**SEMESTER-II SUMMARIES**

**Unit - 1**

**TELEVISION**

**About the Poet:**

Roald Dahl was born in Wales to Norwegian parents. He served as a fighter pilot during World War II and later became one of the most beloved children's authors of the 20th century. His storytelling is characterized by vivid characters, inventive plots, and a playful use of language. Dahl's works often highlight the importance of imagination and the joy of reading.

"Television," a poem by Roald Dahl, critiques the overuse of television and its negative impact on children. Roald Dahl (1916-1990) was a British author known for his imaginative and whimsical children's books, including "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" and "Matilda." His writing often combines dark humor with a strong moral message.

**About the prose**

In "Television," Dahl laments the modern tendency to allow children to watch excessive amounts of television, suggesting it stifles their creativity and intelligence. The poem humorously urges parents to remove their television sets and replace them with books to foster a love of reading in their children.

**Summary:**

“Television” is a poem written by Roald Dahl. He was a British novelist, short story writer, fighter pilot and screenwriter. Widely recognised as "one of the greatest storytellers for children of the 20" century". Dahl's books deal with fantasy and a make-believe world and are a thrilling mixture of the grotesque and the comic. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (1964) and Matilda (1988) are among his most popular children's novels that have also been made into films.He received several awards, including the Edgar Allan Poe Award (1954, 1959), World Fantasy Award for Life Achievement (1983), Children's Author of the Year Award (1990) and Millennium Children's Book Award (2000).

"Television" is one of Roald Dahl's best-known poems. Using his characteristic humor, Dahl criticizes children's addiction to television. The poem highlights the negative impact of television on young minds and warns that too much television can kill the imagination of children. Dahl also proposes reading books as a healthier alternative to watching television and advises parents to their children to grow up with healthy minds and healthy bodies. He is confident that once children overcome their initial resistance and discover the pleasures of reading, they will thank their parents for introducing them to the world of imagination.

The poem begins with advice. It is not to install the television sets at home. Dahl calls it an idiotic thing. Throughout the poem, he attempts to answer the question as to why television is an idiotic thing. The poet addresses the poem in a third person perspective as if trying to cajole the readers along with him. He says outright that the children should not be allowed anywhere near your television set. The speaker then goes to describe the reasons why it’s harmful as the kids do nothing but gape at the screen. He points this out as the first negative impact upon the kids from the television. The speaker continues listing his reasons as why one should avoid buying a television. He says the children do nothing but lounge about in front of the TV until their eyes pop out. Their intelligence and thinking capabilities are drained and they get addicted to the TV and might as well not have eyes if all they do is watch TV. He says that the kids get intoxicated on the ghastly junk of television shows instead of being an actual drunk. The speaker develops an understanding tone when he says that he knows the reason why the parents don’t chide their children when they are attached to their TV. It’s not because they are being bad parents but because the TV keeps them still. As long as the kids are watching TV, the

parents needn’t worry about anything and can go ahead with their work. The TV ensures the kids do not climb out the window sill or up to any mischief. The poet acknowledges the logic behind a parent's reasoning but still questions them whether it is worth it after all the bad things a TV does to their child. He soon explains the damages caused to children by watching television. It rots the sense in the head and destroys imagination, In short it hinders the children’s imagination. The poet then comes up with a solution on how to entertain the children without a television. The solution being reading books.The poet then goes on to explain the kinds of books that the children used to read. He aims to write in a way that will pique children's curiosity in picking up a book and exploring the world. The speaker discusses the fantastic tales of dragons, gypsies, queens, and whales, and how much nicer these worlds are than what is depicted on television. The speaker once brings back his initial plea by telling the parents to please throw away their TV set. He says initially it will be difficult but they must look past the bites and kicks from the children because eventually they become bored and seek the pleasures of reading. A parent should always want the best for their child and this is the only way to ensure the best. The speaker ends the poem on a note of optimism by saying that the day will come when the kids will eventually start reading books. The children will no longer seek the comforts of a TV but lounge in the fantasy world of books. Though this process might take time and the parents might get unhappy or angry remarks from their children, eventually they will love you more for what you did.”

