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(DSC/DSE)

FOUR YEAR BACHELOR'S DEGREE COURSE

(CBCS in Accordance with NEP 2020)

SEMESTER - I

FROM LANGUAGE TO LITERATURE

ENGLISH

Padmanath Gohainbaruah School of Humanities

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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FROM LANGUAGE TO LITERATURE

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COURSE INTRODUCTION: FOUNDATION COURSE IN ENGLISH

This Course has been designed to acquaint the learners with the various concepts related to the use of language in literary works. There are various language devices which one must be familiar with for a better understanding of literary works. In order to interpret literature enrichingly, a sound and precise knowledge of the basics of language is very necessary. This course, therefore, aims to minimise the complexities of interpreting literature by emphasising on language usage. As literature encompasses a wide range of creative and reflective writings having a distinct appeal pertaining to its form, style or content, this Course shall be crucial for the learners as it shall provide them with systematic ideas regarding the various concepts related to the study of language.

Unit 1 : This unit introduces the learners to the concept of literature as fiction and a work of imagination by critically reflecting upon different literary texts. The notion of literariness and the idea of literature as a language event shall also be discussed in the unit.

Unit 2 : This unit introduces the learners to the concept of semantics, a major branch of Linguistics. The different sources of meaning shall also be discussed in the unit. The unit also includes a discussion on the sense relations of words.

Unit 3 : This unit deals with pragmatism, that is, the study of language usage in conversation and aims to acquaint the learners with the scope of pragmatics and other important concepts like deixis, performatives, presupposition, etc.

Unit 4 : This unit shall acquaint the learners with the concepts of sentence, text and discourse as well as the issues related with text such as its structure and form. The unit also elaborately discusses the qualities of a text.

Unit 5 : This unit shall introduce the learners with the concept, nature and scope of applied linguistics. It is a field encompassing a broad range of language activities including ELT which shall be the primary concern of the unit.

Unit 6 : The unit deals with stylistics, that is the study of language, discussing its nature and scope. It shall also familiarise the learners with the difference between stylistic analysis of a literary text and the approach of literary critics to a literary text.

Unit 7 : This unit throws light on the definition of literature and explores some of the major forms of literature. More specifically, the unit deals with the ways in which literature can be interpreted.

Unit 8 : This unit deals with the possibilities of reading a literary text bringing out the relation of text and its author. Apart from this, the unit also addresses the issue of 'context' and 'meaning' in literature.

Unit 9 : This unit is a continuation of the earlier unit. Here the leaners will be provided with a number of significant ways to approach a text. Gender issues, issues of race, politics of interpretation and culture, etc. forms the core of this unit.

Unit 10: This unit deals with the development of Indian English literature and the major writers as well as literary forms associated with it. The unit also includes examples of literary works by the Indian English writers.

Unit 11: This unit shall acquaint the learners with the technicalities of poetry and its use of metaphoric language. Apart from defining poetry, this unit also discusses the art of writing and receiving poetry.

Unit 12: This unit lays importance on the study of drama- its types and its constituent parts. The various modes of theatrical representation will be discussed in the unit along with the theory of drama.

Unit 13: The unit deals with various aspects of the literary form- novel and highlight its important features. The learners will get an idea about certain important concepts like setting, space, time, point of view, etc. with reference to the reading of a novel.

Unit 14: This unit discusses short story as a literary form and points out its main characteristics. Various elements like plot, character, setting, point of view, etc. have been dealt in the unit in a detailed manner.

Unit 15: This unit traces the history of travel writing and discusses the form, features and types of travel writing. The learners will be acquainted with a number of travel writers, including regional writers, through this unit.

While going through a unit, you may also notice some text boxes, which have been included to help you know some of the difficult terms and concepts. You will also read about some relevant ideas and concepts in "LET US KNOW" along with the text. We have kept "CHECK YOUR PROGRESS" questions in each unit. These have been designed to self-check your progress of study. The answers to these questions are given at the end of the unit. We strongly advise that you answer the questions immediately after you finish reading the section in which these questions occur. We have also included a few books in the "FURTHER READING" which will be helpful for your further consultation. The books referred during the preparation of the units have been added at the end of the SLM. However, this SLM is not an end in itself and the learners are strongly advised to consult the books and other resources recommended for reading.

UNIT 1 : LANGUAGE OF LITERATURE

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Learning Objectives

1.2 Introduction

1.3 What is Literature?

- 1.3.1 Literary Devices
- 1.3.2 Stylistic Devices

1.4 Literature as a Language Event

1.5 The Notion of Literariness

1.6 Let Us Sum Up

1.7 Further Reading

1.8 Answers To Check Your Progress

1.9 Model Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- critically examine the issue of literature as fiction and imaginative writing
- distinguish a literary text from a non-literary text
- appreciate the notion of literariness of a piece of text
- think critically about literature as a language event
- develop the notion of language registers.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to a major issue on the concept of literature as fiction and a work of imagination. We shall critically reflect upon different literary texts as starting point to shift your attention to the distinctiveness of a literary text so as to enable you to form your opinion on what constitutes a literary text and what makes a text non-literary.

You will appreciate that the language used by a journalist in his field of work while writing or editing news items for publication in a newspaper is

strikingly different from the language used by a scientist in his field of work while explaining a scientific theory or a scientific experiment. Similarly, the language used by a lawyer in his field of work while drafting legal documents may be quite different from the language used in the business or corporate field. In the same way you will understand that the language used for literary writing has a distinctiveness that contrasts with the use of language in other fields.

Our attempt in this unit is to make you sensitive to those language devices used by a poet or novelist or short story writer that makes the language literary. The unit presents a few figurative devices that are used by poets and novelists. These devices include simile, metaphor and so on. There is also a sample of language drawn from a novel that makes you sensitive to the way novelists craft words and phrases in their attempt to create a world of fiction.

1.3 WHAT IS LITERATURE?

A literary critic M.H. Abrams in his *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Eleventh Edn, 2015), states that the term “literature” has been commonly used “to designate fictional and imaginative writings – poetry, prose, fiction and drama” (p 200). The statement contains two key words “fictional” and “imaginative” that express the notion that

(a) literature is fiction and

(b) literature is imaginative writing

These two key words are taken as norms for designating a piece of text as literature.

However, another literary critic J.A. Cuddon in his *Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory* (1999) considers literature to be “a vague term which usually denotes works which belong to the major genres, epic, drama, lyric, novel, short story, ode”(p 472). Cuddon observes that when we describe a piece of text as literature as opposed to writings from other fields, the term carries with it the idea that the work in question has “superior qualities that is well above the ordinary run of written works”. As example, he states that “George Eliot’s novels are literature, whereas Fleming’s Bond

books are unquestionably not". It is an interesting observation. In spite of the huge popularity and sales of each Bond novel, they are not considered literature. Yet George Eliot's novels like *Adam Bede* (1858), *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) and *Silas Marner* (1861) among others are literature.

The observation by eminent literary theorist Terry Eagleton, in his book *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (2000) on "What is Literature" is much closer to the theme of literature as a language event that forms the core of this unit. Eagleton observes that the conventional definition of literature as imaginative writing will not work. There are a large number of literary works that do not fall under the category of imaginative writing notably, the essays of Bacon, the sermons of John Donne, the spiritual autobiography of John Bunyan which are all classed as literature. Even Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* is considered literature though it is an account of facts.

Hence, in an attempt to define literature, a distinction between fact and fiction will not work. Besides, in the late sixteenth century, the word novel seems to have been used about both true and historical events. Novels and newspapers were neither clearly factual nor clearly fictional. If literature includes much factual writing, it also excludes quite a lot of fiction. The Superman comics and the Mills and Boons novels are fictional but they are generally not regarded as literature. Similarly, it won't do to state that literature is creative and imaginative writing; history, philosophy and natural science are equally creative and imaginative.

Hence, Eagleton attempts to define literature not according to whether it is fictional or imaginative, but because it uses language in peculiar ways. The basic argument is that literature transforms and enriches ordinary language. It does this by deviating systematically from ordinary speech by using a number of resources of the language. They include figurative language like simile, metaphor, personification, metonymy, synecdoche, transferred epithet, irony, hyperbole and a few other concepts.(Refer 1.3.1).They also include distinctiveness in the texture of the language that is brought about by assemblage of devices which include sound, imagery, rhythm syntax metre, rhyme, narrative techniques and so on.(Refer 1.3.2).Under the pressure of literary devices, ordinary language is intensified,

condensed and twisted.

What we would like to emphasise here is that literature expresses itself through a special kind of language that contrasts with the day-to-day language we commonly use. This is the norm or common core language. The user of the language in distinct specific fields enriches the language to suit the different fields in which the language is to be used. The poet or the novelist enriches with 'literariness', the writer of scientific writing enriches it with the terminology and forms that are suitable for scientific writing. Likewise, the journalist makes use of a style that makes journalistic writing distinctive.

1.3.1 Literary Devices

In this section we shall introduce you to a few figurative terms that are a part of the literary devices used by poets and novelists. The use of these terms makes the common day-to-day language literary as you can see from the examples.

1. ***Simile*:** It refers to a comparison between two different things. The comparison made explicit by using words like as, like, etc. is designed to create an interesting effect as in: The fog moves like a cat.
2. ***Metaphor*:** It also refers to a comparison but in this case, the comparison is implicit and is achieved through a non-literal sense of a word as in: Francis X D'Souza is a "pillar of the Church" (Eunice de Souza)
3. ***Personification*:** It refers to giving human qualities, feelings, action or characteristics to non-human objects as in : "I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers". (Shelley)
4. ***Metonymy:*** It is a term used to refer to the substitution of the name of one thing for that of another as in (The pen(writer) is mightier than the sword (fighter)).
5. ***Synecdoche*:** It refers to the substitution of one name for another, associated with it as in "All hands to deck" where the word 'hands' is a substitution for sailors or ship's company.
6. ***Transferred Epithet*:** An epithet is an adjective that is placed

before a noun to qualify it. But in the case of transferred epithet, the adjective is shifted or transferred to another noun associated with it as in "The plowman homewards plods his weary way". Here the epithet 'weary' is transferred from plowman to way.

7. ***Irony*****:** It is a term used to refer to an implied discrepancy between what is said and what is meant as in "A very fine friend you were to forsake me in my troubles".
8. ***Hyperbole*****:** It is a term used to refer to an extravagant exaggeration made by a writer for dramatic effect as in "Ten thousand saw I at a glance" where the reference is to a host of daffodils that the poet Wordsworth had seen.

1.3.2 Stylistic Devices

In the earlier section we briefly looked at a few figurative devices often called figures of speech. These devices are helpful in creating literariness in a piece of text contributing to the formation of a literary style. An interesting figurative device is what is known as *paradox* that is a favourite of both poets and novelists. It is a term used to refer to a statement that seems on the face of it to be logically contradictory or absurd, yet turns out to be interpretable in a way that makes sense. Read the following passage:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of the noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

The passage chosen is the opening paragraph of the novel *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens (1812-1870). An attempt

has been made here to show how the use of figurative language makes a plain prose passage enriched with new meaning. It is of course necessary to look at the passage in the context of the theme of the novel where Dickens presents a contrasting picture of the socio-political condition of the two cities London in England during the reign of George III and Paris in France during the reign of Louis XVI during the period of the French Revolution in 1789. The opening paragraph therefore strikes the key-note to the theme of the entire novel.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Give brief answers to the following questions:

(a) Name two literary works familiar to you that do not fall under the category of imaginative writing.

(b) Name two literary works familiar to you that fall under the category of fiction.

(c) Which of the following titles can be called literature?

(i) The Gitanjali

(ii) Tom and Jerry

(iii) The Prince and the Pauper

(iv) Basic Journalism

(v) Oxford Guide to English Grammar

(vi) New Hart's Rules

1.4 LITERATURE AS A LANGUAGE EVENT

A literary work irrespective of whether it is a poem, a novel, a short story or a play, is a language event. The literary text in question is the contemporary day-to-day language that is heightened and charged with literariness. Reading a literary text involves some sort of engagement with the language elements that constitute the text. But it is an engagement that is beyond simply being able to understand the meaning of the words and phrases in the text. In fact, reading a literary text involves two parameters; first, a reasonable reading comprehension ability and secondly, an

engagement with the literary conventions that are being used besides the socio-cultural variables in the text.

A literary text is thus a language event in the sense that the text in question is essentially language that is charged with meaning to the utmost degree. Hence, it has become necessary to refer to the reading competence of the readers in their attempt to engage themselves with a literary text. Readers with a less than required reading comprehension ability or comprehension fluency to make sense of the words in the page, would not be in a position to respond to the literariness of a text.

In basic terms then, an engagement with a literary text can only start with a certain level of language or reading competence presupposed. That is the early stage of the reader to "experience" literature followed by an ability to describe, explain the nature of the experience. At a later stage, the readers will be in a position to develop an understanding of particular literary traditions, decide for themselves which writers have more value in relation to particular philosophies or ideologies, but that argument should emerge from wide and varied reading.

At a time when there has been a spate of glossy paperback production, naturally readers are confused about what to read. No matter how long our life is, we will, at best be able to read only a few books of all that have been published, and the few we read should include the best. We can be happy at the thought that the number of such books is relatively small. Literariness can be one of the norms for making decisions on which work of fiction to read.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: Give brief answers to the following questions:

(a) What are the two parameters involved in reading a literary text?

(b) In what sense is literature a language event?

(c) Why should we be selective of what books to read?

1.5 THE NOTION OF LITERARINESS

In this section we shall examine a few passages. We shall try to find out which of them are literary and which are not. If we find them literary, we need to know what literary device has gone into the text to make it a literary text.These are all extracts from different forms of writings. As an example, we shall look at a piece of text given here. While reading the text we shall try to identify the narrator or narrators, the situation or context in which the text occurs, what makes it literary or for that matter, a non-literary piece of text.

To-day, we have naming of parts.Yesterday,
We had daily cleaning. And tomorrow morning,
We shall have what to do after firing. But to-day, to-day,
Today we have naming of parts. Japonica
Glistens like coral in all of the neighbouring gardens,
And to-day we have naming of parts.

This is the lower sling swivel. And this
Is the upper sling swivel, whose use you will see,
When you are given your slings. And this is the piling swivel,
Which in your case you have not got. The branches
Hold in the gardens their silent eloquent gestures,
Which in our case we have not got.

These are the first two stanzas of Henry Reed's poem "Naming of Parts". Can you find answers to the following questions:

(a) Who is the speaker here? Is there more than one speaker?
(b) What is the situation in which the lines are said?
(c) Identify points of differences in the use of language in the different lines.
(d) Is the language of the lines literal or poetic?

It may interest you to know that there are two speakers in the lines. In stanza 1, the first four lines up to the full stop and in stanza 2 the first four lines up to the full stop are spoken by a drill sergeant in a parade ground.

Those of you who had NCC might have attended classes in which the drill sergeant (havildar) gave you lessons on naming the parts of a rifle. The language of the drill sergeant is matter of fact. It is prosaic; in the first stanza the speaker provides information to the cadets on the class-routine for three days: yesterday, today and tomorrow. In the second stanza, he begins the lesson by providing names of the parts of a rifle.

The remaining lines are strikingly different. The speaker is a cadet with a poetic sensibility. His lines are quite different in the use of language. He has used figurative language all through: in the first stanza “japonica glistens like coral” is a simile. Even the use of the word “glistens” has poetic overtones. In the second stanza the word hold in “the branches hold” is personification. The expression “silent, eloquent” is interesting. The figure of speech is *oxymoron*, a literary device that is used to place two contradictory words side by side to create a subtle sense of meaning as in “hasten slowly”, “darkness visible”, “bitter sweet” and so on. Unlike the language used by the drill sergeant that is rather literal, the language used by the cadet is poetic; it is characterised by literariness.



