It is a very very interesting question and it also questions the quality of others knowledge as well the other being the crow here.

So, and the crow can stand for any other in the society, anybody who is not the self who is not the speaker. So, Ammu questions not only Muthassi understanding she also questions the understanding of other beings in the society around her.

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### Summer Vacation

◇ The Grandmother offers evidence and her prior experience

◇ Small oil bowls stolen

◇ "keen eye for beauty"

Sharp aesthetic eye

"Great perception"

"Highly developed"

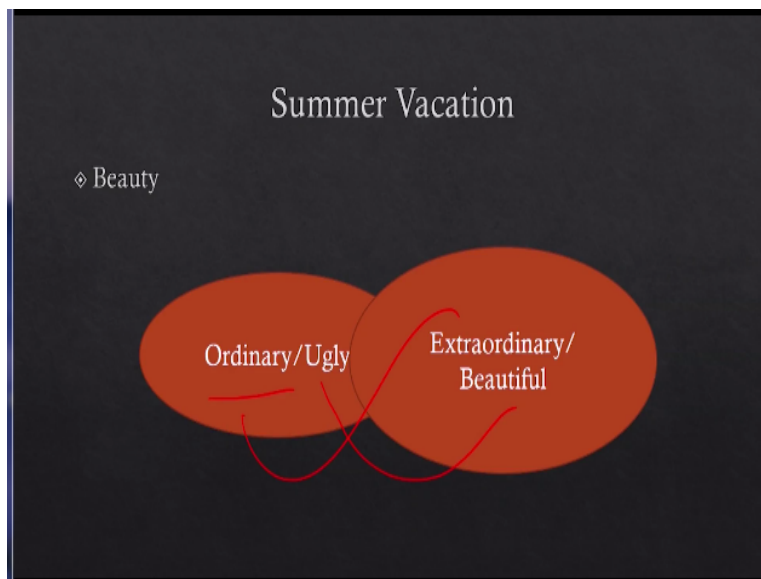


Now as I said the grandmother not only offers her opinions, she offers hard evidence for her opinions, her claims and her claims are you know are something that she has just he has been trucked through her experience of the world in that big house and she is offers the example of small oil bowls that were stolen by the crows. These bowls need not necessarily be very attractive to human beings.

But they may be very attractive to these crows who steal them and it is very interesting that the grandmother says that crows have a keen eye for beauty very keen eye for beauty which means they have sharp aesthetic appreciation what do we mean by the word keen. The word keen means something of great perception or highly developed sense and these quality which are usually used for human beings.

Generally used by human beings are used here in the context of a crow and that is very interesting. Because the grandmother uses these positive qualities to a being that is not human. Now everybody knows that beauty isn't the eye of the beholder that is the general understanding appreciate understanding almost.

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And so what is ordinary to us maybe extraordinary to others, what is ugly to some maybe may appear beautiful to some other kinds of people. So, beauty is subjective not objective.

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## Summer Vacation

◇ 'Nani Amma bowed her head. She stroked her daughter's hair and smiled. I was fascinated by the iron ring she wore on her right hand, a ring with intricate work on it. She wore a shabby mundu and torn blouse. And yet, I thought, she was lucky to be wearing such an unusual ring.'

So, let us make some connections from this assessment of beauty, the concept of beauty that is developed through this soap dish to another example at some other point in the story where Ammu makes a remark about another object and says that object is very very attractive. So, this is the scene that I want us to take a closer look. Nani Amma bowed her head she does that by the way because she is being recommended by Muthassi for coming to the house quite frequently to ask for work and Muthassi is not best place.

So, Nani Amma bowed her head, she stroked her daughter's head and smiled it is a very gentle action here a very emotional gesture there and she smiled again a very interesting gesture that I will come back to unpack in a minute. I was fascinated the eye here is Ammu, Ammu was fascinated by the iron ring she wore on her right hand on Nani Amma's right hand.

So, Nani Amma is wearing that iron ring the ring with intricate work on it, interesting phrase she wore a shabby mundu and torn blouse and yet, I thought she was lucky to be wearing such an unusual ring very interesting last idea thus she was lucky to be wearing such an unusual ring.