**THE FRINGE BENEFITS OF FAILURE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF IMAGINATION.**

**About the Author:**

J.K. Rowling, born Joanne Rowling on July 31, 1965, in Yate, England, is a globally renowned British author best known for her "Harry Potter" series. The "Harry Potter" books have sold over 500 million copies worldwide, making Rowling one of the best-selling authors of all time. The series has also been adapted into a highly successful film franchise. Before her rise to literary fame, Rowling faced numerous personal and professional challenges, including financial struggles and rejection from multiple publishers. Her eventual success is often cited as a quintessential rags-to-riches story.

"The Fringe Benefits of Failure" is a commencement speech delivered by J.K. Rowling at Harvard University in 2008. The speech has garnered widespread acclaim for its insightful and poignant exploration of the themes of failure, imagination, and personal growth. Let's delve into the author, the background of the speech, and a summary of its key points.

**Background**

Rowling was invited to deliver the 2008 commencement address at Harvard University, an honor reflecting her status as a cultural and literary icon. The speech, titled "The Fringe Benefits of Failure, and the Importance of Imagination," drew from Rowling's own life experiences, particularly her early career struggles and her eventual success as an author. The speech resonated deeply with the graduates and has since been widely shared and discussed for its universal themes and practical wisdom.

**Summary:**

“The Fringe Benefits Of Failure and the Importance of Imagination'' is an excerpt from Rowling's commencement speech at Harvard University on June 5, 2008. Joanne Rowling (born 1965), best known as JK Rowling, is a British novelist, screenwriter and film producer. She is the author of the best-selling fantasy series Harry Potter, comprising seven books. Rowling's life is a classic rags-to-riches story. She is also one of Britain's most benevolent celebrities, donating a large proportion of her fortune to charities.Rowling makes a powerful speech full of ideas and dreams, recalling her own graduation ceremony and relying on her humble beginnings. Instead than giving a typical commencement address encouraging graduates to pursue achievement,

Rowling advises them to define success and failure on their own terms. She encourages them to not be afraid of failure and to use their fortunate position to help those in need. She emphasizes the significance of imagination, stating that it is only through imagination that one may achieve success.

In 2008, author J.K. Rowling wrote and gave a commencement speech to the graduating class of Harvard University. Rowling aptly named the speech “The Fringe Benefits of Failure, and the Importance of Imagination”. In this speech Rowling tries to convey the message that failing can be beneficial or an individual and that people should not be afraid to use their imagination. Rowling begins the speech with a reflection on what went through her mind while writing the speech and how the process affected her. During this time Rowling asked herself what she wished she had known at her graduation and came up with the two main ideas of this speech; the merits of failure and significance of imagination. Rowling explains the benefits of failure by using her own personal failure of living in poverty with her daughter and what that failure taught her. During the speech Rowling states “It is impossible to live without failing at something unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all – in which case, you fail by default”. This quote means that in life a person needs to be able to make mistakes in order to learn from them and grow. By making mistakes an individual can discover aspects about their character that they did not know before. Failure can teach one lesson such as Inner security, strong will, more discipline and also true friends whose value she states was truly above the price of rubies. She goes on to talk about Personal Happiness that one gets when one knows that life is not a checklist of acquisitions or accomplishments. She states that “your qualifications, your CV, are not your life”. Life is difficult, complicated, and beyond anyone's complete control, and having the humility to recognise that will help you weather its unforeseen changes.

For the significance of imagination, Rowling describes it not in terms of how it helped her out of poverty, but of how it opens up people to the world and other individuals around them. She says how our intelligence, our capacity for hard work, the education we have earned and

received, give us unique status, and unique responsibilities. If we choose to use our status and influence to raise our voice on behalf of those who have no voice and choose to identify not only with the powerful. but with the powerless; And if we can retain the ability to imagine ourselves into the lives of those who do not have our advantages, then it will not only be our proud families who celebrate our existence, but thousands and millions of people whose reality we have helped change. We do not need magic to change the world; we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already: we have the power to imagine better.

