

English Language for Competitive Exams
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Week - 02
Lecture – 07
Comprehending Literary Passages – 1

We will continue with our reading passages and look at this first passage. It is about the great theatre actress Sarah Bernhardt. As Bernhardt's amazing career brings out, the celebrity narrative goes a long way back by her life and her art.

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PASSAGE 1

As Bernhardt's amazing career brings out, the celebrity narrative goes a long way back. By her life and her art she radically inflected its form and handed it on for later great actresses to inhabit and alter in their turn. She provides, as history always does, a test of authenticity in her heirs. She was an undoubted genius at the job; she thereby returns us to the necessary, antique distinction between fame and renown. To be famous is to be well known, easily recognised on screen or in the street; to be renowned is to be honoured for solid, ungainsayable achievement, and achievement, what is more, of a morally admirable kind. Famousness, let us say, is to be publicly recognisable although perhaps known for no great accomplishment; "famous for being famous" is the cliché but it's not much help. Fame starts from something or other, but what it is may not add up to much. Renown is far more resonant and ample. It has a slightly old-fashioned ring to it but is none the worse for that. Renown is well merited, and this the more so since we have had since 1800 or so such unrivalled amounts of information about famous people. Go back to the sixteenth century and the number of the famous was tiny. Her citizens knew who Elizabeth I was, but very few knew of the hardworking drudge and playwright, Will Shakespeare. Renown now takes in acclaim, sheer volume of talent and accomplishment, and probably of personality.

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You have 10 minutes to read the passage and answer the following questions. Answer within 5 lines.

1. Explain the distinction between fame and renown.
2. Why does the author say that Shakespeare wasn't as well-known as the Queen ?
3. What did Bernhardt's career do for later actresses?

Let us look at the questions here. Explain the distinction between fame and renown, what does, why does the author say that Shakespeare was not as well known as the Queen, and what did Bernhardt's career do for later actresses? Take some time; go back to the passage and go through it and answer the questions. Now fame and renown, as you would have understood; fame could just refer to the quality of being well known. Renown is reserve for those with genuine accomplishments and signifies merit more than near visibility that is the answer. The question between who is more famous Shakespeare of the Queen is refers to the first Elizabeth, Elizabeth the first. The author says that the in

Shakespeare's time not much information was circulated as there were many sources of media. So, only renowned and really important people like the Queen were recognised by the public. And about the question on Bernhard's career; Bernhard's career provided an example of how celebrity and fame could be performed and served as a marker of authenticity to later actresses as well.

She was not only a great actress, but also intelligently crafted her celebrity persona off stage. I will give you a list of words, please look up the meanings; resonant, drudge, ungainly and cliché. So, resonant is a verb. It evokes images memories and emotions, the word resonant with so many different meanings right. So, it is an image, is something that evokes image, meanings, emotions, memories. Drudge is noun, a person made to work or to do hard minimal or dull work. She was little more than a drudge around the house. Ungainly, adjective it is undeniable irrefutable the front porch and the doorway of a house convey ungainly class signals.

So, how you the front of the house says a lot. Cliché is a noun; it is a phrase or opinion that is overused and betrays a lack of original thought. Famous for being famous is a cliché, that old cliché that you know a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; it is a proverb, but of course, you know. So, there are so many worn out clichés and phrases the list is truly inexhaustible. Cliché is something that is over used and it shows that you know you do not have anything original by way of thought or language.

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PASSAGE 2

No doubt a public figure, even a *figurehead*, must have a character, but as a celebrity enacts less his or her special characteristics than carries off or embodies certain key or timely public values. The ready example is Nelson Mandela. He was globally known to have borne up under 25 years' imprisonment on Robben Island with amazing courage, resilience, even meekness. He left prison in serenity, smiling all the way. He forgave his enemies and thereby made reconciliation and justice imaginable. He stood for the best, the only values which would hold his society away from civil war. An inadequate economist and an ineffective policy-maker, he became, as figureheads must, a national allegory: calm, gregarious, jolly, accessible, rock-steady. The moral point about figureheads is made when we grasp that they may also personify fearful, even horrible public values, if the times are ripe for them. Hitler at his peak was such a figurehead, an allegory of stern, removed and ruthless authority, uniformed, expressionless, commanding (softening only and indicatively when bending down to ruffle children's heads). The people gazed and raptly endorsed this special embodiment of what they believed to be their best national identity. Indisputably forceful in his prime, compelling in his achievements, the monster dictator serves to remind us how vague a concept celebrity is, and how important it is to the upholding of civic culture that we keep alive a more vigorous and discriminating moral vocabulary than is spoken on chat radio.