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## Summer

- ◊ Intricate iron ring
- ◊ Ammu admires it
- ◊ Nani Amma is “lucky”, fortunate to possess it.

So, this intricate iron ring captures the attention of Ammu just as a piece of red soap might capture the attention of a crow or just as an oil bowl might capture the attention of a crow. And this intricate iron ring makes Ammu admire it greatly and she thinks that Nani Amma is really fortunate to wear this ring, fortunate to be the possessor of this ring and we can even kind of detect a slight tinge of jealousy there perhaps in Ammu’s thoughts.

So, the word intricate is very interesting because it is a just complexity and complexity in art objects imply that maybe they are higher kinds of artistic objects there is a higher value placed on complex artistic things in our society generally.

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## Summer Vacation

Appreciates what is seen as “higher” art?  
“unusual ring”

Possessor of beauty is lucky ?

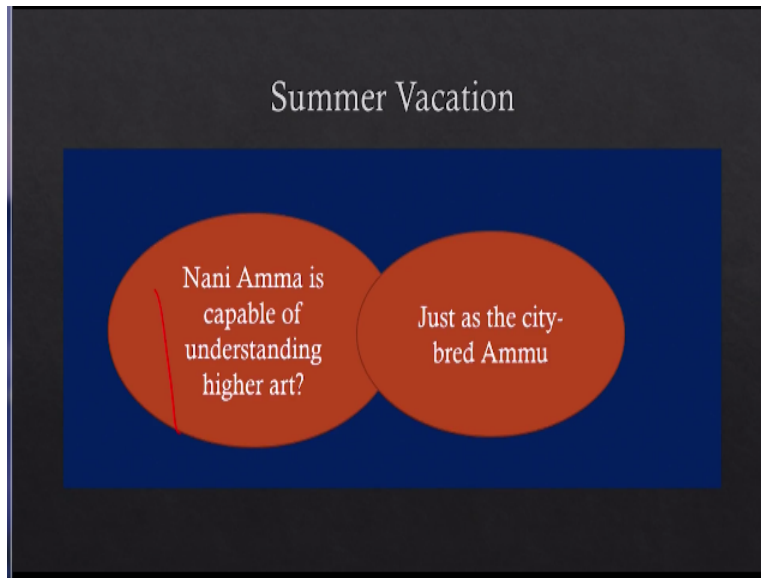
So, what are the questions that we need to ask or the question that we should ask about this art object should we see that Nani Amma or Ammu appreciates this higher art. And this as the text points are is an unusual ring it is a uncommon ring, it is a strange ring and just because she is wearing something an unusual, uncommon and higher should the possessor of that thing we consider as lucky, so these are some of the questions that come to our mind.

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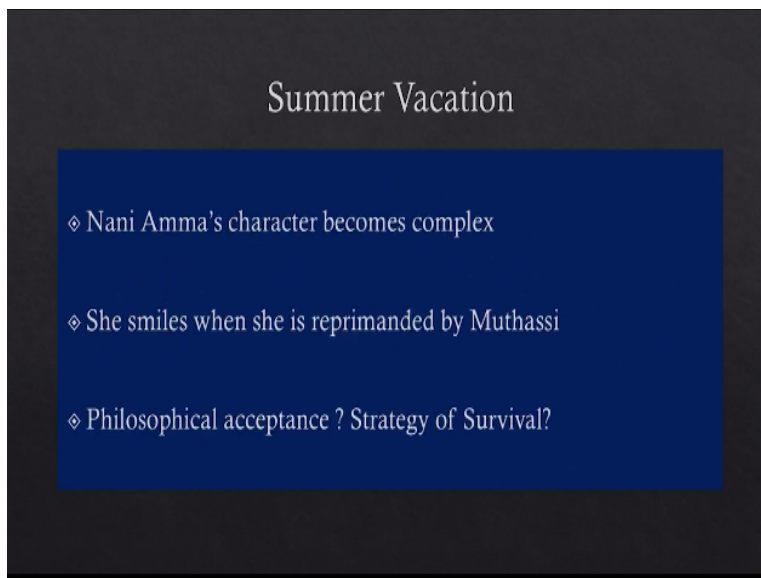
And again should we see or should we ask this question is Nani Amma, the poor woman who comes to beg for work is lucky to have such a piece of higher art is it fortunate she could be poor but she is lucky because she is possessor of such high artistic objects. And the other question that comes up again is Nani Amma capable of understanding higher art.