1.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have been introduced to the language of literature which includes both poetry and prose fiction. By critically reflecting upon different literary texts, the unit aimed to make you sensitive to the distinctiveness of a literary text so as to enable you to form your opinion on what constitutes a literary text and what makes a text non-literary. We learnt that the language used by a journalist in his field of work while writing or editing news items for publication in a news paper is strikingly different from the language used by a scientist in his field of work while explaining a scientific theory or a scientific experiment. We noted that the language used by a lawyer in his field of work while drafting legal documents may be quite different from the language used in the business or corporate field. We understood that the language used for literary writing has a

distinctiveness that contrasts with the use of language in other fields. We studied those language devices used by a poet or novelist or short story writer that makes the language literary. These include simile, metaphor and so on. We also examined a sample of language drawn from *A Tale of Two Cities* to illustrate the way novelists craft words and phrases in their attempt to create a world of fiction.



1.7 FURTHER READING

1) Abrams, M.H. and Harpham, G.G. (2015). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, Cengage Learning.

2) Cuddon, J.A. (2000 4th Edition). *Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory,* Penguin.

3) Eagleton, Terry. (2000). *Literary Theory: An Introduction,* Maya Blackwell.

4) Seturaman, V.S. et al. (1990). *Practical Criticism,* Macmillan. (The poem "Naming of Parts" is quoted from this book at p 159).



1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1:

(a) Jawaharlal Nehru's *Autobiography*
Nirad C Chaudhury's *A Passage to England*

(b) You may name any two good novels familiar to you.

(c) Titles (i) and (iii) are literary works.

Ans to Q No 2:

(a) The two parameters involved in reading a literary text are first, developing a reasonable reading comprehension ability and secondly, developing a competence towards the engagement with the literary conventions that are being used in the text besides the socio-cultural variables.

(b) Literature can be called a language event because a literary text is essentially language charged with meaning to the utmost degree.

(c) We should be selective of what books to read because there have been more books than anyone could read. Besides, they have multiplied through the years. Hence, the few books that we read should include the best.



1.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Give brief answers :

(a) Compare a simile with a metaphor.

(b) What is a transferred epithet?

(c) Name the figure of speech in the line: “Earth has not anything to show more fair”.

(d) “The thirsty earth soaks up the rain” – Name the literary device.

Q 2: Comment on the lines:

The fog comes
on little cat feet.
It sits looking
over harbour and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

*** ***** ***

UNIT 2 : SEMANTICS

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 What is Meaning?

2.4 Elements of Meaning

- 2.4.1 Conceptual Meaning
- 2.4.2 Connotative Meaning
- 2.4.3 Stylistic Meaning and Affective Meaning
- 2.4.4 Reflected Meaning and Collocative Meaning
- 2.4.5 Thematic Meaning

2.5 Sources of Meaning

2.6 Lexical Semantics: Sense Relations

- 2.6.1 Antonymy
- 2.6.2 Synonymy
- 2.6.3 Homonymy and Polysemy
- 2.6.4 Hyponymy

2.7 Let Us Sum Up

2.8 Further Reading

2.9 Answers To Check Your Progress

2.10 Model Questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the concept of semantics as the study of meaning
- appreciate the term meaning and its elements
- discuss the various sources of meaning of words
- appreciate the concept of sense relations.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we shall discuss the concept of semantics which is a major branch of linguistics devoted to the study of meaning in language. The focus being on meaning, we shall begin by referring to the authoritative work of Ogden and Richards (1923) titled *The Meaning of Meaning* as starting point that will lead us to a study of the different elements of meaning in the light of the approach of G. N. Leech (1981) in terms of conceptual meaning, connotative meaning and so on. Then we shall move on to an exploration of the different sources of meaning in terms of *lexical meaning, syntactic meaning, intonation meaning and socio-cultural meaning* by stating how the sources of meaning can be traced back to the words themselves, to the syntactic structure, to the kind of intonation used in spoken discourse and the socio-cultural situation in which the utterance is made. We close the unit by a discussion on the sense relations of words in terms of *antonymy, synonymy* and so on.

2.3 WHAT IS MEANING?

Let us begin this section by looking at the word *meaning* in the general sense that most of us have been using it in our common language use. Here are two sentences:

A : What is the meaning of the word *exasperating*?

B : The meaning is *annoying*.

From these two sentences we understand that the word *annoying* is an equivalent and much more common term than *exasperating* besides being easier to understand. In other words, the term *meaning* refers to an equivalent term that is much more common and easier to understand.

The question "*what is meaning?"* has been engaging the attention of philosophers for over 2000 years. It has been felt that the physical world gives us items, actions, responses, qualities, etc., the cognitive world conceives them in terms of ideas and also associates them with other items. The linguistic world labels the items as conceived by the cognitive world. However, modern linguists like Lyons (1981) do not think that no one has

yet produced a satisfactory answer to it. One reason may be that the question, in the form in which it is posed is unanswerable. Their thinking began from the issue of the relationship between words and the objects which words represent. Hence it has been suggested that instead of posing the question "What is Meaning?" a more appropriate poser would be "What is the meaning of meaning?"

Two literary critics C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards in their famous book titled *The Meaning of Meaning* were able to list no less than sixteen different meanings of the term that have been favoured by reputed scholars as observed by the references made to them. In this small module, it may not be possible to investigate all these popular and scientific definitions of meaning but a brief look at a few of them can be illuminating for the study of meaning, for example,

(a) an intrinsic property of something

(b) other words related to that word in a dictionary

(c) the connotations of a word

(d) the thing to which the speaker of that word refers

(e) the thing to which the speaker of that word *should* refer

(f) the thing to which the speaker of that word believes to be referring

(g) the thing to which the hearer of that word believes is being referred to.

These definitions approach different ways in which meaning is understood. Taking up some of the above definitions of meaning, we can identify the different elements of meaning.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Answer the following questions:

(a) State briefly what you understand by the expression: "The connotation of a word".

(b) Briefly explain how connotation of a word is different from denotation of a word.

2.4 ELEMENTS OF MEANING

We use language either in our speech or writing to express meaning so that what we say or write is understood by the listener or the reader. Meaning in a general sense takes care of almost everything that takes place between the sender and receiver of a message through language. In this section we shall discuss seven different elements of meaning as propounded by Geoffrey Leech. These different elements can also be referred to as the aspects of meaning:

2.4.1 Conceptual Meaning

The term conceptual meaning, also called denotative meaning is basically the literal meaning of a word indicating the idea or concept to which it refers. A concept can be described by analysing the different components that constitute the concept. These components can be analysed by making use of three term labels as follows:

1. man = + human – female + adult
2. sow = + porcine + female + adult
3. boy = + human – female – adult
4. cow = + bovine + female + adult

If any of these conceptual features change, the concept also changes. For example, in 3 above, if ' - female' is changed to '+ female', the concept boy changes to girl. Thus we see that the change of one minimal quality changes the concept.

2.4.2 Connotative Meaning

While conceptual meaning is concerned with the core meaning of the word or concept, connotative meaning is the meaning which is attributed to a given word or concept. These attributes come into use over a period of time in a particular culture. They may change with change in time. For example, while the conceptual meaning of bull is that it is + bovine – female + adult, the connotative meaning

is that it is a sacred animal. Connotative meaning is not part of what is conceived but what is perceived. The fact that the cow or the bull is a sacred animal is part of the connotative meaning of the word.

2.4.3 Stylistic Meaning and Affective Meaning

Stylistic meaning is the meaning conveyed by a word or an expression regarding the socio-cultural background of the users of the language. Stylistic meaning derives from the style in which something is written or spoken and of the relationship between the participants of the spoken or written text. The meaning of a formal, semi-formal or informal utterance is essentially stylistic meaning. For example, the informality associated with the word 'fag' for a cigarette is the stylistic meaning of the word. On the other and affective meaning is the meaning conveyed by the personal feelings or attitudes of a listener to a statement or an utterance. For example, the meaning of *"Why are you making a noise?"* should be understood as a warning to be silent.

2.4.4 Reflected Meaning and Collocative Meaning

Reflective meaning is the effect of one meaning on another meaning of the same word. For example, let us take the word 'simple', which has several meanings notably *plain, natural,* and *naive.* In the statement "His responses are simple", the meaning of the word may be expressed as *plain,* though other meaning especially *naive* may be also reflected. On the other hand, collocative meaning refers to the meaning acquired by a word under the influence of words which it co-occurs with. For example, the meaning of *pretty* gets specified with *girl, woman, flower, garden, colour*, etc. whereas the meaning of *handsome* gets specified with *boy, man,* etc.

2.4.5 Thematic Meaning

Thematic meaning is the meaning conveyed by the way in

which a speaker or writer organises the message in terms of ordering, focus and emphasis. It is often felt that an utterance in the active voice has a meaning different from that in its corresponding passive voice.

(a) The police arrested the thief.

(b) The thief was arrested by the police.

Certainly these have different communicative values in that they suggest different contexts. The active sentence answers the question *"Whom did the police arrest?"* whereas, the passive sentence answers the question *"Was the thief arrested?"* The themes are different.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: Answer the questions briefly:

(a) Give the componential analysis of the following words: boar, calf, stallion

(b) Write short notes on: stylistic meaning, thematic meaning.

2.5 SOURCES OF MEANING

In this section we shall look at the different sources of meaning. It is an interesting fact of semantics that the major part of the meaning of words that we use in our speech and writing is partly located in the language (code) that we use and partly in the language user (coder).

The sources of meaning located in the language or code that we use include three types of meaning namely, *lexical meaning, syntactic meaning* and *phonological meaning*. On the other hand, the sources of meaning located in the language user or coder include *socio-cultural meaning*.

Lexical meaning is derived from the analysis of the components of a word. We call it componential analysis. It is an approach to the study of meaning which analyses a word into a set of meaning components as we had shown in our discussion on conceptual meaning at 2.4.1.

Grammatical meaning can be of two types namely: (i) functional relations of their constituents and (ii) the function of a component in the structure of a larger unit as exemplified below:

John called her a fool.

John called her a taxi.

In sentence 1, the grammatical function of *her* is direct object in the structure S+V+O+O whereas in sentence 2, the grammatical function of *her* is indirect object (John called a taxi for her). Besides, word-order can reflect different meanings. The function of John in a sentence like '*John met the minister'* is not the same as in the sentence '*The minister met John'*; there are functional differences.

Phonological meaning is the meaning of an utterance derived from the kind of intonation used by a speaker in making the utterance. You will note even from the intonation patterns used in your mother tongue that yes-no type questions are uttered with a rising tone. If an utterance like '*He came yesterday?'* is uttered with a rising tone, we get the meaning that it is a question.

Socio-cultural meaning is the meaning that is derived from the shared knowledge on the use of language, social behaviour, etc. of a speech community sharing the same socio-cultural ethos. For example, when a person on seeing another, makes the utterance "*Good morning"*, the utterance may be interpreted as a *greeting.* We find meanings of such expressions from our socio-cultural situations.

2.6 LEXICAL SEMANTICS: SENSE RELATIONS

The word *lexical* is the adjective form of the word *lexeme*. The word *lexeme* is used to refer to the smallest unit in the meaning system of a language that can be distinguished from other similar units. A lexeme is an abstract unit and can occur in different forms in actual spoken or written sentences and is regarded as the same lexeme even when it takes prefixes or suffixes. In grammar we distinguish two kinds of words: lexical words and grammatical or function words. For example, the words *take, took, taking* and *taken* would belong to the one lexeme *take*. The term lexical

words, also called content words, include mainly nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs whereas function words are words that have little meaning of their own e.g. prepositions, conjunctions, articles, etc.

Words in a language are organised in certain laid down syntactic principles that form the grammar of the language. A word in a language may have two meanings – lexical meaning and sentence meaning. We shall discuss lexical meaning here. In our attempt to describe lexical meaning, our attempt will be to explain different meaning relations that exist among different lexemes. These relations can be described in terms of *antonymy, synonymy, polysemy* and *hyponymy*.

2.6.1 Antonymy

The term antonymy (noun) which is a variant of the word antonym (noun), refers to the oppositeness of a word in meaning to another word. The oppositeness of words in English can be studied in terms of their *gradability, non-gradability* and their *relational oppositeness*.

Gradable antonyms can be best explained in terms of pairs of words like *high-low, wide-narrow, big-small, old-young,* and so on. All these words given in italics are adjectives and can be seen in terms of degrees of the quality involved. Thus, one building may be high or very high and one building may be higher than another while relatively, another may be the highest of the three. We have gradation of height, width, size, quality etc. One road may be wide or very wide, another may be wider than the other and another may be the widest of the three. When we refer to something as wide or high, we have a norm of what makes us to say that something is wide or high or big. This accounts for the fact that a small elephant is bigger than the biggest mouse.

Non-gradable antonyms include pairs of words that do not have gradability. These antonyms cannot be graded. They are also known as *binary opposites*. Examples include *male-female, married-single, alive-dead* and so on. A word in each pair is complementary

to the other. When we say that a child is male, it implies that it is not female. These pairs are non-gradable; they cannot be described in terms of degrees. They do not have intermediate terms showing gradation unlike *hot-cool-cold.*

Antonyms referred to as *relational opposites* are found in pairs like *above-below, lend-borrow, debtor-creditor,* etc. These terms in pairs are interdependent; one pre-supposes the other. Kinship terms like *husband-wife, father-mother, son-daughter, uncle-aunt* etc also belong to this category.

2.6.2 Synonymy

Synonymy refers to words having the same meaning. They are called synonyms. It is a fact of language that two words with the same meaning rarely exist; one of them may take different shades of meaning or may die a natural death. Words we call synonyms are *fully synonymous* if all their meanings are identical. Such types of synonyms are rare in English. Many of the words listed in dictionaries of synonyms are concerned with what John Lyons calls *near synonymy* or *partial synonymy*.

Absolute synonymy or full synonymy or complete synonymy would mean only those words or expressions that are synonymous if all their meanings are identical; partial synonymy are synonymous in certain context but not in all contexts.

Dictionaries of synonyms treat the words *big* and *large* as synonyms. However, they vary in a number of meanings that they assign to each. In one meaning exemplified by *"He built a large/big house"*, the two words are synonymous. Whether they are completely synonymous will depend upon whether the two words can be used in all other contexts. For example, we can say *"The boy has grown quite big"* but we normally do not say *"The boy has grown quite large"*. Hence, it becomes difficult to say that *big* and *large* are fully synonymous.

It is important to state that some words can collocate with

some words, but they do not collocate with others. The word collocation refers to the restrictions on how words can be used together regularly. We do not say that *"You are making a large mistake"*; *big* collocates with mistake, *large* does not. If words have collocation restrictions, they are not fully synonymous.

2.6.3 Homonymy and Polysemy

Homonymy is defined as different words with the same form. The word *bank* meaning 'a financial institution' shares the same form of *bank* to refer to 'the side of a river'. The word *bank* meaning financial institution and the word *bank* meaning the side of a river are two different words because they have different meanings. Dictionaries list them as *bank 1* and *bank 2*. These two words are homonyms because

- their forms are unrelated in meaning
- their forms are identical
- their forms belong to the same part of speech.

We can draw a distinction between *absolute homonymy* and *partial homonymy.* We discussed the two words – *bank 1* and *bank 2* are absolute homonyms because they share the three characteristics identified above.

Here is another example. The word *sole* to mean the bottom of the foot or a shoe and the word *sole* to mean a kind of fish are absolute homonyms because these two words also share the same three characteristics identified above; we call them *sole 1* and *sole 2*.

But there are many different kinds of words that belong to the category of partial homonymy. For example, *find* and *found* share the same form *found*, but not *finds, finding* or *founds*, *founding,* etc; and *found* as a form of 'find' is not syntactically equivalent to *found* as a form of 'found'.

2.6.4 Hyponymy

Hyponymy refers to the relationship between two words, in which the meaning of one of the words includes the meaning of the other. The words *animal* and *cow* are related in such a way that *cow* refers to a type of animal. Animal is a general term that includes cow and other types of animals like cat, dog, and so on. The specific term cow is called hyponym and the general term is called *superordinate*. Read the following list of superordinates and hyponyms:

Superordinates	**hyponyms**
Vehicle	car, lorry, van, bus
Furniture	chair, table, bed
Vegetable	potato, cabbage, carrot
Fruit	apple, mango, banana
Move	walk, run, swim, fly
Colour	blue, green, white, yellow

The list shows that the relationship between the words under superordinates and those under hyponyms is one of hyponymy.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Answer the following questions:

(a) Give an example of a pair of gradable antonyms by showing their grades.