Let us move on to the second passage. No doubt a public figure, even a figurehead, must have a character, but as a celebrity enacts less his or her special characteristics than carries off or embodies certain key or timely public values. The ready example is Nelson Mandela. He was globally known to have borne up under 25 years' imprisonment on Robben Island with amazing courage, resilience, even meekness. He left prison in serenity, smiling all the way. He forgave his enemies and thereby made reconciliation and justice imaginable. He stood for the best, the only values which would hold his society away from civil war. In an inadequate economist and an in ineffective policy maker, he became, as figureheads must, a national allegory; calm, gregarious, jolly, accessible, rock steady.

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keep alive a more vigorous and discriminating moral vocabulary than is spoken on chat radio.

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You have 10 minutes to read the passage and answer the following questions. Answer within 5 lines.

- 1) Despite being an inadequate economist and policy-maker, why was Mandela's celebrity monumental?
- 2) Explain the fascination Hitler had.
- 3) What do you think the author's understanding of celebrity persona is, from this particular passage?

Here, are your questions. Despite being an inadequate economist and policy maker why was Mandela's celebrity monumental? Explain the fascination Hitler had. And third one, what do you think the authors understanding of celebrity persona is from this particular passage? Take some time and solve the answers. All right, the Mandela's public image; he as a man, who fought for justice and espouse values for offer peace and courage belied is ineffectual administration. His public identity as a national leader was so strong that nothing else matter in popular opinion.

The Hitler fascination, he was more national allegory than a person. People found is heir of command and ruthlessness compiling in a figure of authority and wanted him to represent the nation. And the third question about, authors are understanding of celebrity persona. The author argues that celebrity is often removed from the actual qualities of a person and some representations stand in for the whole or these representations are blown up out of proportion. Overall celebrity itself is a wake formula and needs to be studied more.

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PASSAGE 3

One morning in March 1812, George Gordon, Lord Byron famously woke up to find himself famous. The first edition of 500 copies of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* had sold out in just three days. The ensuing years would witness a frenzy of attention and adulation for the handsome young member of the House of Lords. He was lionised in London's high society, celebrated across Europe, and inundated by admiring letters from women eager to meet him. "Byromania," as it came to be called, was one of the first examples of fan-driven literary celebrity, and the adjective "Byronic" quickly became shorthand for the personal and literary style of its namesake. It was an inaugural moment in the history of literary celebrity. Writers had striven for and meditated upon fame for centuries prior to Byron's apotheosis, but it was only during the Romantic era that literary celebrity began to take its modern form. Prior to the rise of print capitalism and mass literacy, writers typically addressed small audiences with whom they were personally acquainted, and it was not expected that they earn any money directly from their published texts. Literary figures were either patronized by the aristocracy or were themselves members of that aristocracy and their ideas of fame were based in established traditions of Judeo-Christian piety and classical honor that tended to emphasize posthumous renown.

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You have 10 minutes to read the passage and answer the following questions. Answer within 5 lines.

- 1) Describe 'Byromania'.
- 2) Why was Byron's fame a product of the Romantic age?
- 3) How were authors regarded before?

Let us go on to read the questions now. So, what was 'Byromania'? Describe 'Byromania'? Why was Byron's fame a product of the romantic age and how were authors regarded before? But before the authors, the question is before Byron. So, Byromania refers to the sensation that Lord Byron created through his persona and literary endeavours. Byromania is the first known example of print fuel literary celebrity. Now coming to the next question; why was Byron's fame a product of the romantic age? The romantic age was also the age of print capitalism and more and more people were reading as education levels rose. This is why Byromania is so particularly a product of its times and what was happening before Byron? Byron authors were usually patronized by the aristocracy, our nobles themselves and their ideas of fame was based on Judeo Christian ideal or ideas that idealised a classical past instead of the present.

Let me give you a list of words for developing vocabulary; adulation, posthumous, apotheosis and lionised all these words you have already seen. Find out the meanings take five minutes. So, adulation is a noun; it means excessive admiration operates many a time we say, in India celebrities face a lot of adulation or are at the receiving end of adulation. So, he found it difficult to cope with the adulation of the fans. Posthumous is adjective after someone death.