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This question is a loaded question that I am asking here just as the city bred Ammu she perhaps is also appreciative of this beautiful thing.

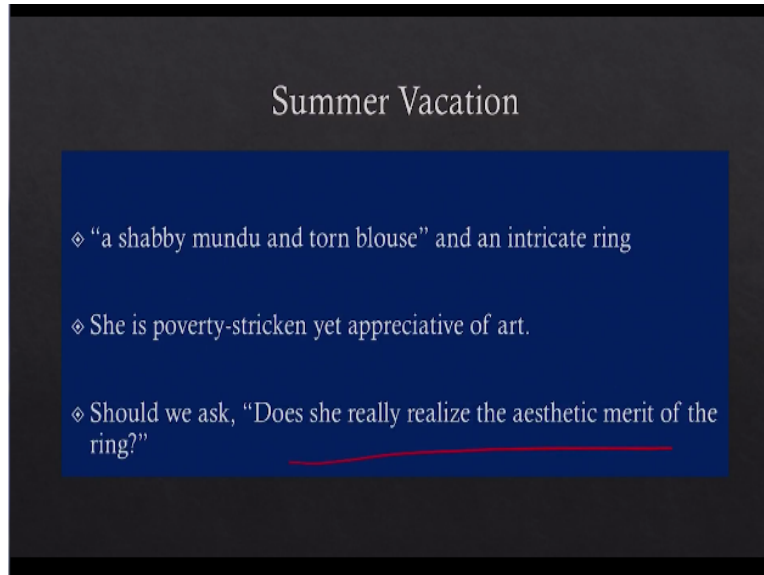
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Now after we pay attention to this complex ring Nani Amma's character becomes a little bit complex. So, we have several things here to make an assessment about her character she smiles when she is reprimanded by Muthassi what sort of reaction is that is also an unusual reaction perhaps it is a kind of a philosophical acceptance of difficulties that come by her or is it simply a strategy of survival you know.

The higher ups will constantly snap it to you, shout it to you, fine fault with you, you just accepted and get along. Otherwise how exactly are you going to find work in this world especially if you are poor. So, as I said the characterisation becomes complex when certain details are noticed and evaluated.

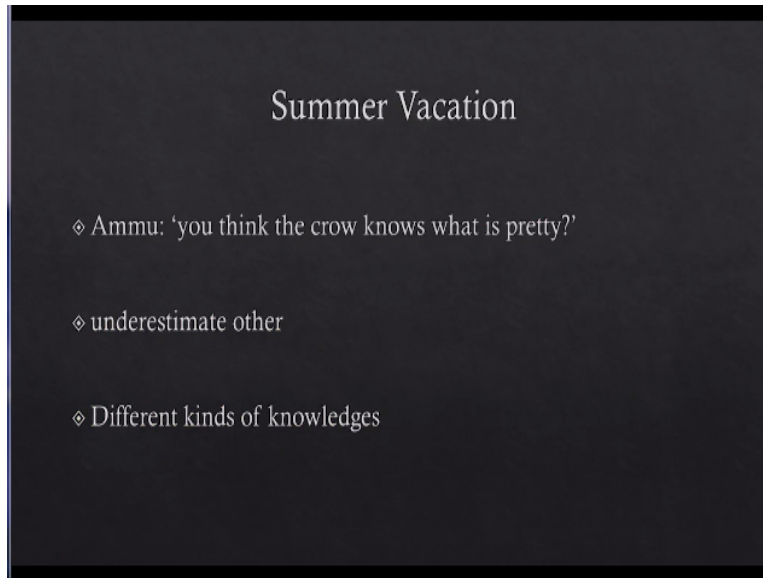
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So, as I said she is the owner of a shabby mundu and torn blouse and an intricate ring that the city bred girl is appreciative of and yet she is also very poverty-stricken of our stricken and can as I said can we ask this question could a poverty-stricken women be also appreciative of higher art. So, again this question that I ask earlier does she really realise the aesthetic merit of the ring.