(b) Give the hyponyms of the superordinate terms: *red* and *colour.*



2.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we discussed the concept of semantics as a study of meaning in language. We began by referring to the authoritative work of Ogden and Richards titled *The Meaning of Meaning.* We discussed the

terms *conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, stylistic meaning, affective meaning, reflected meaning, collocative meaning* and *thematic meaning.* We moved on to an exploration of the different sources of meaning in terms of *lexical meaning, syntactic meaning, phonological meaning and socio-cultural meaning* by stating how the sources of meaning can be traced back to the words themselves, to the syntactic structure, to the kind of intonation used in spoken discourse and the socio-cultural situation in which the utterance is made. Lastly, we discussed the sense relations of words in terms of *antonymy, synonymy* and so on.



2.8 FURTHER READING

1) Leech, G.N. (1981). *Semantics,* Penguin.

2) Lyons, John. (2002). *Language and Linguistics: An Introduction,* Cambridge.

3) Ogden, C.K. & Richards, I.A. (1923). *The Meaning of Meaning,* London, Kegan Paul (10th edn).

4) Palmer, F.R. (1981). *Semantics,* Second Edn. Cambridge.



2.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1:

(a) The connotation of a word refers to the idea suggested by a word in addition to its main meaning. For example, the main meaning of *mouse* is that it is a *rodent* but the connotative meaning is *timidity*.

(b) Denotation is the act of naming something with a word. It is the act of labelling an item. The physical world gives the item, the cognitive world conceives it in terms of an idea and the linguistic world labels it with a name.

Ans to Q No 2:

(a) boar = + porcine – female + adult

calf = + bovine – adult

stallion = + equine – female + adult

(b) Stylistic meaning – see 2.4.3.

Thematic meaning – see 2.4.5.

Ans to Q No 3:

(a) hot- cold; gradation: *very hot—hot—cool — cold – very cold*

(b) red = scarlet, crimson, vermillon

colour = red, orange, blue, etc.



2.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Give brief answers to the following:

(a) Give componential analyses of: *ox, woman, dog.*

(b) Pairs of antonyms like *husband-wife* are called _____. (Fill in the blank)

(c) Give the hyponyms of the superordinate term *tree*.

Q 2: Write short notes on:

(a) Gradable antonyms

(b) Collocation restrictions

(c) Stylistic meaning

Q 3: Answer the following questions:

(a) Write a note on the sources of meaning.

(b) Draw a distinction between conceptual meaning and connotative meaning.

(c) Bring out the distinctiveness of homonymy and polysemy with illustrative examples.

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UNIT 3 : PRAGMATICS

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 The Scope of Pragmatics

3.4 Deixis

3.5 Conversational Implicature

3.6 Presupposition

3.7 Performatives

3.8 Let Us Sum Up

3.9 Further Reading

3.10 Answers To Check Your Progress

3.11 Model Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- understand the term pragmatics in relation to semantics
- appreciate the scope of pragmatics as a distinct field of study
- understand the principles underlying conversation in real-life situations
- distinguish the language of conversation from the language of written discourse.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit begins by drawing a distinction between semantics and pragmatics that are two distinct fields of study and yet complementary to each other in view of their concern with meaning. Next, the unit provides a workable definition of the term *pragmatics* as the study of language usage in conversation. By taking the definition, we proceed to study the scope of pragmatics. The unit takes into account a number of parameters of pragmatics beginning with *deixis*, a term for a word or a phrase which directly

relate an utterance to a time, place or person for an encoding of the meaning of an utterance. Other areas of concern in this unit include conversational implicature wherein we refer to the four conversational maxims that is, conversational strictures, proposed by H.P. Grice (1981) in his *Presupposition and Conversational Implicature*. In a section on presuppositions, we consider presuppositions as assumptions made about the context of a sentence or utterance that are necessary to make it verifiable or appropriate so as to discover the way meaning is communicated. Lastly, we take up the structure of performatives which are utterances that perform and not just inform and show their difference from that of constatives that are utterances meant for informing.

3.3 THE SCOPE OF PRAGMATICS

In the previous unit you were introduced to the concept of semantics as the scientific study of meaning. It may interest you to know that pragmatics is also concerned with meaning. But there is a difference between the uses of the term *meaning* in these two fields of study. In semantics, meaning is defined purely as a property of expressions in a given language, in abstraction from particular situations, speakers or hearers. On the other hand, meaning in pragmatics is defined relatively to a speaker or user of the language in a context of a given situation. In other words, semantics is a study of what meaning is and how it operates whereas pragmatics is a field of language study concerning how during a social conversation people experience, make sense of and react to the way meaning is communicated through the language used. Thus, we can state that semantics and pragmatics are distinct though complementary and interrelated fields of study in meaning.

From the distinction made between semantics and pragmatics in their concern with meaning, it appears that the term pragmatics can be defined as a field of language study from the point of view of the user of the language. This use is governed by (a) the choices of language items that a person makes, (b) the constraints that is encountered in using language and (c) the effects the person's use of language has on the other participants

in the act of communication. In brief, pragmatics is *the study of language usage in social interaction*.

This definition helps us to appreciate the scope of pragmatics. The scope of pragmatics is the study of language usage from a socio-functional perspective. We can call it a communicative perspective. Such a perspective requires that the scope of pragmatics should concern itself with the following parameters:

- The first parameter is the context dependent aspect of language structure. It means that the meaning of an utterance is always dependent on the context or the situation in which the utterance is made.
- The second parameter is the principles of language usage. It means that there are certain aspects of language that help a listener to encode the meaning of an utterance.

The scope of pragmatics includes the study of those aspects of language that require reference to the users of the language for their meaning. One of the major aspects of natural languages that require reference is the study of *deictic* or *indexical* words like the pronoun "I" and "you" which we take up in 3.4 in this unit. Secondly, another scope of pragmatics that has been considered here is that pragmatics deal with the study of *conversational implicature,* an area taken up in 3.5 here. Thirdly, a scope of pragmatics is the study of *presupposition*, a term that refers to what a speaker or hearer presupposed through references drawn from the utterance in the process of a conversational act. Moreover, the scope of pragmatics is a study of *performatives* as part of *speech act theory.*



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Give brief answers to the following questions:

(a) Give a definition of the term pragmatics.

(b) State the two parameters that the scope of pragmatics must concern with.

(c) State the scope of pragmatics in about 50 words.

3.4 DEIXIS

The term *deixis* is used to refer to a word or a phrase in communication which directly relates an utterance to a time, place or object. Borrowed from a Greek word, the term is used for pointing or indicating something to a listener. This is done by the use of demonstratives like *this, that, these, those,* first and second person pronouns *I, we, you*, tense, specific time and place adverbs like *here, there, now,* etc. and a variety of other grammatical features tied directly to the utterance.

Basically, deixis concerns the ways in which we draw meaning from a piece of utterance in a speech event. In deixis the meaning does not lie in the sentence or the utterance but in the context of the situation. Let us take a situation in which speaker A says to B: *"Look at that!"* In order to encode the meaning of the deixis 'that', the listener B will turn his/her attention to whatever A means by 'that'. The interpretation of the deixis lies outside the text in the context of the situation. Thereby, deixis concerns ways by which we interpret or decode utterances. Deictic information is of immense importance in our understanding of an utterance.

Let us take an example. Suppose a person provides the following information to you in the form of a small note which you discover on your table. How will you react to this note?

(1) See me in fifteen minutes from now. I'll be back by then.

You will not know when this note was sent to you and whether the fifteen minute time frame has ended or not for we do not know when the time count from *now* has begun nor do we know whether the person has returned so that the meeting can be materialized. It becomes difficult to deduce relevant information from such a sentence. The reason is that the deixis is missing.

In order to deduce meaning of a piece of text, either spoken or written, the text must directly concern the relationship between the structure of languages and the contexts in which they are used. We should be able to *encode*, that is, derive meaning from different aspects of the circumstances surrounding the utterance, within the utterance itself. Now let us look at two

other examples. Imagine that you are saying these to a person at a given place:

(2) Here is the pen that I borrowed from you yesterday.

(3) Don't stand here, go over there.

The first utterance uses the deixis *here*; it specifically points to the pen that the person had borrowed from the hearer the previous day and now he is returning it. The second utterance directly relate to places. The speaker indicates the places by the use of the two adverbs *here* and *there.* Thus we see that deixis establishes meaning of an utterance by decoding a reference given in the form of first and second person pronouns, demonstratives, specific time and place adverbs and a variety of grammatical features.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: Give brief answers to the following questions:

(a) Explain briefly the term deixis.

(b) State how deixis establishes meaning of an utterance.

3.5 CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE

The term *conversational implicature* briefly referred to as *implicature* is used in pragmatics to mean the meaning of an utterance which can be deduced from the form of the utterance on the basis of certain *co-operative principles*. The co-operative principles govern the efficiency and normal acceptability of conversation. The source of the pragmatic meaning drawn through inference lies on the structure of the concerned utterance. For example, when the sentence *"The front door is open"* is used to mean a request to close the front door, we discover some general principles of shared interaction.

To illustrate co-operative principle, we refer to the conversational implicature laid down by H.P. Grice as conversational maxims. Grice identifies these maxims as guidelines or general principles underlying the efficient use of language in conversation. The co-operative principle follows the following four maxims:

(a) The maxim of Quality

Make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

(i) do not say what you believe to be false

(ii) do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

(b) The maxim of Quantity

(i) Make your contribution informative enough for the current purpose of the exchange

(ii) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

(c) The maxim of Relevance

(i) Make your contribution relevant to the context

(ii) Do not say things that are not relevant for the present situation.

(d) The maxim of Manner

Be perspicuous, and specifically:

(i) avoid obscurity

(ii) avoid ambiguity

(iii) be brief

(iv) be orderly.

The value of these maxims is that they provide conversational strictures; they specify what speakers have to do in order to converse in an efficient, rational and co-operative way. For example, one stricture is that participants in a conversational act should speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly while providing information.

Secondly, conversational implicature can provide some explicit account of how it is possible to mean more than what is actually said. To illustrate the statement, here is an example of an exchange between two persons A and B:

A: When will father arrive?

B: The train is late by two hours.

The utterance of A is a request for specific information. However, B's response is not directly explicit. We may expect a response that would be something like: "He'll arrive in two hours" or something like that. However, the answer provided by B is not directly expressed. There is a gap between what was asked and what was said as response. Implicature bridges the

gap by giving some account of how the information is encoded. Obviously, father is arriving by train and the train that day is two hours late.

Thirdly, the notion of implicature brings out significant simplification in both structure and context of a sentence to express meaning. Let us examine the conjunction *and* in the following two sentences. While grammar considers *and* as a connective, joining two coordinate clauses, pragmatics would explore the truth condition of the clauses when they are interchanged and try to find meanings of the word *and* as to whether they have the same implicature in each context.

(4) The man locked the door and walked down the stairs.

(5) John bought a book and Mary bought an umbrella.

The sense of *and* in sentences (4) and (5) seems to be rather different. Unlike as in (5) where *and* is a plain connective, in (4), it carries the meaning of 'and then'. Hence, it is possible to rephrase sentence (5) without affecting the meaning as

(6) Mary bought an umbrella and John bought a book.

But we cannot interchange the coordinate clauses in sentence (4) without affecting the meaning. We cannot have a sentence like the following:

(7) The man walked down the stairs and locked the door.

On the other hand, in sentence (5), there is no 'and then' sense and hence, it implies that the whole sentence in its totality is true. The rephrasing of the two coordinating clauses does not affect the conceptual meaning of the sentence. What is being implied through these examples is that implicature helps in making clear those natural language expressions which would otherwise be ambiguous.

Fourthly, implicature appears to be helpful in accounting for some closely related concepts like *well, anyway, by the way* and so on. If we try to find meanings of these words, which are essentially *discourse markers*, we shall find ourselves referring to the pragmatic mechanism that produce implicatures. For example, in the midst of a conversational act, let us suppose that a person A asks B the following question:

(8) "By the way, what are you doing these days?"

From the discourse marker "by the way", B gets the hint that A has

deviated from his/her earlier topic of conversation. We see certain pragmatic rules operating in the use of discourse markers in utterances.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Answer the following questions:

(a) Briefly explain co-operative principle.

(b) Explain the term maxim of Manner.

3.6 PRESUPPOSITION

When a person named A gifts a book she had recently published to a friend B, it appears that A presupposes B still reads books and would surely like to read her recent book. In this statement, the word 'presupposes' is used to mean 'assumes'. In pragmatics, the word *presupposition* is used as a concept to refer to assumptions made about the context of a sentence or utterance that is necessary to make it verifiable or appropriate or both so as to discover the way meaning is communicated.

A sentence or an utterance must contain a sense as well as a reference. A well-formed sentence carries a sense, but if it lacks reference, it fails to have a truth value. Let us look at the following sentences:

(9) Dilip has a sister.

(10) Dilip has a female sibling.

(11) Dilip's parents have more than one child.

(12) Dilip exists.

Each of these sentences is well-formed and contains some sense. But the truth value of these sentences is what we must look for now. We can say that

(a) If sentence 8 is a true sentence, sentence 9 is also a true sentence.

(b) If sentence 8 is false, then sentence 9 is also false.

The relationship between these two sentences (8) and (10) is one of entailment because if sentence (8) is true, sentence (10) is true too. But if sentence (8) is false, sentence (10) is not necessarily false: Dilip may have a brother. The relationship between sentence (8) and (11) is one of presupposition.

3.7 PERFORMATIVES

The term *performatives* is used to refer to the utterances which perform and not just inform. The following utterances are examples of performatives:

(a) I apologise.

(b) I name this baby Akash.

(c) I give my word.

(d) I warn you that tresspassers will be prosecuted.

(e) I call you a fool.

Each of these sentences perform an act: *apologising to someone, naming a baby, giving word, warning tresspassers* and *rebuking someone as a fool*. Hence, they are performative sentences or performatives.

On the other hand, there are sentences that inform. These sentences are called constatives. If we say these sentences, we are actually passing on some information.

(f) The baby was named Akash.

(g) Tresspassers will be prosecuted.

(h) You are a fool.

Sentences that do not perform an act but only gives information are constatives. The above are examples of constative sentences.

The performatives are also called illocutionary acts. In the **speech act theory** J.L. Austin (1956) isolates three basic senses in which in saying something one is doing something, and hence, three kinds of acts are simultaneously performed.

(i) Locutionary act: the utterance of a sentence with determinate sense and reference

(j) Illocutionary act: the making of a statement, offer, promise, etc. in uttering a sentence

(k) Perlocutionary act: the bringing about of effects on the audience by means of uttering the sentence.

Locutions are required for a communicative act to take place whereas perlocutions create the effects planned. The following sentences illustrate

the three types of speech acts:

(l) Be silent. (locutionary act)

(m) He urged me to be silent. (illocutionary act)

(n) He persuaded me to be silent. (perlocutionary act)

In the above examples, sentence (l) reflects a verbal act in "Be silent". Sentence (m) reports the verbal act whereas sentence (n) expresses the effect on the speaker.



3.8 LET US SUM UP

We began this unit by drawing a distinction between semantics and pragmatics that are two distinct fields of study and yet complementary to each other in view of their concern with meaning. Next, we provided a workable definition of the term *pragmatics* as the study of language usage in conversation. By taking the definition, we proceeded to study the scope of pragmatics. The unit takes into account a number of parameters of pragmatics beginning with *deixis*, a term for a word or a phrase which directly relate an utterance to a time, place or person for an encoding of the meaning of the utterance. We also discussed conversational implicature by referring to the four conversational maxims proposed by H.P. Grice (1981) in his *Presupposition and Conversational Implicature*. We further discussed presuppositions by considering presuppositions as assumptions made about the context of a sentence or utterance that are necessary to make it verifiable or appropriate so as to discover the way meaning is communicated. Lastly, we take up the structure of performatives which are utterances that perform and not just inform and show their difference from that of constatives that are utterances meant for informing.



