

'Fiction writers should be socially responsible'

Amutha Kannan

COIMBATORE: "I learnt that as a writer you have to inspire someone and create an impact. For this to happen, every writer should consider it a social responsibility to write well and a science fiction writer had to have more of this when compared to writers of other genre," this is what an enlightened J. Kirthikayeni, an M.Phil. student, had to say here on Friday.

She was among those who attended the 'Storytelling and Story-writing Workshop' conducted by Eric Miller, Director, World Storytelling Institute, Chennai, as part of the International Conference on 'Science Fiction' at Bharathiar University.

After an intense session of theory and practicals, she along with other participants, was all geared up to practice what she had learnt at the workshop.

Though the workshop opened with Mr. Miller explaining the 12 elements a story should contain, it moved on to the specifics needed to tell or write a science fiction. The 12 elements were: title of the story, characters, their way of speaking, their way of moving, place, time, storyline / plot, objects, sensory elements, emotions, the narrator, point / moral /



ART OF INSPIRING: Eric Miller, Director, World Story Telling Institute, Chennai, at a workshop on 'Storytelling and Story-writing' held as part of the International Conference on Science Fiction at Bharathiar University in Coimbatore on Friday. - PHOTO: K. ANANTHAN

message. All elements combined together resulted in the last element.

"Regardless of whether a story's characters are humans, animals, divinities, or aliens, all stories are about situations. Story listeners can project themselves as these characters and imagine themselves in these situations," Mr. Miller said.

"Do not just tell us how the characters feel through your writing, but let us see and hear how they feel," he added.

Focussing on the theme of science fiction, Mr. Miller gave 10 instances to the par-

ticipants and told them to give him one new development in those instances, applicable 50 years from now.

For example, they had to tell one new development in transportation, communication, buildings, language, cities, countryside, the way we work, etc., which they envisaged would exist 50 years from now.

Ms. Kirthikayeni and her friends said that they enjoyed this exercise very much because this kind of thought process was what formed the basis for science fiction writing.

They were made to understand that the knowledge of English alone was not enough for writing science fiction. Keeping tab of the latest technological advances and reading technical writings were equally important.

Science fiction should be written in such a way that scientists should be inspired by the concepts that they read in the novel. That inspiration should propel them to come out with something useful or advantageous to mankind - this was what got imprinted in the minds of the participants as they left the workshop.