**Unit - 2**

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY ELIZABETH MERTZ**

**About the Poet:**

Elizabeth Mertz is a distinguished legal and linguistic anthropologist recognized for her pioneering contributions to the understanding of legal language and education. She serves as a Research Professor at the American Bar Foundation (ABF) and holds the title of John and Rylla Bosshard Professor of Law Emerita at the University of Wisconsin–Madison .

**Background:**

Mertz’s academic foundation is robust, with a Ph.D. in Sociocultural Anthropology from Duke University, where she studied under Virginia R. Domínguez and William O'Barr. She also holds a J.D. from Northwestern University School of Law, where she was honored as the John Paul Stevens scholar and a Wigmore Scholar. Her undergraduate studies were completed at Bryn Mawr College, where she earned a B.A. in Anthropology .Her early academic work focused on the linguistic and cultural dynamics in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, particularly exploring issues of language shift and identity among the Scottish Gaelic-speaking community. This research was foundational in the field of semiotic anthropology, which examines how language and other sign systems mediate social and cultural practices .AccomplishmentsMertz has significantly impacted the study of law through her examination of legal language, particularly within educational contexts. Her seminal book, The Language of Law School: Learning to "Think Like a Lawyer" (2007), critically examines how the language used in law schools shapes students' learning experiences and professional identities. This work was influential in the development of the Carnegie Report on legal education and received the Herbert Jacob Book Prize for its substantial contributions to legal studies .In addition to her book, Mertz has co-edited several important volumes, including Translating the Social World for Law (2016) and The New Legal Realism: Translating Law-and-Society for Today’s Legal Practice (2016). These works emphasize the integration of empirical social science into legal practice and education, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of law within its social context .Her scholarly articles have been widely published in prestigious journals such as the Harvard Law Review, U.C. Irvine Law Review, and Law & Social Inquiry. These articles explore various aspects of legal language and education, further solidifying her influence in the field .Mertz's dedication to education and mentorship has also been recognized with numerous awards. In 2021, she received the Harry J. Kalven, Jr. Prize and the Stan Wheeler Mentorship Award from the Law & Society Association, honoring her exceptional research in law and society and her commitment to mentoring junior scholars

**Summary:**

Elizabeth Mertz’s work bridges the disciplines of law and anthropology, offering deep insights into how legal language shapes professional training and practice. Her research has profoundly influenced the fields of legal education and legal anthropology, promoting interdisciplinary approaches that enhance the empirical study of law. Her accomplishments reflect a career dedicated to advancing the understanding of legal systems through rigorous academic inquiry and mentorship.

Elizabeth Mertz is a professor at the University of Wisconsin Law School, where she teaches family law courses. She is a leading linguistic and legal anthropologist and a pioneer in the field of law and language. While her early research focused on language, identity and politics in Cape Breton Island in Canada, her later research examines the language of US legal education. Her publications include The Language of Law School: learning to think Like a Lawyer.

The poem, accomplishments deals with gender roles and in a humorous manner highlights the differential expectations for mothers and fathers.

The poem describes how men and women seem to operate in two distinct spheres. While women are naturally expected to take care of the domestic sphere, the men are in public spheres.

Men's role is seen as the provider and protector and women's as the care-taker of both the home and the family. While the men's contribution is celebrated, the women's contribution remains invisible labour.

The author questions who took care of their toddlers when Aristotle was writing his books and when Milton was searching for rhymes. If the women were not taking care of the toddlers, could they accomplish their works? Next she talks about Dante, who contemplated Hell, and sonnets of Shakespeare. Did they have their juniors to interrupt them? And then she talks about teachings of Socrates and Plato's ‘Phaedo’. Did they clean the mess of their children's Play-Doh? They never go through that because there was a woman to do all.

Next she asks that if Edmund Broke had to take care of his kid's ablutions, would he have spoken on Revolutions. No, but there was a woman to take care of his children. And the author asks how did Homer and Aesop become famous for their works if not for their wives who took care pf everything so that the men need not worry about setting the table every time.