3.9 FURTHER READING

1) Brown, Gillian & Yule, George. (1983) . *Discourse. Analysis,* Cambridge.

2) Leech, Geoffrey N. (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics,* Longman.

3) Levinson, Stephen C. (2003). *Pagmatics,* Cambridge University Press.



3.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1:

(a) Pragmatics can be defined as the field of language study concerning how during a social conversation people experience, make sense of and react to the way meaning is communicated through language use.

(b) See the two bullet points at 3.3.

(c) Read 3.3 and make a gist in 50 words.

Ans to Q No 2:

(a) The term 'deixis' is drawn from Greek for pointing or indicating something to a listener. It refers to a word or phrase used in communication which directly relates an utterance to a time, place or object. E.g. Look, *that* is the boy.

(b) Deixis establishes the meaning of an utterance by decoding a reference given in the form of the 1st and 2nd person pronoun, demonstratives, specific time or place, adverbs, etc. from the context of the situation.

Ans to Q No 3:

(a) The term co-operative principle is derived from the work of the philosopher H.P. Grice and now frequently used in pragmatics to refer to conversational strictures. At its simplest, the principle states that speakers try to co-operate with each other when

communicating. They will attempt to follow the four maxims of quality, quantity, relevance and manner.

(b) By maxim of Manner, Grice refers to the conversational stricture that requires a speaker to avoid obscurity and ambiguity and to be brief and orderly.



3.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Give brief answers to the following questions:

(a) Give a definition of pragmatics.

(b) Give the Greek meaning of deixis.

(c) Give an example of locutionary act.

(d) Give an example of illocutionary act.

Q 2: Answer the following questions:

(a) Distinguish between semantics and pragmatics.

(b) Distinguish between performatives and constatives.

(c) Explain how deixis helps in finding meaning in a conversational act.

(d) Explain the term ‘discourse marker”.

Q 3: Answer the following questions:

(a) Discuss the co-operative principles propounded by Grice and state their importance.

(b) Discuss the value of implicature in a conversational act.

(c) Discuss the importance of presuppositions in conversation.

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UNIT 4 : TEXT AND DISCOURSE

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Sentence, Text and Discourse

- 4.3.1 The Sentence
- 4.3.2 The Text
- 4.3.3 Discourse

4.4 Qualities of a Text

- 4.4.1 Correctness
- 4.4.2 Clarity
- 4.4.3 Cohesion
- 4.4.4 Coherence

4.5 The Structure of Discourse

- 4.5.1 The Paragraph Structure
- 4.5.2 Structure Beyond the Paragraph

4.6 Let Us Sum Up

4.7 Further Reading

4.8 Answers To Check Your Progress

4.9 Model Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- grasp the distinctiveness of sentence, text and discourse
- appreciate the qualities of a text in terms of correctness, clarity, etc.
- discriminate between text and discourse
- appreciate the structures of different forms of texts.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we shall deal with the concepts of *sentence, text* and *discourse* and related issues of the text notably their structures or forms. We begin by making a reference to the structure of the sentence which we refer to as the largest unit of grammatical description as the starting point for a discussion of the structures of the text and discourse. You will understand that a piece of text has certain distinctive characteristics notably *correctness* in the use of sentence structures and marks of punctuation; focus on *grammaticality* and *appropriateness*. Besides, a piece of text must have *clarity, cohesion* and *coherence.* We shall look at techniques by which a piece of text can be considered to have correctness and clarity, cohesion and coherence.

Another area of concern in this unit is the concept of discourse. We draw a distinction between text and discourse by placing discourse in language as process whereas text as the product of language. We draw points of reference between the structure of the paragraph and that of units larger than the paragraph.

4.3 SENTENCE, TEXT AND DISCOURSE

In our grammar books we had learnt the concept of the sentence as the largest unit of grammatical description. We had analysed the syntactic structure of the sentence in terms of words, phrases and clauses. In this section, we take the sentence as the starting point of our discussion on text and discourse.

4.3.1 The Sentence

In a discussion on text and discourse, it is useful to begin with the concept of the sentence for the simple reason that the sentence occupies two interesting positions in text and discourse. On the one hand, it is the largest unit of grammatical description while, on the other, it is referred to as the minimal unit of language activity. As the largest structural unit in terms of which the grammar

of a language is organised, a classification on the sentence can focus on two areas of activity – its structure and its functions. Approaches to structure proceed along many different lines, the most common one for pedagogical purpose being identification of a hierarchy of its elements in terms of *morpheme—word – phrase – clause – sentence*.

Another issue of concern is the identification of the sentence in a piece of text. In written language, it is fairly straightforward: we know that a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with an end-punctuation mark (a full stop, a note of interrogation or a sign of exclamation). In speech where intonation and pauses may give certain clues as to where a sentence boundary exists, it becomes important to have some knowledge of these features of the language for better communication.

4.3.2 The Text

A text is a piece of spoken or written language activity that belongs to the semantic system of the language. A text is realised through sentences though it is possible to have fragmentary bits of messages like

- NO SMOKING
- SILENCE
- KEEP OF THE GRASS
- WEAK BRIDGE DRIVE SLOW

or newspaper headlines like TEN KILLED THIRTY INJURED as texts. What is important to remember is that texts may refer to collections of spoken or written material ranging from (a) warning signs, (b) road signs or hoardings (c) news stories, (d) conversation between two participants or (e) any written or printed or spoken communication. Each of these pieces of texts requires to be encoded for meaning. Thus, text is a semantic unit used in discourse. We can define a text as a communicative occurrence which meets some standards of textuality notably, cohesion and coherence.

4.3.3 Discourse

Discourse is a general term to refer to the use of language as process. We may call it a piece of language that has been produced as a result of an act of communication. Whereas grammar refers to the rules of a language that operate in the formation of grammatical units such as phrases and clauses and sentences, discourse refers to larger units of language such as paragraphs, conversations and interviews. The basic difference between a text and a discourse is that discourse in language is a process whereas text is the product of a language activity. Discourse is what conceptualises in the minds of the participants of the discourse as a part of the language activity. Discourse subsumes the text as well as the context.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Answer the following questions:

(a) What do you mean by the hierarchical structure of a sentence?

(b) Briefly draw a distinction between text and discourse.

(c) How is grammar related to discourse?

4.4 QUALITIES OF A TEXT

The qualities of a text are discussed in the following sub-sections :

4.4.1 Correctness

One of the most important features of a text is grammatical correctness, which refers to whether a sentence structure is formally possible or not. It is concerned with whether the language permits a structure as grammatically possible or rejects it as ungrammatical. Grammar provides the logical framework without which communication in any language would be impossible. Imagine a young news writer covering a fire disaster reporting the incident as

follows:

**A massive fire has destroyed a thirty-six storey building in Central London last night. The fire caused a lot of damages.*

The first sentence uses a wrong verb form. When we use the time adverbial 'last night', we cannot use a present perfect tense form of the verb; instead, we use the simple past tense. Secondly, the word 'massive' is inappropriate here. The word does not collocate with fire; the word to use here could be *big/huge/devastating*. In the second sentence, the word damages is not correct. The word 'damage' is an uncountable noun that cannot be pluralised with the plural marker –s. Thus, grammaticality is the permissible ways by which words can be organised in a sentence structure.

Hence, along with grammaticality, there is another feature that can be seen as a feature of the text. It is appropriateness to the context or situation. A sentence can be grammatically feasible and possible but can still be unacceptable if it is not appropriate to a situation. We cannot say :

**The road was not large enough for the fire brigade to enter and hence the accident broke out.*

When we are talking about distances from one side to the other, we use *wide* or *broad* but not *large*. The phrasal verb 'broke out' is rather unusual with accident. We say fire broke out, malaria broke out but accident *occurred/took place/happened*.

In order to achieve acceptability, a text has to be grammatical and appropriate in the use of punctuation and capital letters. Read the following text with the punctuation and capital letters missing.

The cabinet secretariat has recently issued a directive to private secretaries of the concerned ministers in this regard it has been decided that smart phones mobile phones will henceforth not be permitted inside the meeting venues of cabinet committees it said.

Here is the version of the passage with the punctuation marks and capitals incorporated.

The Cabinet Secretariat has recently issued a directive to private secretaries of the concerned ministers in this regard.

"It has been decided that smart phones/mobile phones will henceforth not be permitted inside the meeting venues of Cabinet Committees," it said.

This version is definitely comprehensible as a text.

4.4.2 Clarity

Clarity is a distinctive feature of a piece of text. There are three aspects to clear communication.

- Being clear about what we want to state
- Being clear in the way we want to state it, and
- Ensuring that what appears clear to us will be equally clear to the person who receives the message.

(a) Being clear about what we want to state:

Thinking is an integral part of spoken or written communication. It becomes easier to write something when we have time to think clearly about what we want to write and the purpose for which we are writing. If we intend to write a text of any length, we require source material. It is helpful to think of a title for the composition that you intend to write. That narrows down our search for the materials. If, for example, we intend to write about the tourist potential of Assam, you should look up some materials from different sources in order to add authenticity to our composition. Next, we should be able to organise in a logical way the material in our composition. Most importantly, we should make a plan as detailed as possible and form an idea as to what to write at each step of our composition.

(b) Being clear in the way we want to state:

Being clear in the way we want to state implies that we should be conscious of the techniques of presenting our thoughts with clarity. These techniques include a competence in ordering the words in a sentence. Sequencing of words becomes more important to the

meaning of a sentence than anything else. We should be careful of loosely connected words and phrases. In general, descriptive words and phrases will draw meaning from the noun or verb that is nearest to it. Putting words in the wrong position will cause unintended associations that are either confusing or absurd. Here are two examples:

(i) I saw a dead cow walking on the road.

(ii) Did you see the portrait coming upstairs?

The problem with the first sentence is that it gives the impression that the information in the sentence is absurd. A dead body cannot walk on the road. Hence it becomes necessary to be clear about what you want to say by rephrasing the sentence with the words "while I was" before the words "walking on the road". Similarly, in the second sentence you have to clarify that it is not the portrait coming upstairs but the listener of this question by adding "while you were" before "coming upstairs".

(c) Ensuring that what appears clear to you is also clear to others :

Though our writing may appear quite clear to us, we can never entirely be sure that it is clear and unambiguous to others too. We can understand our writings even when we miss out the linkers or other structural elements. Hence, there is the need for revising our text by looking at it more critically for dangling and misplaced phrases, redundant words and vagueness in our choice of words.

4.4.3 Cohesion

A piece of text is characterized by a cohesiveness or unity between the sentences. Cohesion is the relation of meaning that exists within and between the sentences which creates a text. We discover that a good piece of composition is marked by certain cohesive links or devices that can be either explicit or implicit. Explicit cohesive devices are also called overt connectives whereas implicit cohesive devices are called covert connectives.

Overt connectives often play the role of linkers in a piece of text. They are specific devices in writing whose main objective in a piece of composition is to ensure a smooth transition. They can be single words or group of words each performing certain definite function in the composition.

(a) Those that deal with a new aspect of the subject

And so

First,...second,....third,... etc.

Next

Then...

(b) Those that reinforce a point already made

Again,

Besides,

For example,

For instance,

Furthermore,

In addition,

Moreover,

(c) Those that introduce a difference or contrast

Alternatively

Although

Conversely

Despite this, however

In comparison

In contrast

In spite of this

Meanwhile,

Nevertheless

On the other hand,

Still

Yet

(d) Those that indicate similarity

Furthermore

Likewise

Moreover

Similarly

(e) Those that indicate result

Accordingly

And so

As a result

Consequently

Then

Therefore

Thus

(f) Those that indicate summary or restatement

In other words

In short

On the whole

To put it differently

Covert connectives are not explicitly stated in a sentence or in a passage. They are stated in so indirect a manner that one has to look for them to discover them. Pronouns and adverbs covertly build up a web of inter-connection between sentences. This is the objective of covert connectives. Such connectivity characterise a text.

4.4.4 Coherence

We derive the meaning of the text solely on the basis of the words and structures of the sentence used to convey the message. We can recognize grammaticality and appropriateness in the use of language from which we derive meaning. But we fail to grasp meaning of a piece of text when there is no coherence between the sentences. The term coherence is used to refer to the relationships which link the meanings of sentences in a piece of text. Coherence shows the relationship between the sentences in a paragraph and between paragraphs in a piece of composition. To illustrate this point, read the following passage:

"The boys at school have just found out, and they are mocking me". "I am sure you have read his books about the house". Willie Chandran asked his father one day, "Why is my middle name Somerset?" His father said without joy, "You were named after a great English writer."

You will find that each of the sentences in the passage is correct. But somehow they do not make sense to you. What is lacking in them is coherence. Without coherence, a piece of writing fails to convey meaning. A good piece of writing is something more than an assembly of words or sentences. There should be coherence between these elements. Coherence between the sentences is missing in the passage above. Now, read the revised passage:

Willie Chandran asked his father one day, "Why is my middle name Somerset?" the boys at school have just found out and they are mocking me."

His father said without joy, "You were named after a great English writer. I am sure you have seen his books about the house."

To be comprehensible, a text must have coherence between the units of composition. Coherence occurs when the interpretation of some elements in the text is dependent on the other elements. Thereby, we discover an inner connection between the sentences. This is coherence. The first passage is not coherent; it fails as a piece of text – it is a non-text. The second passage is coherent; it qualifies as a piece of text.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: The following is a piece of text that lacks cohesion and coherence. Rewrite it in proper order.

No one could remember when the monsoon had been so late. And the summer was longer. It was hotter than usual and drier and dustier. Even the weather had a different feel in India that year. For weeks the sparse clouds cast only shadows. There was no rain. The summer of 1947 was not like other Indian summers.

4.5 THE STRUCTURE OF DISCOURSE

4.5.1 The Paragraph Structure

The structure of a paragraph can be a good starting point to discuss units of composition beyond the sentence. Just as a sentence can be discussed in terms of its structure, we can talk of different layers of structure while discussing a discourse. For example, we can discuss a paragraph in terms of these features: (a) a central controlling idea; (b) adequate development of the idea; and (c) coherent connections between parts of the paragraph. Here is a paragraph from a work of fiction:

It was Monday morning. Swaminathan was reluctant to open his eyes. He considered Monday specially unpleasant in the calendar. After the delicious freedom of Saturday and Sunday, it was difficult to get into the Monday mood of work and discipline. He shuddered at the very thought of school: that dismal yellow building; the fire-eyed Vedanayagam, his class-teacher; and the headmaster with his thin long cane.

The central controlling idea of the paragraph is that it was a Monday morning and Swaminathan was reluctant to open his eyes. The idea as to his reluctance to open his eyes is adequately developed all through the paragraph with the author pointing to several reasons why he detests Monday mornings – the delicious freedom of Saturday and Sunday and his bitterness towards his school. There are coherent connections between the parts of the paragraph guiding us smoothly from one sentence to the next.

4.5.2 Structure Beyond the Paragraph

We take the essay as an example of a piece of discourse beyond the paragraph. Generally, an essay can be divided into three parts: the introduction, the body and conclusion. The first paragraph of an essay is the introduction and the last paragraph is the

conclusion; the paragraphs in between constitute the body.

Let us look at the introduction of an essay. The introduction serves two purposes:

- to interest the reader and
- to lead him/her into the topic.

The introduction should arrest the reader's attention and show the reader what you are writing about and why. There are different ways by which you can make a presentation of the introduction of the essay. Let us look at a few of them.