So, posthumous award or reward conferring, an Oscar posthumously. Apotheosis is a noun; if the highest point in the development of something a culmination or climax of something. So, his appearance is Hamlet was the apotheosis of his career. Lionised is verb and you lionised someone, you elevate that person, give a lot of attention and importance and significance, modern sports man are lionised and (Refer Time: 13:44) and celebrated all over.

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PASSAGE 4

The Romantics were the first artists to champion their own sensibilities in response to the destabilizing forces of the literary marketplace, and the masculine heroic figure they forged would have avatars across Europe and, increasingly, the world as the formulation of the romantic hero coincided with, and to a certain degree depended on, colonial expansion and its attendant fantasies of adventure and escape. The romantic hero additionally inaugurated what I'm calling the autobiographical mandate, the requirement that the protagonist align with the writer such that the literary celebrity becomes an amalgam of character, narrator, and author. Lord Byron was Childe Harolde as Goethe was Werther as Chateaubriand was Renee; these authors channelled their post-aristocratic angst into an image of masculine melancholy that would have enormous appeal to a rapidly expanding (and predominantly female) middle-class readership.

So, forth passage now. Let us look at that. The romantics were the first artists to champion their own sensibilities in response to the destabilizing; forces of the literary marketplace, and the masculine heroic figure they forged would have avatars across Europe and, increasingly, the world as the formulation of the romantic hero coincided with, and to a certain degree depended on, colonial expansion and its attendant fantasies of adventure and escape. The romantic hero additionally inaugurated what I am calling the autobiographical mandate, the requirement that the protagonist align with the writer such that the literary celebrity becomes an amalgam of character, narrator, and author.

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melancholy that would have enormous appeal to a rapidly expanding and predominantly female middle-class readership.

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You have 10 minutes to read the passage and answer the following questions. Answer within 5 lines.

- 1) Why does the author bring up colonial expansion?
- 2) What is the 'autobiographical mandate'?
- 3) Why does the author bring up a 'predominantly female' middle-class audience?

So, now questions; why does the author bring up colonial expansion, what is the autobiographical mandate? And why does the author bring up a predominantly female middle-class audience? What is the reference to that? To answer the first question, why does the author bring up colonial expansion? Because of the concept of the romantic hero depended on colonial ideas of adventure and conquest. These qualities made the romantic hero dashing and appealing. What is the autobiographical mandate that the author is talking about? It is the modern requirement, that the literary protagonist imitates the author in real life through its sentiments opinions and behaviours.

So, he gives examples right. That Goethe is Werther, that Byron is Childe Harolde. The author argues the third to answer the third question that why does the author bring up a predominantly female middle class audience? So, author according to the author, the particular formulation of romantic masculinity has special appeal amongst the female middle class reading public and hence the reference to female readers. As usual I will give you a list of difficult words that is your vocabulary check; amalgam, a m a l g a m,

mandate, attendant and forge; f o r g e. Amalgam, mandate, attendant and forge; find out the meanings.

Now, amalgam is a noun, is a mixture or blend, a curious amalgam of the traditional and the modern that could be one example. Mandate is a noun again which an official order or commission to do something; a mandate to see the release of political prisoners; a mandate that all students must attend the assembly tomorrow. Attendant is an adjective which is occurring with or as a result of something. Forge is a verb to create something strong or enduring the two women forged a close bond.

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PASSAGE 5

Under the post-World War II, postmodern dispensation the restricted and general fields of cultural production begin both to collapse into each other and to segment into semi-autonomous subfields serving specific taste communities. During this era, two institutions come of age as gatekeepers for literary celebrity: the prize industry and the creative writing program. The proliferating prize industry provides literary consecration across an ever expanding variety of platforms, from the international to the national to the generic, continuously catapulting authors into celebrity. Overlapping at a number of key points with the system of literary prizes is the creative writing program, which has emerged as a new form of patronage, enabling a semiautonomous star system based in the academic circulation of personality and prestige. In this contemporary cultural field, celebrity is broadly accepted as an inevitable component of literary success, and authors are accustomed to, and frequently very talented at, the wide variety of practices, from readings and interviews to blogs and tweets, that have emerged to disseminate it.

Now, let us move on to the fifth passage. Under the post World Wars, the Second World War, postmodern dispensation the restricted and general fields of cultural production begin both to collapse into each other and to segment into semi autonomous subfields serving specific taste communities. During this era, two institutions come of age as gatekeepers for literary celebrity; the prize industry and the creative writing program.

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You have 10 minutes to read the passage and answer the following questions. Answer between 3-6 lines.