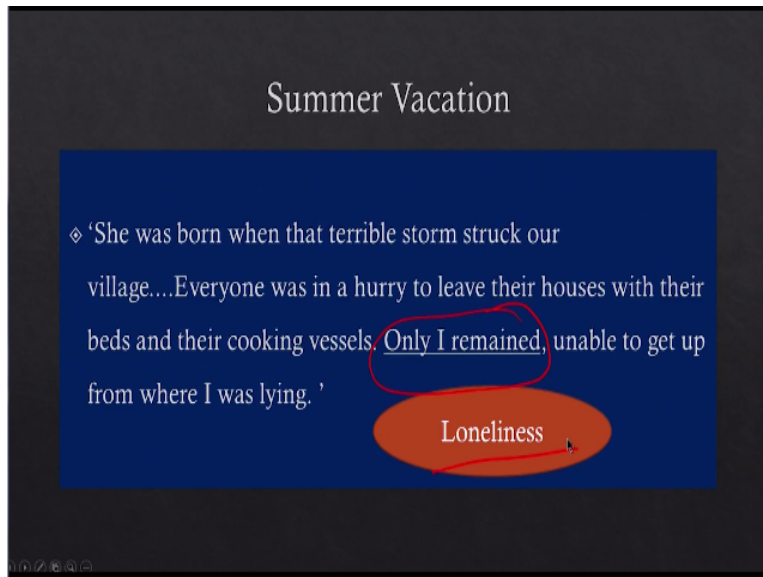
This question is comparable to the other question that Ammu ask about the crow, do you think that the crow knows what is pretty. So, these 2 questions have a similar ring in terms of it meaning.

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So, these 2 questions do one thing if we ask them they underestimate the other they do not offer the quality of thought to the other. And we should avoid making such questions we should avoid asking such questions because people are capable of different kinds of knowledge's they are made up of uneven kinds of knowledges.

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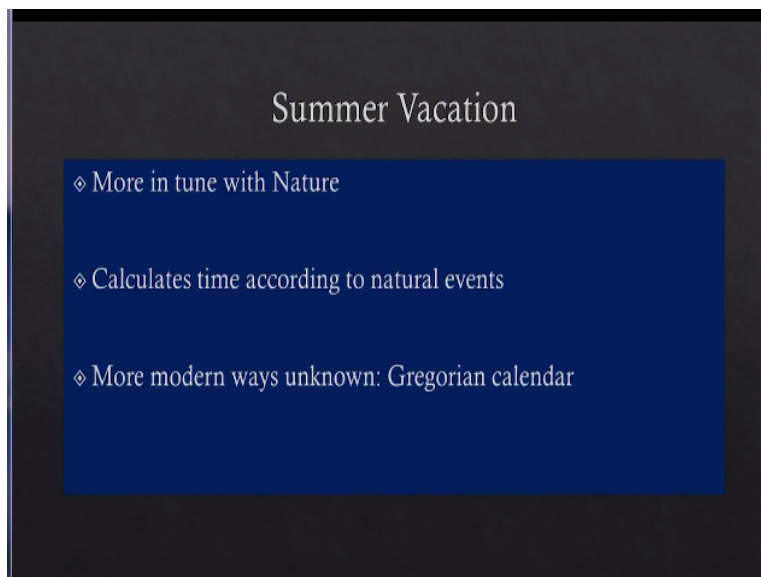
And I will give you 1 example of the uneven kind of knowledge that Nani Amma has for example when she visits the big house with Muthassi they visits the big house with her young daughter and Muthassi asks how old is your daughter. And Nani Amma responds by saying she was born when that terrible storm struck her village everyone was in a hurry to leave their houses with their beds and their cooking vessels.