1. *Opening paragraph as a direct statement*

   It was midday in a small settlement on the river Ogowe in West Africa. Into the jungle nearby floated the sound of music... (G. F. Lamb)

2. *Opening paragraph as a starting statement*

   August 6, 1945 – the day the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima – brought home to all of us in a dramatic fashion the significance of science in human life. (Marcel Junod)

3. *Opening paragraph as anecdote*

   Some time ago I was watching what must be the strangest group of refugees in this country... (Gerald Durrell)

The main body of the essay may consist of several paragraphs and comprise *statement, elucidation* and *comment*. There will be information to support the main argument of the essay. It collects together and elucidates the ideas promised in the first paragraph. It also comments on the ideas to support the view put forward there. The last paragraph of the essay is the conclusion. The conclusion begins with a restatement of the main argument of the essay.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: (a) Write a paragraph on "A scene in an examination hall".

(b) Write an essay on a book that you have read.



4.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we discussed the concepts of *sentence, text* and *discourse* and related issues of the text notably their structures or forms. We began with the structure of the sentence which we referred to as the largest unit of grammatical description and noted its inter-connectedness with the structures of the text and discourse. We examined the features of a piece of text by referring to *correctness* in the use of sentence structures and marks of punctuation; focus on *grammaticality* and *appropriateness*. Besides, we referred to features of a piece of text notably *clarity, cohesion* and *coherence* and the techniques by which a piece of text can have correctness and clarity, cohesion and coherence. Another area of concern that we referred to in this unit is the concept of discourse. We drew a distinction between text and discourse by placing discourse in language as process whereas text as the product of language. We also drew points of reference between the structure of a paragraph and that of units larger than a paragraph.



4.7 FURTHER READING

1) Beaugrande, Robert de & Dressler, Wolfgang. (1981). *Introduction to Text Linguistics,* Longman.
2) Brown, Gillian & Yule, George. (1983). *Discourse Analysis,* Cambridge.
3) Edmondson, Willis. (1981). *Spoken Discourse: A model for Analysis,* Longman.



4.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1:

(a) A sentence can be analysed in terms of its hierarchical structure. In this approach a five-rank hierarchy is used. The ranks are: *sentence – clause – phrase – word – morpheme*. According to this description, morphemes are units smaller than the word.

(b) A text is a semantic unit which is realized in sentences. A text is to the semantic system what a clause is to the grammatical system. We can call it a communicatve occurrence that meets several standards of textuality notably cohesion, coherence, clarity, correctness, etc. It is different from discourse in the sense that a discourse is a process while a text is a product of language activity. Discourse is what obtains in the mind of the participants of a discourse. The relationship between the participants of a discourse can also enable them to modify and organize their discourse in terms of formality, semi-formality and informality in the use of language.

(c) Grammar is related to discourse in an interesting way. Both are connected with the language structures. But whereas grammar is concerned with the structure of sentences by taking the sentence as the largest unit of grammatical description, discourse is concerned with the structure of units larger than the sentence.

Ans to Q No 2: The summer of 1947 was not like other Indian summers. Even the weather had a different feel in India that year. It was hotter than usual, and drier and dustier. And the summer was longer. No one could remember when the monsoon had been so late. For weeks, the sparse clouds cast only shadows. There was no rain.

Ans to Q No 3:

Try yourself.



4.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Give brief answers to the following questions:

(a) Explain the two interesting positions that a sentence occupies in the study of text and discourse.

(b) Explain how sentence boundaries are identified in speech.

(c) Discuss overt connectives with suitable examples.

(d) Give an example of covert connective.

Q 2: Answer the following questions:

(a) State the hierarchy of the sentence structure.

(b) Explain the term cohesion.

(c) Explain the structure of a paragraph

Q 3: Answer the following essay-type questions:

(a) Distinguish between text and discourse.

(b) Discuss two distinct features of a text.

(c) Discuss the features of discourse.

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UNIT 5 : APPLIED LINGUISTICS

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning Objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 The Nature and Scope of Applied Linguistics

5.4 Second Language Learning

5.5 Contrastive Analysis

- 5.5.1 Assumptions of Contrastive Analysis
- 5.5.2 Criticism on Contrastive Analysis

5.6 Error Analysis

- 5.6.1 Types of Errors
- 5.6.2 Error Analysis as a Pedagogic Tool
- 5.6.3 Methodology of Error Analysis

5.7 Let Us Sum Up

5.8 Further Reading

5.9 Answers To Check Your Progress

5.10 Model Questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- appreciate the nature and scope of applied linguistics
- define and describe the theories of second language learning
- explain contrastive analysis
- appreciate the importance of error analysis in language learning.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to the concept of applied linguistics to familiarise you with a few issues in this field of study. We define the term as the application of the concepts, principles and theories of linguistics to other related fields of study. This definition throws light on the scope of applied linguistics besides its multi-disciplinary character. Thereby, we become aware

of its extensive field. It is a field encompassing a broad range of language activities including English Language Teaching (ELT) which will be our primary concern in this unit.

Next, the unit draws a distinction between L1 and L2 learning by showing that while the L1 is acquired in a natural language learning environment, the L2 is learnt through a conscious process. We shall discuss the processes of L2 learning by considering the applications of the principles of behaviourism. We shall also take up the applications of the cognitive theory of L2 learning that prepares the ground for the next two sections where a discussion is presented on contrastive analysis and error analysis.

5.3 THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

While defining the term 'applied linguistics' we begin with the word *linguistics*. It is defined as the scientific study of the systems and principles underlying language. It is the one field of study that can offer insights into the issues and real-life problems related to language. The other word *applied* refers to the application of the concepts, principles and theories of linguistics to other related fields of study. Thereby, applied linguistics offers solutions to issues and real-life problems.

The scope of applied linguistics can best be explained by referring to the following issues and concerns related to its field:

(a) **Language problems in developing nations:** These problems have arisen out of the linguistic consequences of colonialism, national language problems, literacy programmes among others.

(b) **Language and society :** The area of concern is the relationship of language and society. It addresses issues on language varieties, speech communities, dialect studies, standard language and register among others taken up in the field of *sociolinguistics*.

(c) **Language and mind:** The area of concern is the study on the relation between language and the individuals' behaviour and capabilities in affective variables like interest and motivation on the one hand and language acquisition in children on the other taken up in the field of

psycholinguistics.

(d) Language teaching and learning: The area of concern is the study of various issues of language teaching and learning ranging from syllabus design, materials production to teaching and evaluation.

(e) Communication and interaction: It is a vast field covering areas like *discourse analysis, stylistics, translation, lexicography* among others.

Thus, we discover the extensive scope of 'applied linguistics' encompassing a broad range of language activities.

Secondly, we understand that applied linguistics is an inter-disciplinary field drawing on disciplines like sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, pedagogy and linguistics in dealing with problems of language teaching and learning. The field is practical in nature without losing sight of the theories of general linguistics.

Moreover, we understand that applied linguistics explores the relation between theory and practice with particular reference to language teaching. It is a practically oriented field and at the same time, theory-driven. Various language learning theories have given a direction to the practical orientation of the field of ELT.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Answer the following questions briefly:

(a) Define the term applied linguistics.

(b) State briefly why applied linguistics is considered inter-disciplinary.

(c) Briefly list the areas of ELT.

5.4 SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

In general terms, the term "second language" refers to any language other than the learners' mother tongue or first language (L1) that the learners acquire. In specific terms, the term "second language" in the context of the three language formula adopted by the National Policy on Education refers to English wherein the learners' first language is invariably the first language

that they learn in the home environment. Here our focus is on learning English as second language (L2). But before that, it would be important to see what exactly is involved in learning the first language.

While considering the child's acquisition of language between the ages of about twelve months and five years, the most interesting thing that we may observe is the child's learning process. How does that happen? It has now been accepted that the early language environment that children are exposed to plays an important part in their learning the L1. This language environment consists of a speech environment provided to them by their parents, elders and other children to acquire their L1. The term acquisition refers to the process by which a learner learns the L1 as the development of the L1 is an innate ability. This claim has given rise to the following notions:

1. Children are born with innately endowed capabilities to build up for themselves the 'knowledge' of their first language.
2. They do not have to be taught the rules of their L1 or corrected for their mistakes
3. They learn language by being exposed to it.
4. Linguistic rules develop unconsciously.

Thus, based on mere exposure to a language community, children invent the grammar of the concerned language for themselves with no significant language related inputs. The foundation of the L1 is laid unconsciously. Subsequently, they receive formal inputs by which they build on to what they had been exposed to leading to a proficiency in the language.

However, the process by which children acquire and gain proficiency in their L2, is far from being an unconscious process. It is a conscious process. We note that the environmental circumstance of L2 learning differ systematically from L1 learning. Discussions on the process of the child's L2 learning have always been guided by the fundamental issues of a set of theories of language learning. The theory of L2 learning that had gained popularity in the 50s and 60s of the last century was the behaviourist theory. Here we shall briefly bring out its implications to language learning.

(a) A language is learnt only through imitation and an exposure to the language.

(b) The more a learner gets the opportunity to use and practice the language, the more he/she learns the language.

(c) Language is always used with reference to a particular context or situation and hence the full meaning of a language unit is known only when the situation is known.

(d) The situation may be real (actual or recalled) or contrived (visualised or a verbal context).

(e) Oral communication is the most natural use of language and that is made use of in L2 learning. The spoken language comes earlier than the written language.

(f) Selection and gradation of language items should form the basis of the teaching/learning experience so that what to teach and how much to teach and especially how to teach become a useful framework for the teaching/learning experience.

The cognitive view of language learning, on the other hand, would not like to explain language learning purely in terms of imitation. If it were so, it would not be possible to account for the utterances that the child had produced without hearing them before. The child had heard sentence structures like:

(i) This is a book.

(ii) This is a ball.

But surely, it had not heard the sentence given below.

(iii) *This is a white.

(iv) *This is a went.

How did the child produce such a sentence? According to the cognitive view of language learning, the learner possesses some kind of mechanism that processes the language data. The output from this action is a system of language rules which allows the learner to produce other sentences.

It is important to state that since the child's exposure to the language is limited and gradual, it is not in a position to formulate all the rules of the language that would make it possible to construct a number of well-formed sentences. If the learner makes errors at this stage of learning, these errors

are merely developmental errors. The rules that it makes with its limited input would get modified with more input.

According to the cognitive view, repetition and practice have been considerably devalued as language learning strategies. In their place hypothesis formation and problem-solving have been emphasised.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: Fill up the blanks:

(a) L1 learning is an _____ process.

(b) Every normal child has an _____ language learning faculty.

(c) L1 children acquire their language by being _____ to it.

(d) Based on their exposure to their language, learners _____ a grammar of the language.

(e) Repetition and practice constitute the main strategies of the_____ theory of learning.

5.5 CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

The mistakes or errors that learners make have been a concern that had led towards a systematic study on errors in an effort to account for their linguistic and psychological origin, regularity, predictability, variability and so on. The concept of *contrastive analysis* (CA) of learners' errors is such an effort that was developed and practised in the 1950s and 1960s and had been guided by the theoretical assumptions of the structural approach and the behaviourist theory of language learning.

5.5.1 Assumptions of Contrastive Analysis

The term *contrastive* refers to a comparison. In the present context, the comparison is of the linguistic systems of two languages, for example, the sound system or the grammatical system followed by an analysis of the distinctive features of the learners' L1 and L2. One of the assumptions of CA is that the main difficulties of learning

a new language are caused by the *interference* from the L1. It was hypothesised that a substantial number of learners' errors can be due to the interference coming from the learners' first language (L1). It is a phenomenon which has been referred to as *the pull of the mother tongue.* The term implies that when learners acquire their L1 /mother tongue they begin as it were, with a clean slate. As they acquire the language – its forms, meanings and their associations get impressed in their minds. When they begin to learn a second language (L2) they carry over the language pattern of their L1 into their target language (L2) performance. In psychological terms, this is known as *transfer* – meaning that when they use the L2, they transfer the language habits that they had already acquired to the L2.

Another assumption is that the errors of L2 learners are chiefly due to the differences between the structural patterns or the sound pattern of their L1 and L2. The greater these differences are, the more acute the learning difficulties will be. Learners' deviation in the use of language from the norm of the L2 occurs as a result of their bilingual or multilingual habits accounting for their familiarity with more than one language. This assumption had led to the argument that a contrastive analysis of the structural framework of the two languages is needed to predict and to make explicit the difficulties and errors of L2 learners.

5.5.2 Criticism on Contrastive Analysis

Research findings have provided the evidence of a number of limitations and shortcomings of the contrastive analysis hypothesis. These studies have shown that the developmental structures of first and second language learners are similar. More significantly, L2 learners make the same kind of errors that L1 learners make.

As against these findings the contrastive analysis had hypothesized that the major source of errors is supposed to be due

to the difference between the structural features of the learners' L1 and L2. Thus while learning syntax of the L2, the learners tend to use the structure of their L1. But it has been seen that the L2 errors of learners are similar to their L1 errors. This evidence rules out the argument that the errors of L2 learners are due to the interference of their L1. Thus, interference as the primary source of errors as argued by contrastive analysis has been questioned.

Moreover, the argument of language transfer as hypothesized by contrastive analysis, have been questioned. That is, the automatic transfer of L1 structure due to habit onto the structure of the L2 is virtually non-existent. Studies of L2 acquisition have ended to imply that CA may be most predictive at the level of speech. It is logical that bilingual speakers tend to be influenced by the sound system of their L1 when they use L2 in oral communication.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Answer the following questions:

(a) What is contrasted in contrastive analysis?

(b) Explain the term L1 interference.

(c) Explain the terms bilingual and bilingualism.

(d) Explain the terms multilingual and multilingualism.

5.6 ERROR ANALYSIS

With the advent of *contrastive analysis* (CA) and its claim to predict and explain some major types of errors, there has grown a serious interest in learners' errors. Primarily the question as to what is an error has been engaging the minds of the scholars. Various terms like *slips*, *lapses, mistakes* and *errors* are currently in use. These terms generally mean the use of a word or a grammatical item either in speech or in writing in a way which is considered faulty. Pit Corder, in his paper titled "The Significance of Learners' Errors"(1967) makes a distinction between *errors of performance* and *errors of competence*.

5.6.1 Types of Errors

Errors of performance include slips, lapses and mistakes. Slips are made by a learner when writing or speaking and which result from a lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness or some other aspect of performance. We often refer to slip of the pen or slip of the tongue. We would not make these slips if we are a bit careful. Similarly, lapses and mistakes are also errors of performance that may often result from memory lapses, fatigue or emotional strain or even a failure to match the language to the situation resulting in inappropriate utterance. Errors of performance will characteristically be unsystematic and it is meaningless to formulate rules to overcome them.

Errors of competence on the other hand, will be systematic. Primarily, the significance of these errors is that we obtain from them evidence of the system of the language that the learner is using or has learnt at a particular point in the course of learning. Secondly, they provide to the researcher evidence on how language is learnt or acquired, what strategies or procedure the learners are employing in the learning of the language. Thirdly, they are important to the learners themselves because they provide developmental evidence of language learning. This is the type of errors that belong to the scope of *error analysis* (EA).

5.6.2 Error Analysis as a Pedagogic Tool

The claim for using EA as a primary pedagogical tool is based on the argument that EA does not suffer from the inherent limitations of CA in its restrictions to errors caused by interference or transfer. Rather than making an attempt to compare the linguistic features of the learners' L1 and L2, in EA it has been thought to be more relevant to study the learners' performance data so as to infer from it the nature of their competence and the process by which the language elements are acquired. Thus, EA has been able to overcome the

drawbacks of CA.

From the insights gained from such investigation, it has been possible to adopt the teaching materials which facilitate the process of acquisition. The learners have been seen as constructing for themselves a grammar of the target language on the basis of linguistic data to which they are exposed and the exposure they receive from classroom teaching. With the newer insights gained from cognitive language learning theory and transformational generative grammar L2 learning has now been seen as a creative process of constructing a system in which learners are trying out hypotheses about the target language from a number of possible sources, limited knowledge of the target language, knowledge of communicative functions, knowledge of the L1 and so on.

5.6.3 Methodology of Error Analysis

Error analysis works by following a systematic methodology beginning with the *identification* or recognition of errors as the first stage of the process. Next, it becomes necessary to provide a *description* of the errors followed by an *explanation* of the errors in terms of their source, cause and significance.