Then Mertz mentions that when Newton was busy with his calculus works in the lab his woman laboured to whiten his laundry. She asks who cooked food when Darwin was busy with his theory. Then she says, how wise the women are to sort the clothes from a pile of four feet, for Holmes and Brandeis.

Finally, the author expresses the greatness of women behind every man's accomplishment. They clear all their tasks and manage both house and family, taking care of their children while being students of a university. How great the woman is! How difficult it is for women to succeed! Despite the difficulties, she continues her career as a wife to a husband, as a mother to a child, as a daughter of a mother and a mother of her son.

**Conclusion**: In most societies, men’s contributions are recognized and praised. However, the poet claims that women’s unseen domestic labour goes unnoticed and of course, unpaid, while emphasizing how difficult it is women to thrive in the public domain. The poet argues that women’s success in the public sphere is noticed and celebrated precisely because it is considered uncommon and unusual.

**THIRD SUGGESTION**

**About the Author:**

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a celebrated Nigerian writer, is renowned for her novels and essays that explore themes of identity, feminism, and post-colonialism. She was born on September 15, 1977, in Enugu, Nigeria, and raised in the university town of Nsukka, where her father was a professor and her mother was the university’s first female registrar. Adichie’s literary journey began early, influenced by her family's intellectual environment and her rich Igbo heritage.

**Summary:**

Dear Ijeawele is an epistolary manifesto composed of 15 suggestions. Its intended audience is parents who want to raise their daughters as feminists. The book functions both as a parenting guide for raising girls to be empowered, independent women, and as a sort of field guide for feminism that anyone can use to live a more feminist life.

Written by Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, the work is the product of a correspondence between Adichie and her friend Ijeawele. Ijeawele just gave birth to a baby girl, Chizalum, and asked Adichie for advice on how to raise her to be a feminist. Adichie’s response forms the basis of this manifesto, which was first published by Knopf Publishers in 2017.

The purpose of the manifesto is to undo this gender inequality by raising girls to reject traditional gender roles and expectations. As Adichie characterizes it, gender roles are like a straitjacket designed to restrict women’s freedom and limit their potential. Her hope is that this work will contribute to a more gender equal world.

Suggestion 3 is “Teach her that the idea of ‘gender roles’ is absolute nonsense”.

It discusses the concept of gender roles and to what extent a culture constructs gender by conditioning men and women to behave differently.

We’re often told that the reason men and women behave as they do is because of their gender: Men are active, rational, and industrious because they’re men; Women are passive, emotional, and caring because they’re women. We’re told that our gender dictates how we will perform at certain tasks or react in certain situations. Our gender, essentially, defines who we are and limits what we’re capable of as individuals.

This view treats gender as though it’s natural—simply a fact of human nature that we’re all born with. But, the author argues, this couldn’t be further from the truth. In her view, boys and girls are born equal, and its society that thrusts gender roles onto children by conditioning them to behave differently based on their sex.

Almost from the moment babies are born, society begins to condition boys and girls differently. We dress them differently, talk to them differently, handle them differently, and choose different toys for them to play with. Boys are usually given active toys to play with, such as vehicles, whereas girls are typically given toys related to care work, such as dolls. The author relates how she once saw a mother refuse to buy her daughter a toy helicopter on the grounds that she already had dolls to play with.

Children’s clothes and toys do not need to be categorized by gender. They could be categorized by size, age, or type. The fact that society categorizes products by gender is a choice, and it’s one that Adichie argues has harmful outcomes, especially for girls.

It’s harmful because it squeezes children into predefined moulds. Instead of being allowed to discover for themselves what they like and find interesting, children are told what they ought to like and find interesting. This curtails their curiosity and sets arbitrary limits on their field of exploration, which may hinder their development.

So, instead, Adichie implores parents to treat their daughters as individuals first and “girls” second. As she says, “‘because you’re a girl’ should never be a reason for anything”. So, let her play with whatever she wants to play with, pursue whatever she wants to pursue. Teach her to be active and independent. Let her try things; indulge her curiosity.