- 1) What were the factors that decided literary fame post-war?
- 2) Explain how contemporary authors cement literary success.

Let us look at the questions. What were the factors that decided literary fame post war? That we are talking about the Second World War and explain how contemporary authors cement literary success? Now the factors that decided literary fame post war the answer should be; two institutions rows S key factors of literacy married, determining literacy married. The prices industry and the creative writing programs; the first provided an authoritative opinions across national boundaries while the second enable the domination of academia in the literary field. And then about the contemporary authors and how the cement literary success, fame through (Refer Time: 19:54) their success and fame through public appearance, use of social media platforms, like the blog and twitter and literary competence is usually always followed by some form of celebrity in today's world.

Let us look at the difficult words here. Proliferation, please take them down gatekeepers, dispensation and generic; proliferation gatekeepers, dispensation and generic. So, proliferation is a noun; it means rapid increase in the number or amount of something. You all often say proliferation of IIT related books in the market, JE exam clear the JE exam and proliferation of such kinds of books. The adjective would be prolific, he is a prolific writer. Gatekeepers, is a noun, a person or thing that controls access to something, right. Dispensation is also a noun which is exemption from a rule or usual requirement. Generic is something which is characteristics or relating to a group of person or thing people or thing.

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PASSAGE 6

The logic of negation that determined avant-garde aesthetic value also meant that failure in the general field of cultural production became equated with success in the restricted field; once again Baudelaire is representative, as his early death in obscurity comes to represent the tragic fate of unrecognized genius. The melodrama of mainstream rejection becomes *de rigueur* during this era, epitomized by the starving artist whose work is only recognized after a (usually) early and impecunious demise. However, the artist's stark opposition to the mainstream marketplace is in reality a pose. The logic is temporal and dictates that failure precede success. The standard career arc becomes one in which an artist is initially accepted by a cultural coterie but rejected by the mainstream, after which this very rejection becomes the basis for a later critical canonization, consecrated by the apprenticeship in obscurity. The passage from outlaw to classic comes to epitomize the temporal logic of the avant-garde and to represent a template upon which a successful modernist career would be mapped.

Let us look at the last passage for today. The logic of negation that determined avant-garde aesthetic value also meant that failure in the general field of cultural production became equated with success in the restricted field; once again Baudelaire is representative, as his early death in obscurity comes to represent the tragic fate of unrecognized genius. The melodrama of mainstream rejection becomes *de rigueur* during this era, epitomized by the starving artist whose work is only recognized after a usually early and impecunious demise. However, the artist's stark opposition to the mainstream marketplace is in reality a pose. The logic is temporal and dictates that failure precede success. The standard career arc becomes one in which an artist is initially accepted by a

cultural coterie, but rejected by the mainstream, after this after which this very rejection becomes the basis for a later critical canonization, consecrated by the apprenticeship in obscurity. The passage from outlaw to classic comes to epitomize the temporal logic of the avant-garde and to represent a template upon which a successful modernist career would be mapped.

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QUESTION:

Outline the author's argument in passage between 4-8 lines. You have 5 minutes.

Let us look at the questions now. So, the question is outline the argument or authors argument in the passage between which is given in 4 to 8 lines and you have 5 minutes. Go through the passages very carefully. The answer could be a possible answer is that, the author suggests that the career and success of modernist artist like Baudelaire was predicated upon rejection by the mainstream reader. In fact, the avant-garde writer was usually only lorded by small elite community and this trope of an indulgent, but brilliant artist who is rejected by popular opinion served many authors like Baudelaire. The author argues that the initial rejection was performed and was actually necessary act for incoming success and this was a script many modernist careers copied. And some of the difficult words here avant-garde; a v a n t g a r d e is a French word, but very common, so common that it has become a part of the English language and pose; p o s e, coterie; c o t e r i e and de rigueur; de rigueur is again a French word.

So, avant-garde is new and experimental you often use it in terms of avant-garde cinema, avant-garde music, avant-garde theatre. Pose; pose is to behave in a certain way to impress others. Some people like to practice adventure pose. They were not be really into it by they like to pose. Coterie is a small group of people we shared interest or taste and they always support each other, they are exclusive to other people or coterie of friends and advices. And de rigueur adjective, it is an adjective which is required by etiquette or current fashion you know if de rigueur to, for a students to wear jeans today. So, it is part of current fashion. It was de rigueur for rock band or rock musicians to grow their hair long. That is the seventies seen, the eighty seen yeah. So thank you very much and we will meet for our next class.