The identification or recognition of errors is possible from samples of language users' speech or composition. For example, we can recognize the following sentences as errors:

1. *We are live in this house.
2. *He was died last year.
3. *He did not found.
4. *We can took him out.
5. *He born in Delhi.
6. *The sky is cover with clouds.

It becomes necessary now to provide a description and explanation of these errors. Let us take up two of them:

(a) **We are live in this house* is not acceptable. The acceptable form is *We live in this house.* It is basically an error of syntax;

more specifically, an error in the use of verb form. The error can be classified as over-generalization

(b) **He did not found* is not acceptable. The acceptable form is *He was not found.* It is basically an error in the use of the verb form in passive constructions. The error can be classified as incomplete application to rules.

The basic point now is: why do these errors occur? In his description and explanation of the types of errors given above, Jack C Richards (1971) in his paper titled "A Non-contrastive Approach to Error Analysis" observes that an examination of these errors suggests that they reflect the general characteristics of learning the rules of grammar. These include *over-generalization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules, false concepts hypothesized* among others. Developmental errors illustrate the learners' attempt to build up hypotheses about features of the English language from their limited experience of it in the classroom or through textbooks.

(a) *Overgeneralization*: The term covers instances where the learner makes errors on the basis of their experience of other structures in the L2. For example **We are walk to school every day* is basically an error in the use of the verb form. The error is the result of a tendency to over-generalize the rules of grammar. Over-generalization generally involves the creation of one unacceptable sentence due to the false generalization of the grammatical input that the learner had acquired.

(b) *Ignorance of rule restriction:* The term covers instances where the learner fails to observe the restrictions of application of rules of grammar to contexts where they do not apply. For example:

- From *We talked about it*, in the analogy he produces **We discussed about it*.
- From *He said to me*, he produces **He told to me*.
- From *Ask him to do it*, he produces **Make him to do it*.

(c) *Incomplete application of rules*: Under this category we may note the occurrence of structures which show that the learner is in the process of acquiring acceptable forms. For example, earner has acquired the statement form which he uses wrongly in the question form by producing sentences like

- *When you are coming?
- *Why you are late?

(d) *False concepts hypothesised:* Under this category we include errors that are produced from faulty comprehension of distinction in the L2. Examples include

- *He was helped me.
- *She is comes to school regularly.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Write short notes on:

(a) Overgeneralization

(b) Ignorance to rule restriction

(c) Incomplete application of rules



5.7 LET US SUM UP

This unit introduced you to the concept of applied linguistics so as to familiarise you with some of the concerns of this field of study. We defined the term as 'the application of the concepts, principles and theories of linguistics to other related fields of study'. We discussed the scope of applied linguistics in terms of a number of inter-disciplinary fields. Next, we took up issues on L2 learning by taking L1 learning as starting point for the discussion. We brought out the differences between L1 learning and L2 learning by showing that while the L1 is acquired in a natural language learning environment, the L2 is learnt through a conscious process. We discussed the applications of the principles of behaviourism to L2 learning by identifying the behaviourist model of learning. We also discussed the

applications of the cognitive theory of L2 learning to initiate a discussion on contrastive analysis and error analysis.



5.8 FURTHER READING

1) Krishnaswami, N. et al (1992). *Modern Applied Linguistics,* Macmillan.

2) McCarthy, Michael. (2001). *Issues in Applied Linguistics,* Cambridge University Press.

3) Richards, Jack C. ed. (1990). *Error Analysis,* Longman, London & New York.



5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1:

(a) Applied linguistics may be defined as the field of study involving the application of the concepts, principles and theories of linguistics to other related fields of study. It tries to offer solutions to real-world problems in which language is a central issue.

(b) Applied linguistics is considered inter-disciplinary because of its relationship with several other disciplines notably sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, general linguistics, clinical linguistics (speech therapy), stylistics, discourse analysis, lexicography and so on.

(c) The areas of ELT include learners' need-analysis, syllabus designing, development of textbooks and instructional materials (print and electronic, visual and audio-visual), designing different kinds of tests and remedial teaching materials based on learners' errors.

Ans to Q No 2:

(a) unconscious

(b) innate

(c) exposed

(d) invent

(e) behavourist

Ans to Q No 3:

(a) The linguistic features of the learners' L1 and L2 are contrasted.

(b) The effect of one language on the learning of another is referred to as interference. The difficulties faced by learners due to the effect of their L1 while learning the L2 is known by the term L1 interference.

(c) Bilingual refers to a person who knows or uses two languages. Bilingualism is the use of at least two languages either by an individual or a community of speakers.

(d) Multilingual refers to a person who knows and uses three or more languages. Multilingualism is the use of three or more languages by an individual or a language community.

Ans to Q No 4 : (a) (b) (c): See short notes at 5.6.3



5.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Give brief answers to the following questions:

(a) Explain the word *applied* in the term "applied linguistics".

(b) State the areas of concern of sociolinguistics.

(c) State the areas of concern of ELT.

(d) Define the term errors.

Q 2: Answer the following questions:

(a) Discuss the scope of applied linguistics.

(b) Discuss the term "pull of the mother tongue".

(c) Discuss the criticism against contrastive analysis.

(d) Discuss the methodology of error analysis.

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UNIT 6 : STYLISTICS

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Nature and Scope of Stylistics

6.4 Stylistics and Literary Criticism

6.5 Formal Poetic Style

6.6 Formal Prose Style

6.7 Stylistic Analysis of Poem

6.8 Let Us Sum Up

6.9 Further Reading

6.10 Answers To Check Your Progress

6.11 Model Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- appreciate the nature and scope of stylistics
- distinguish between the approaches of stylistics and literary criticism to a literary text
- appreciate the features of formal poetic style
- appreciate the features of formal prose style.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

In the general sense, stylistics is the study of style; of how language use varies according to varying situations and contexts in which language is used either orally or in writing. In this unit you shall be introduced to the nature and scope of stylistics. We observe that what style we adopt depends upon a number of situational factors that can be explained in three domains namely, *the field of discourse, the style of discourse* and *the mode of discourse*.

Next we shall discuss the distinction between stylistic analysis of a literary text and the approach of literary critics to a literary text by arguing that while the literary critic is concerned among other things with value judgement of a literary text, stylistics is concerned with how language operates in the literary text and to explore its significance.

We shall next move on to an analysis of the formal properties of poetic style by stating that poetic style is essentially a deviation from the general use of language either of written prose or conversational discourse.

Following the different deviations and devices that poets use to make poetic language distinctive, we shall discuss the features of formal prose style and the style of conversation. The unit is essentially an introduction to the field of stylistics to make you aware of the approaches that can be adopted to analyse literary style as evident from the stylistic analysis of the poetical text given.

6.3 NATURE AND SCOPE OF STYLISTICS

Stylistics is concerned with the study of style of distinctive varieties of language and variations in the use of language. When we use language, we adopt a style. However, what style we adopt depends upon a number of factors that can be explained in terms of three domains:

(a) The subject-matter or topic that is governed by different fields of language use or the *fields of discourse*. These fields include the fields of science and technology, business communication, law and journalism, religion and literature. Each field is characterized by its distinctive language use. For example, the style of science and technology is different from that of business communication which again is different from the language of law and journalism.

(b) The relationship between the participants of the discourse which could require the *style of discourse* to be formal, semi-formal or informal. We modify our style of language use into formal, semi-formal and informal depending upon the demands of a particular situation.

(c) The *mode of discourse* which refers to the medium in which the language is used. The medium could be spoken or written. The style

of spoken language is different from that of the written language and so on.

We make a selection from a range of syntactic and lexical possibilities according to the purpose of communication and the context and situation in which the communication takes place. For example, depending on the speaker-listener relationship, we use an informal or a semi-formal or formal style. Likewise, depending on whether it is in the spoken or the written mode, our style may vary. Again, depending on the field in which we are using language as to whether we are writing a news-story or a work of fiction or a commercial correspondence, our style will also vary. A study of these variations in the use of language belongs to the purview of stylistics. The study of style has traditionally been the preserve of literary criticism. Through the centuries, literary critics from Horace and Longinus to Matthew Arnold and Dr F.R. Leavis and beyond, have characteristically examined the way in which different literary works use different literary styles to represent human experience. The ultimate concern of the literary critic is with evaluation, with being able to say whether a work succeeds or fails as a work of art.

Stylistics does not discriminate between literary texts and non-literary texts as worthwhile objects of study. In other words, stylistics does not attempt to accord a privileged status to a literary work over a non-literary work which could be a travel brochure or an entry of a recipe book or any written text for that matter. Thus, the scope of stylistics is much wider than that of literary criticism with its exclusive concern for literary texts.

Secondly, stylistics does not accord a privileged position to the written text over the spoken word. The spoken word can be fairly extensive; one can think about sports commentaries, religious sermons, chat shows, conversational acts, etc., all of which come under the purview of stylistics. The primary agenda of stylistics is to concern itself with the text – either literary or non-literary, either spoken or written, as a linguistic entity worthy of serious study.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Answer the following questions briefly:

(a) Give a definition of stylistics.

(b) Compared to stylistics, what do you think is the limitation of literary criticism?

(c) Explain the term 'field of discourse'.

(d) Give an example of a sentence illustrating formal style.

6.4 STYLISTICS AND LITERARY CRITICISM

A major concern of stylistics is to use new insights in linguistics to study the language of literature. From this point of view, one of the definitions of stylistics could be that stylistics is the linguistic study of literature. This definition raises a basic question: how is a stylistic analysis of a literary text different from that of literary criticism?

By stating that stylistics is also concerned with the study and analysis of literary texts, it is important to remember that the approach of stylistics, (more appropriately, *literary stylistics,* as the term is referred to in order to distinguish it from general stylistics,) is not the same as that of literary criticism. H.G. Widdowson (1975) very convincingly draws the distinction between these two fields. He states that the ultimate purpose of literary criticism is to interpret and evaluate literary writings as works of art. The literary critic explicates the individual message of the literary text in terms which makes its significance clear to others. He deciphers a message encoded in an unfamiliar way, to express its meaning in familiar and comprehensible terms.

The basic distinction of stylistics with literary criticism is that stylistics does not attempt to account for literary value of a literary text unlike literary criticism. Stylistics is concerned with the language of the text. Given a piece of literature, a poem for example, stylistics will be interested in finding out how language operates to make the text meaningful. If there are any curiosities of usage, some expressions that appear to be foregrounded against normal usage, stylistics attempts to see how these curiosities might

be accounted for. It does not attempt to follow the path of literary criticism leading to a search for literary value of a piece of text. Freed from the burden of evaluation, stylistics approaches a literary text with a fresh and almost a naive eye and explores some very basic issues concerning the ways in which the language of a literary text communicates.

We may illustrate the stylistic approach to a literary text through the concept of foregrounding. It is a term originally from painting where it is a means of achieving significance. If we assume that literary language is somewhat different from non-literary language, then we can say that non-literary language is the background against which literary language is foregrounded. Foregrounding devices are not systematically employed in non-literary language unlike as in literary language where a word or expression stands out or deviates from normal collocation or usage so as to give what Leech calls “an extra regularity into the language. Stylistic analysis of literary texts would attempt to discover foregrounding in the text and see how these devices are aesthetically purposeful. When we read Eliot’s “Prufrock...” for example, the colloquial expressions in the poem appear to stand out. Stylistic analysis attempts to discover significance in these deviations.

The nature of the language of literature has been engaging the attention of stylistics more than anything else. These engagements point to diverse views on literary styles, especially formal poetic style, by carrying the notion that poets exercise a freedom in their use of language that is denied to the others. The term “poetic licence” is used to explain this freedom. Poetic licence is the liberty allowed to poets to play with the language according to their needs in the uses of *figurative speech, archaism* among others. These uses characterise literary language in the sense that they are deviations from the general use of language which has been considered to be the norm. These devices including foregrounding are the tools of stylistics in the attempt to analyse literary texts.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: Answer the following questions:

(a) Explain the term “poetic licence”.

(b) Briefly discuss the term ‘foregrounding’.

6.5 FORMAL POETIC STYLE

The term “formal poetic style” carries the notion that the language of poetry contains features that distinguish it from the features of prose. If we take the language of prose as the norm we can say that the language of poetry is a deviation from the norm. Poetic language deviates by the use of figurative speech and archaism. The term figurative speech refers to the use of literary devices like *similes, metaphors, personification, transferred epithets* etc. We had earlier discussed these literary devices along with a number of stylistic devices in our unit on *The Language of Literature*. The term *archaism* is another literary device used in literary texts. The term denotes use of words or expressions especially in poetry that have now been considered old or obsolete. These uses contribute towards making the language of poetry *deviate* from that of prose or the language of conversation referred to as *verbal style*.

Deviation is especially characteristic of poetic language: the language deviates from expected norms of linguistic expression. A study of these deviations can give us a fair idea of what constitutes poetic language. Moreover, these deviations provide us a framework for the analysis of a literary text. They are the linguistic devices that poets make use of to bring distinctiveness in literary language. A few of them have been briefly discussed below:

(a) ***Lexical deviation*:** The term refers to the liberty of poets to coin new words or to give new meanings to an old word. Poets apply the existing rules of word formation with greater generality than is customary.

(b) ***Grammatical deviation*:** The term refers to the liberty of poets to deviate from the grammatical conventions that allow an ordering of different grammatical elements in a pattern. Word-order in English

syntax being fixed, it is possible to identify patterns in poetry that deviate from these fixed patterns as in

(i) My days among the dead are passed (Southey)

(ii) Home they brought her warrior dead. (Tennyson)

(c) ***Phonological deviation*****:** Phonology is the study of the sound system of a language. The term phonological deviation refers to a deviation from the normal pronunciation of a word for certain poetic effect. In their effort towards identifying rhyming words, poets deviate from normal pronunciation For example. John Donne deviates from the normal pronunciation of the word 'wind' (strong flowing air) to pronounce it as a verb form of the word 'wind' (to twist or to turn) in the poem "Sweetest love, I do not goe..." Apart from rhyme, metre, assonance and alliteration which are a part of the poetic language are realized with a patterning of sounds.

(d) ***Graphological deviation*****:** Graphology means writing. The term refers to the liberty of poets to deviate from the norms of conventional writing including both spelling and punctuation. Blake calls his animal "Tyger" and not "Tiger", making the spelling of the word a deviation from the normal spelling of the word which was already standardised in Blake's time. Blake makes use of a deliberate choice of the old spelling suggesting an animal more mysterious and different. A striking example of punctuation is the American poet E.E. Cummings who deviates from all the rules of punctuation and capital letters in his poetry.

(e) ***Semantic deviation*****:** The term refers to the liberty of poets to deviate from the normal conventions of meaning and to give new meaning to words and expressions. Wordsworth's "The child is father of the man" is a striking example of semantic deviation in the sense that the surface meaning conveyed by the line deviates from normal meaning which would tend to regard the man as the father of the child.

(f) ***Register deviation*****:** The term "register" refers to the situational use of language. Poets often take the liberty to shift from one register to another for poetic effect. For example, they may deviate from a formal poetic style to a conversational style or some other variety of style

that makes the text to stand out to provide significance of some sort.

Apart from these deviations, poetic language makes use of a few other devices to achieve poetic effect. These include *repetitions, foregrounding* and *parallel structure*. Repetition is often employed by us even in our ordinary language for emphasis. Poets use the device systematically to achieve more complex effects than are possible in daily language. The repetition may be of sounds or words and phrases and sentences or lines in poetry as in "Stopping by woods..." by Robert Frost where the last two lines are repeated "And miles to go before I sleep" primarily to give a connotative significance to the word "sleep" to refer to death. Parallel structure, on the other hand, is seen as a poetic device in which a structure or line used earlier is repeated with minor changes in words as in "To err is human, to forgive, divine". In nursery rhymes and ballads, it affords some kind of pleasure.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Name the type of poetic deviation in these lines:

(a) Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen

(b) The sun does arise
And make merry the skies

(c) Tomorow and tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty face from day to day...

(d) Discuss semantic deviation.