Only I remain unable to get up from where I was lying, so it is very interesting that when she is asked a question. She does not give a particular number a very brief answer Nani Amma paints the picture here to that question, she was born on that particular naive when there is a big storm and things were topsy-turvy everybody was in a hurry to leave but I being heavily pregnant I was struck to where I was .

And this phrase only I remained immobile when everybody with mobile around me in the village is place kind of offers an interesting contrast here between this poor lonely women and the rest of the societies. So, as I said it kind of emphasises the loneliness, the isolation the suffering that one undergoes especially at a difficult moment in once personal journey is highlighted here.

And we can also speculate on further and ask is she a single mother, is she a widow does not she have a husband companion or a family member to take care of the family. So, all these questions are generated through these few ideas that she throws out in the context of the birth of her little girl.

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So, in other thing that is very striking about that particular passage is that like Muthassi Nani Amma is also in tune with nature. So, that particular example that I just read out shows that when asked about the age of the daughter she offers a natural clarity as a reference for that. So, she



calculates time according to natural happenings in the village even though there are other more modern ways of accounting for time, the passage of time.

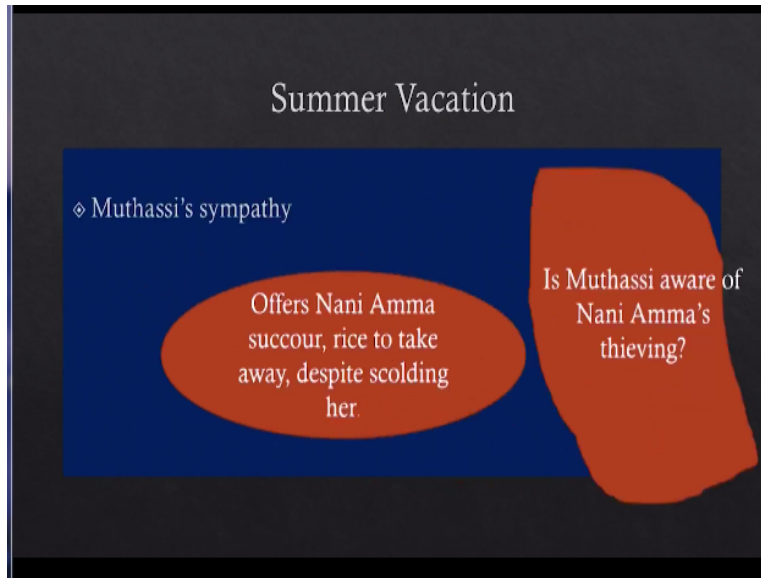
She does not seem to follow the Gregorian calendar that most people follow today or most people followed even back in those days. So, this snip it of information that we get about Nani Amma changes the perspective that we have had you know that we get when a when we do a very brief reading of the story. So, close reading does open up windows into the motivations, the social backdrop and the background. And the various character motivations of the people that litter the fictional landscape.

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Now through this process of close reading I have established a connection between Nani Amma and the crow. These 2 figures are the others, the others people who are outside the pale of this high society made up of Muthassi, Ammu and Ammu's father. So, how does this high society asses these 2 representatives of the other, the category of the other.

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Now we need to remember that even though Muthassi has reprehended Nani Amma for coming by the house quite often, she is not hesitant to offer succour to Nani Amma. So, if we notice at the end of the story she does offer Nani Amma the rice to take home despite being harsh to her to a certain extent when she meets her. So, considering this should we also speculate and ask this interesting question of does Muthassi know about Nani Amma's thieving attitude, is this the first time that Nani Amma has done something of this kind.

Or has it being a frequent occurrence something that Muthassi turns a blind eye to, so these questions are quite logical to ask in the set of information that we collect from the rest of the story especially in relation to the attitude of the grandmother who seems to have a rough exterior but deep down hidden inside there is a soft corner that she tries to kind of hide and not reveal to those around her, thank you for watching, I will catch up with you in the next session.