6.6 FORMAL PROSE STYLE

The term formal prose style used here refers to written prose that is distinct from conversational or verbal style on the one hand and formal poetic style on the other. The basic character of formal prose style is its distinctive and well-structured syntax, its use of complete and well-formed sentences that follow all the conventions of grammar and usage. For example, a notable feature of formal prose style is the use of subordinations

and passive constructions. Such constructions are very rare in conversational style. The sentence constructions used in formal prose style follows the cannons of grammaticality unlike poetic style where grammatical deviation of a device followed by poets besides a host of other devices that go under the category of poetic licence. Grammaticality can be called a distinctive feature of formal prose style.

Besides grammaticality, formal prose style is marked by appropriateness. It is not enough for sentences to be grammatical; the style followed must be appropriate for a given situation. Different fields of language have been identified namely the language of science and technology, of business communication and so on, as it becomes necessary to select the appropriate variety of language for the distinctive field. Thus, the formal prose style used in newspaper writings will not be appropriate in writing a legal brief or a report in the area of science and technology.

Moreover, formal prose style is characterized by the extensive use of cohesive markers to show relationship between words and sentences to achieve connectivity and coherence of the text. Just as one word leads to another in a sentence, one sentence in a paragraph leads to another and one paragraph in a longer text leads to another. In between there are cohesive devices that characterise formal prose style.

Formal prose style contrasts with conversational or verbal style that refers to the style of spoken language. From the point of view of production, it is clear that spoken language and written language make somewhat different demands on language producers. The speaker has available to him/her the full range of voice quality effects as well as facial expression, postural and gestural systems that are denied to the writer. The most significant character of verbal language is that it is typically much less structured than that of written language. Spoken language is characterised by incomplete utterances, context-bound utterances and space fillers like *well, er, I think, you know,* etc.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Answer the following questions:

(a) Explain the term “grammaticality”.

(b) Explain what you mean by the term “appropriateness”.

6.7 STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF POEM

In this section we propose to present a stylistic analysis of the first section of “To Autumn” by John Keats by considering the lexical and grammatical devices and foregrounded lexical items that contribute towards a cohesive structure of the lines.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom friend of the maturing sun:
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss’d cottage-trees;
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
To swell the gourd and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o’er-brimmed their clammy cells.

The first thing that we note about the lines from John Keats’ “To Autumn” is that the lines have a cohesive structure. Both lexical and grammatical devices have been used to bind the lines into a cohesive piece of text. The poet achieves this cohesion by the use of lexical sets that form a network of inter-related lexical items. The following are the lexical sets identified:

(a) mellow—mature—ripeness—sweet
(b) fruit – apple – gourd – hazel – kernel
(c) vine – moss’d cottage-trees – flowers
(d) swell – plump – o’er-brimmed – fill – load – bend
(e) season – summer – warm days – sun

These lexical sets notably *mellow – fruit – vine – swell—season,* contribute towards building up a network of cohesive devices to bring out the deeper meaning underlying the lines. They heighten the effect of the "mellow fruitfulness" of autumn brought about by the conspiracy of the maturing sun with the season.

The adjective "maturing" in "maturing sun" is interesting. The denotative meaning of the word is the action of ripening of the fruit by the sun. But connotatively, it could also mean the sun of autumn in its maturing stage before its decline in winter. These lexical items in each set not only help to form inter-textual patterns but also to paint a landscape of autumn with the ripening fruit, late flowers and the bees gathering honey in their already clammy cells touched by a sunset glow.

A notable feature of the given lines is the foregrounding of some lexical items in order to make them stand out against the background of normal use of language. As example we refer to the expression "bosom friend" that is used in the context of the "friendship" between the sun and the autumn season. This friendship leads them to "conspire" to come into a secret plan to ripen the fruits of autumn. From this sense it is seen that the word "conspiring" too stands out. The poet makes use of lexical items denoting human action that are attributed to non-human entities – the sun and the season. Thereby, these lexical items carry a deeper significance. They suggest that the poet takes recourse to personification. Foregrounding occurs here because the placement of the lexical items *bosom friend* and *conspiring* become figurative.

Another notable stylistic feature in the lines is the pattern of syntax.

- To bend with apples...
- To swell the gourd...
- To load and bless...
- To set budding more...

They are parallel structures that also build up inter-textual patterns where they are related among themselves. The lexical sets identified above denote a large variety of fruit of the season. But they connote to create a situation of the abundance of autumn. Words like bend, swell and load contribute towards creating the effect of the abundance of autumn.



6.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we discussed stylistics as the study of style; of how language use varies according to varying situations and contexts in which language is used either orally or in writing. You are now familiar with the nature and scope of stytistics. We briefly discussed the three domains namely, the field of discourse, the style of discourse and the mode of discourse. Next we discussed the distinction between stylistic analysis of a literary text and the approach of literary critics to a literary text by arguing that while the literary critic is concerned among other things with value judgement of a literary text, stylistics is concerned with how language operates in the literary text and to explore its significance. We next moved on to an analysis of the formal properties of poetic style by stating that poetic style is essentially a deviation from the general use of language either of written prose or conversational discourse. After discussing the different deviations and devices that poets use to make poetic language distinctive, we moved on to provide a sample of formal prose style and the style of conversation. An attempt has also been made to work out an analysis of a poem by applying the devices and deviations as tools for analysis.



6.9 FURTHER READING

1) Leech, Geoffrey N.(1975). *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry,* Longman.
2) Toolan, Michael. (1997). *Language in Literature,* Arnold, London.
3) Widdowson, H.G. (1995). *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature,* Longman.

6.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1:

(a) Stylistics is a field of study that makes use of the new insights in linguistics to study the language of literature. In other words, stylistics is the linguistic study of language. However, because of its concern with language, stylistics also reaches out to non-literary language as worthwhile objects of study.

(b) The field of stylistics is much wider than that of literary criticism. Stylistics encompasses not only literary and non-literary texts but also both oral and written texts. On the other hand, the range of literary criticism is restricted to an evaluation of a literary text.

(c) For the field of discourse refer to 6.3. (a).

(d) Example: You are advised to see the doctor.

Ans to Q No 2:

(a) The term “poetic licence” refers to the liberty enjoyed by poets to break the rules of the language when it suits them. The poets exercise this freedom of distorting common or ordinary language with a definite aesthetic purpose. But unless the aesthetic purposefulness emerges, sooner or later in the interpretation of the poem, the deviation will be felt to be mere whimsical or a habit on the part of poets for their own sake.

(b) See 6.4.

Ans to Q No 3:

(a) Parallel structures or parallelism

(b) Grammatical deviation

(c) Repetition as a poetic device

(d) For semantic deviation see 6.5.

Ans to Q No 4:

(a) Grammaticality: see 6.6.

(b) Appropriateness: see 6.6.



6.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Give brief answers to the following questions:

(a) Explain the term 'style of discourse'.

(b) Give the two modes of discourse stated in this unit.

(c) Stylistics does not discriminate between literary texts and non-literary texts. (State True/False)

(d) Give an example of personification.

Q 2: Explain the following:

(a) Foregrounding

(b) Lexical deviation

(c) Phonological deviation

(d) Parallelism

Q 3: Answer the following:

(a) Discuss the nature and scope of stylistics.

(b) Discuss the distinctive features of stylistics and literary criticism.

(c) Give a stylistic analysis of the following poem titled "The Eagle":

He clasps the crag with crooked hands,
Close to the sun in lonely lands
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls,
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

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UNIT 7 : INTERPRETING LITERATURE

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Defining Literature

7.4 The Basic Forms of Literature

7.5 Interpreting Works of Literature

7.6 Let Us Sum Up

7.7 Further Reading

7.8 Answers To Check Your Progress

7.9 Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- define the meaning of literature
- grasp the concept of 'literary canon'
- discuss the various forms of literature
- identify the various National and International prizes for literature
- gain an idea on the ways to interpret and evaluate works of literature
- develop an interest to further explore various works of literature.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

Literature is a comprehensive term for the rich variety of literary works that capture human imagination, experiences and life in its myriad forms. In the earlier times, any form of written document was referred to as 'literature'. However, literature came to be universally acknowledged as a domain that encompasses a range of creative or reflective writings or works that follow literary conventions and have a distinct literary appeal in its form, style and content. Literature mirrors the world around us and can be very powerful, as well as, influential in our lives through its reflections and revelations. The invention of the printing press brought about a revolutionary

change as it made available books in the printed form. This led to a wide circulation across the world and it provided an impetus to process of printing and publication of books which led to the proliferation of literature. The present unit explores literature in order to highlight some of its major forms while examining the presence of multiple literary traditions and the ways in which we can interpret literature in order to cultivate an interest in exploring works of literature, as well as, enhance our critical reading skills.

7.3 DEFINING LITERATURE

The term 'Literature' is derived from the Latin word *literatura*, where litera means 'writing' which encompasses various forms of literary narratives. However, it would be rather difficult for us to arrive at a singular comprehensive definition of literature. In this subsection, let us make an attempt to meaningfully define the same. Let us begin by thinking what is literature? We must first consider the tradition of oral narratives that had travelled down the ages before these came to be recorded in the form of writing which later developed as works of literature. Thus, storytelling came to be shaped into various literary forms that could be analysed for its underlying factors of narrative style, language, rhetorical devices, characters and thematic content among other literary aspects. In the Introduction to the work titled *Elements of Literature* (1997), the term is aptly described in the following words:

"Literature begins in the creative possibilities of human language and in the desire of human beings to use their language creatively. -Though its origin lies in the joy of creation, literature can be intensely serious. It can use its formal beauty as a way of enabling us to contemplate the most painful and terrible aspects of existence, or as a way of celebrating those things we value most highly in life. In the end, literature enriches our lives because it increases our capacities for understanding and communication. It helps us to find meaning in our world and to express it and share it with others. And this is the most humane activity of our existence." (xxvii)

Further, imaginative literature is a fascinating realm for both the writer and the reader owing to its delight in the playfulness of language and

striking narratives that easily captures the interests and curiosity of readers. In *Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing* (2004), imaginative literature is considered to motivate the readers towards enjoying "the possibilities of language and mov[ing] beyond the factual details of an event" (2). It discusses the ways in which literary narratives and literary practices differ from one culture to the other. It is for this reason that it becomes necessary for readers to grasp the cultural contexts of various literatures so as to be able to appreciate it better. With regard to Literature, we may often wonder on certain important aspects such as:

- What or who defines a standard work of Literature?
- What is the real meaning of a canon or literary canon?
- Why are some works considered canonical while others not?
- How does a work of literature make its way to the traditional literary canon?

Originally derived from the Greek word '*kanon*' which has religious connotation, the English word 'canon' is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "a general rule or principle by which something is judged". And 'canonical' defines the acceptance of "being authentic or established as a standard" which generally implies to the list of saints or laws of the church. However, it is also used as a secular term for works of literature. Thus, the term 'literary canon' refers to the tradition of pioneering, groundbreaking or representative Literature that are universally considered as authoritative works that embody or define various parameters of excellence. Such canonical works of literature are considered to act as exemplars of literary standards for writers across the world. Moreover, it is wide base of readers across the globe who universally acknowledges, authenticates and decides the worth or value of a literary work.

However, the problem that arises with an established literary canon is the nullifying effect it has on many good works of literature which may be excluded from the canons. Such works may remain under-valued and worse, be lost and forgotten with the passage of time. The absence of women's writing from early literary records and the later marginalization, may be attributed to such a tradition of constructing literary canons whereby women

writers were perhaps found lacking in the hallmarks established by the male literary canon.This may imply that there was a time when women writers were not taken seriously by readers, intellectuals and critics. However, with the passage of time, like many other traditions, there was an emergence of a female literary tradition in which women writers articulated their voices and celebrated their experiences and experimented with their writings to create a tradition of their own.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Mention the term from which the word 'literature' is derived.

Q 2: Why is Imaginative Literature considered a fascinating realm for both the writer and the reader?

Q 3: Define the terms canon and canonical with regard to its religious connotation.

Q 4: What does the term 'literary canon' refer to?



LET US KNOW

The Western literary canon represents some of the great works of writers such as: Homer, Aeschylus, Virgil, Horace, Geoffrey Chaucer, Dante Alighieri, William Shakespeare, Miguel De Cervantes, Michel De Montaigne, John Milton, Samuel Johnson, William Wordsworth, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Walt Whitman, George Eliot, Emily Dickinson, Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, Jorge Luis Borges, Pablo Neruda, Henrik Ibsen, Samuel Beckett among others.

7.4 THE BASIC FORMS OF LITERATURE

Often, we may find ourselves walking into a book shop and feeling thoroughly confused about making the right pick. Thus, it is important to note that literary expressions give shape to a range of literary forms that can be generally classified as the following: fiction, non-fiction, poetry and

drama. These forms can be further classified into various genres and subgenres. This section provides a brief idea on the above-mentioned classifications in order to enable the learner to gain a fair idea on the aspects that differentiate these forms.

Fiction and Non-fiction :

Narrative Fiction comprises the most popular practice of novel writing which is an art of representing life, the world around us and its experiences through creative storytelling or narratives. As mentioned in *Elements of Literature* (1997), "[f]act and fiction are old acquaintances" in which the element of fiction takes over most of novelistic narratives (121). Further, it discusses the factors of history and fantasy at two extreme ends of the 'fictional spectrum' with realism and romance in between with which we can better relate to narratives on the experiences of life. The important elements in any work of fiction are plot, characters, action, themes, events, perspective, style and language.

The early forms of fiction comprised tales and stories considered as short forms of fiction apart from the earlier forms of 'epics' which were considerably lengthy. This was followed by the practice of writing longer narratives such as 'novels'and 'novellas' i.e., the chiseled version of the novelistic form. Some of the genres of fiction are: classical, historical, fantasy, fairy tales, fables, legends, folklore, mythology, humor, horror, mystery, short story, science fiction, children's literature, women's fiction, meta-fiction, pulp fiction, experimental fiction among others. As far as fiction is concerned, it is generally classified into realist, romantic, historical, epic, picaresque, folk/ regional, epistolary, gothic, thriller, graphic and existential types. Non-fiction comprises works such as biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, essays, diaries, letters, journalistic writings, manuals, self-help books, travel accounts, academic works, literary criticism and so forth in which factual and genuine information is presented without any distortion. Such works can have a personal touch with regard to the narrative presentation and are reliable to a large extent, in terms of their content. Therefore, the next time you walk into a shop, you may walk in confidently and make your pick of the kind of literary narrative that you may want to read.

Poetry :

Jeffrey Wainwright in his discussion on the elements of poetry writes thus,

"In all its presences the fascination, pleasure and impact of poetry inherent in the patterns of the language where form and content are truly indivisible:

O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,

How can we know the dancer from the dance" (181)

Poetry encompasses in its form the very essence of experiences in the economy of words. Some of the various types of poetry are lyric, limerick, ballad, sonnet, villanelle, ode, satire, parody, elegy, emblem, haiku among others. Due to its condensed structural form, hidden meaning(s) and minimal usage of words, poetry can often be very confusing and difficult to comprehend. At times, reading poetry can turn into a tedious exercise when the reader needs to make significant efforts while trying to literally decode or decipher its layered meaning. The knowledge of the stylistic or rhetorical devices therefore, would be a prerequisite if one is to appreciate poetry in its complete sense. However, for most common readers it is the beauty of language and versification that is enough to attract one towards reading poetry.

Drama :

In drama, fiction is represented through dialogue and performance. As noted in *Elements of Fiction* (1997) that the "essence" of the form is its "imitative action" and that "[d]rama is true to life by being false to our conventional notions of reality" (785). Further it discusses how plot, dialogue and characters are the "indispensable elements of drama" without which a dramatic work can never take shape. While there are many factors at work in a dramatic text, the details of which the learner can explore individually, some of the basic forms of drama are comedy, tragedy, romance and satire which often tend to blend into the other depending on the content and context of the work.

Music, dance and spectacle further can enliven the text or performance of a drama. The greatest dramatist of all times, William Shakespeare made use of song, spectacle and chorus in his plays too.

One of the most significant works on dramatic theory is Aristotle's *Poetics* (335 BCE) which had outlined and defined dramatic conventions and aesthetics of drama. Some of the various genres of drama are: ancient, classical, epic, opera, choral, play, one-acts,monologues, mime, pantomime, melodrama, creative drama, children's theatre, ensemble, farcical, theatre of cruelty, theatre of oppressed, absurd drama, *avantgarde* theatre and modern drama among several others.

While exploring various forms of literature, the learner will do well to be aware of some the prestigious International awards for literature namely: The Nobel Prize in Literature, Neustadt International Prize for Literature, The Booker Prize, The Man Booker International Prize, Golden Wreath of Struga Poetry Evenings, America Award, The Franz Kafka Prize, The Warwick Prize for Literature, International Rubery Book Award, KONS International Literary Award, Grand Prix of Literary Associations and Windham–Campbell Literature Prizes which are given across nationalities of writers. It is worth mentioning that Rabindranath Tagore and V.S. Naipaul are the only two Indian English writers to have received the prestigious Nobel Prize in Literature in the year 1913 and 2002 respectively. It is important to note that in our national context, the major awards for excellence in Literature are namely the Jnanpith Award, the Sahitya Akademi Award and Saraswati Samman which are given only to remarkable writers of Indian nationality.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: Mention the general classification of Literature.

Q 6: Write briefly on the literary form of fiction and poetry in your own words.

Q 7: What comprises works of non-fiction?

Q 8: Mention the three indispensable elements of drama.

Q 9: Name some of the International Awards in the field of literature.

7.5 INTERPRETING WORKS OF LITERATURE

Interpreting works of literature is to read between the lines or in other words, engage and examine the hidden meaning in the text of a literary work. However, meanings by nature may be deceptive, playful and not necessarily fixed. For this reason, it is necessary to appreciate the multiplicity of meaning that is derived from one's reading. Meaning is always open to various interpretations and thus, it follows that multiplicity of meaning also tends to lead to multiple interpretations. In many ways, the interpretation of literature varies from person-to- person or from one individual to another as it takes into account the various defining perspectives or personal characteristics of the person himself or herself who is engaged in the process of reading.

This is due to the fact that, a reader's literary interpretation tends to shape up in accordance to his or her thoughts, beliefs, preferences, perspectives, prejudices, emotions, and experiences to mention few such aspects. In other words, interpretation of literature tends to be highly subjective in general. Therefore, it is necessary for readers to have a functional knowledge of literary conventions in order to engage in objective reading of any work of literature. A reader must be able to 'justify' the logic behind his or her interpretation of a literary work as the textual source itself provides sufficient facts or hints, in order to enable the reader to arrive at probable meanings. Some of the basic guidelines on the interpretation of a literature arementioned in *Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing* (2004) which are briefly mentioned below:

a. Consider the 'literary objective' that is evident in a work of literature.
b. Be well-versed in the elements of literature and their literary functions.
c. Evaluate whether these elements or literary functions are combined well to the objective of a work.
d. Determine whether the work is "intellectually stimulating" (10).
e. Reflect on whether the literary work gives you a pleasurable reading experience.

Further, the work highlights three important strategies with regard to

interpreting literature namely, previewing, highlighting and annotating. While previewing the reader is to note the basic features of a literary work; followed by the practice of highlighting important lines, words and paragraphs in order to examine it in a detailed manner; and finally annotating or writing one's response(s) in the form of side-notes on the text of the work. It is only gradually that one develops his or her critical or rather interpretive reading skills through a keen sense of interest, observation and practice.

Thus, language can be considered as a powerful tool for the way in which it can shape multiple creative expressions as we do find in Literature. It holds the power to literally enchant or lure readers into a reading spell, stirring a range of thoughts and emotions in the readers. Literature provides a wide variety of experiences, enjoyment while also enlightening readers in various ways. As noted by Kirszner and Kendall, "[b]eyond transporting readers out of their lives and times, literature can enable readers to see their lives more clearly" (2).



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 10: What is meant by the phrase " interpreting works of literature"?

Q 11: Why does interpretation of literature tend to differ form person to person?

Q 12: What are the three strategies of reading and evaluation? Explain briefly.



7.6 LET US SUM UP

At the end of the unit, you have gained a fair idea of the term Literature which encompasses literary works that reflect and represent multiple experiences of human life. You are now aware of the basic guidelines and strategies to interpret works of literature. The unit also provided you with a detailed discussion on the concept of literary canon. Some of the important international and national awards or prizes which are given as recognition

of excellence in Literature have also been highlighted. As you have finished reading the unit, you are now motivated to explore more and varied works of literature.



7.7 FURTHER READING

1) Kirszner, Laurie and Stephen Mandall. (2004). *Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing.* Fifth Edition. Canada: Thomas Wadsworth.

2) Scholes, Robert. and Nancy R. Comley et al. (eds.) (1997). *Elements of Literature*. Fourth Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

3) Wainwright, Jeffrey. (2004). *Poetry: The Basics.* New York: Routledge.



7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The term 'Literature' is derived from the Latin term *literatura*, in which *litera* means writing that encompasses various forms of literary narratives.

Ans to Q No 2: Imaginative Literature is a fascinating realm for both the writer and the reader owing to its delight in the playfulness of language and unforgettable narratives. In *Reading, Reacting, Writing* (2004), imaginative literature is considered to motivate the readers towards enjoying "the possibilities of language and mov[ing] beyond the factual details of an event" (2). Narratives differ from one culture to the other and as readers, it is very important to grasp the cultural contexts of various literatures in order to appreciate it better.

Ans to Q No 3: The word 'canon' derived from the Greek word '*kanon*' has a religious definition which according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "a general rule or principle by which something is judged" and the word 'canonical' defines the acceptance of "being authentic or established as a standard" which generally implies to the list of saints or laws of the church.

Ans to Q No 4: The term 'literary canon' refers to the tradition of pioneering, groundbreaking or representative Literature that are universally considered as authoritative literary works that define various parameters of excellence across space and time.

Ans to Q No 5: Literature can be generally classified as fiction, prose, poetry and drama.

Ans to Q No 6: To attempt on your own.

Ans to Q No 7: Non-fiction comprises works such as biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, essays, diaries, letters, journalistic writings, manuals, self-help books, travel accounts, academic works, literary criticism etc. in which factual and genuine information is presented without any distortion.

Ans to Q No 8: The plot, dialogue and characters are the "indispensable elements of drama" without which a dramatic work can never take shape.

Ans to Q No 9: Some of the prestigious International awards for literature are namely: The Nobel Prize in Literature, Neustadt International Prize for Literature, The Booker Prize, The Man Booker International Prize, Golden Wreath of Struga Poetry Evenings, America Award, The Franz Kafka Prize, The Warwick Prize for Literature, International Rubery Book Award, KONS International Literary Award, Grand Prix of Literary Associations and Windham –Campbell Literature Prizes which are given across nationalities of writers.

Ans to Q No 10: Interpreting works of literature is to read between the lines or in other words, engage and examine the hidden meaning in the text of a literary work. However, meanings by nature may be deceptive, playful and not necessarily fixed. For this reason, it is necessary to appreciate the multiplicity of meanings that can be derived from one's reading. Meaning is always open to various interpretations and thus, it follows that multiplicity of meanings also leads to multiple interpretations.

Ans to Q No 11: In many ways, the interpretation of literature varies from person-to-person or from one individual to another as it takes into

account the various defining perspectives and personal characteristics of the person himself or herself.

Ans to Q No 12: The three important strategies suggested are namely, previewing, highlighting and annotating. While previewing one is to note the basic features of a literary work; followed by the practice of highlighting lines, words and paragraphs in order to examine it in a detailed manner; and finally annotating or writing one's response(s) in the form of side-notes on the text of the work.



7.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Give a brief definition of the term Literature.

Q 2: What are the various forms of literature? Give a detailed explanation in your own words.

Q 3: What are some of the ways of interpreting and evaluating works of literature?

Q 4: Write short notes on the following:

a. Imaginative Literature
b. Literary Canon
c. National and International Prizes for Literature
d. Basic guidelines to interpret and evaluate literary works
e. Appreciation of Literature.

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UNIT 8 : APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF LITERATURE I

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Language and Meaning

8.4 Author

8.5 Text and Contexts

8.6 Intended Meaning

8.7 Meaning Perceived by Readers

8.8 Let Us Sum Up

8.9 Further Reading

8.10 Answers To Check Your Progress

8.11 Model Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- discern the possibilities of reading a literary text
- bring out associations between the text and its author
- identify the presence of the authorial voice in a text
- perceive the milieu or the 'context' that necessitated or encouraged the birth of a particular text
- acquire an idea of the motifs and patterns woven by certain literary devices in a text
- differentiate between the 'intended meaning' and the 'received meaning' in a particular text.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

Think about a story written by the eminent American poet and short story writer, Edgar Allan Poe. You find a cold shiver running down your spine, although practically there is nothing much happening around you.

The language gradually masters you and holds you in its folds so firmly that you find yourself face-to-face with the character in the story. The psychological impact of his stories, or any other horror fiction, is achieved by the clever arrangement of language that leaves the reader **gaping** and inquisitive to know what happens next. Another aspect of such texts (stories or novels) is that they try to tamper with the patience and curiosity of the reader; that is, the language is so employed that it creates a sense of mystery and unexpected occurrences and the climax is delayed to the reader. Thus, the desired effect of shrouding the text in an aura of suspense is successfully created by the author and the meticulous postponement of the climax only contributes to the growing restlessness and interest of the reader. But in order to create this desired effect, the author must be adept in handling the art of language, lest too much of postponement or delay and too many 'unnecessary' details might mar the interest of the reader and he/she might as well skip a few pages in the book and directly come to the last page of it. But the author who has mastered the art of such story-telling knows that it is language and language only that is capable of such an effect through the efficient application of techniques and devices such as pauses, **onomatopoeia, alliteration**, **assonance**, exaggeration, **personification**, **metaphor, simile**. These devices not only offer ornamentation to the language but also make the reader attentive and alert to the change in the narration of the language. Such literary methods or devices are called figures of speech and they together contribute towards the meaning and rhetoric of the text. In a detective story, the use of language is generally intended to create a sense of ambiguity as a result of which the reader remains in the dark regarding the resolution in the narrative. But gradually the pressure builds up and the final revelation of the most unsuspected character to be the actual criminal fills the reader's mind with a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. This may happen in any other text as well. The capacity of the text to hold the interest of the reader and to push him/her to read it further till he/she reaches its conclusion is achieved through the clever use of the language and the aforementioned literary devices that give meaning to the text.



LET US KNOW

Alliteration : It is a repetition of a speech sound in a sequence of nearby words, for instance, 'seep silent all summer'.

Assonance : It is a repetition of vowel sound of nearby words, for instance, 'Thou foster child of silence and slow time'; here, 'i' sound is repeated.

Personification : When an object, usually non-living or inanimate, is attributed with the qualities of a human, it is called personification. For instance, "winter shrugged her shoulders and wandered in the grey streets".

Metaphor : In a metaphor, a word or expression is applied to a distinctly different thing without asserting a comparison. For instance, to the utterly poor rag-pickers living in slum areas, garbage is gold.

Onomatopoeia : It is the sound of things or animals also used as verb. For instance, the sound of snake is 'hiss' and thus, 'the snake hisses'; 'leaves rustle'; 'crabs scuttle'.

Simile : In a simile, two things are compared by using words such as 'like' or 'as'. For instance, 'as cool as cucumber.'

8.3 LANGUAGE AND MEANING

As we have already discussed in the Introduction of this unit, it is language that gives meaning to the text. Language, in this regard, goes beyond its general description of being a medium of expression because in a literary text, the function of language is not merely to give expression to the author's thoughts, but also to mould and manipulate the understanding of the reader. The writer adopts a particular tone for expressing his/her thoughts (say, comic, serious, ironical, didactic) and chooses a particular language accordingly. The branch of study that engages in a systematic study of the various elements of language is called Linguistics. M.H. Abrams' definition of Linguistics is, "the systematic study of the elements of language and the principles governing their combination and organization". The literary

devices that we have already discussed briefly (constituting the rhetoric of the language) along with grammar are two important areas of Linguistics. Let us read an extract from a poem below:

'Is there anybody there?' said the Traveller,
Knocking at the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence chomped the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor:
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller's head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time:
'Is there anybody there?' he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:

The above lines have been extracted from Walter de la Mare's poem 'The Listeners'. Now look at the suspense that has been created by the opening line itself. The reader is at once attentive to the mysterious atmosphere created by the poet's choice of words like 'moonlit', 'silence', 'forest'. The arrival of the unnamed, mysterious traveller in the middle of the night to a dilapidated mansion in a forest at once creates a dramatic vision and sets the tone of the poem. The soft sound of the horse silently 'chomping' away the grass and the knocking of the traveller at the door give an auditory effect to the poem, breaking the dense silence and tranquility of the forest. The use of the same consonant sounds as in this phrase, 'forest's ferny floor' is another ornamentation attributed to the language of the poem. Such a device is called 'alliteration' where a particular consonant sound is repeated to acquire a desired effect. Here, it gives a spooky feeling to the reader with the continuous 'f' sound that can be likened to the blowing of a

soft, dry breeze through the leaves of the forest that set them rustling. Again, the mere mention of the absence of any human in such concrete terms as 'no head from the leaf-fringed sill' sets the reader to question again the apparent absence of any human being on the other side of the door. However, the feeling of the traveller that there is something which assures the possibility of the presence of 'phantom listeners' ascertains the reader's expectation and fear that the house is not altogether empty. Such is the power of language. It holds the capacity to conjure up an image of an abandoned, dilapidated house amidst an unknown forest in the middle of the night without human occupation except the lonely traveller and his horse. The thrill that the reader experiences and the curiosity that each line creates in his/her mind forces him/her to read it further. The tactful arrangement of language and the clever choice of words give meaning to the poem and the reader draws its conclusion by constantly engaging in the rhetoric inherent in the poem.

This is just one example of how language gives meaning to the overall text. There could be other examples of fiction, short story, essay, letter and even published diary entries that play with the language and attribute meaning to them.

8.4 AUTHOR

In the strictest sense of the term, author means someone who writes a particular literary piece from his or her own experience. M.H. Abrams' definition of the author is thus: "Authors are individuals who, by their intellectual and imaginative powers, purposefully create from the materials of their experience and reading a literary work which is distinctively their own. The work itself, as distinct from the individual, written or printed texts that instantiate the work, remains solely a product accredited to the author as its originator, even if he or she turns over the rights to publish or profit from the printed texts of the work to someone else. And insofar as the literary work turns out to be great and original, the author who has composed that work is deservedly accorded high cultural status and achieves enduring fame". Thus, it is clear that the author is the 'originator' of a literary text. But

suppose one is unsure of the author of a particular literary text as the medieval epic, *Beowulf*– *does* that mean that the text came by itself and that it was conceived mysteriously? No. It simply means that it was written anonymously, and that we do not know anything about the author of this text. The question of authorship comes with the question of 'ownership' or possession of anything worth possessing. It could be property, fame, knowledge and so on. Writers became conscious of their authorship with the shift in the medium of narration of some of these literary genres— say, poem, ballad, story or epic, from an oral tradition to a written one. Medieval literature was mainly oral and thus it was transmitted from one generation to another through multiple agents and therefore, it was rather difficult to ascertain one particular individual as the author of the text. Moreover, oral literature involves aspects like forgetfulness, omission, addition of particular incidents in a given narrative and therefore, the text emerges anew each time it is retold. But when a text is written, it becomes a concrete document. A written text does not incorporate many changes in it and therefore, it retains the identity of its author rigidly. In modern times, the question of authorship is gaining popularity with issues like media, publicity, disclaimers and copyright. One who violates the authorial sanctity of the texts by adopting certain unfair means like claiming someone else's writing as one's own is said to have committed plagiarism, and it is a punishable offence. Therefore, the author is one who conceives his/her own experiences of life and existence, of politics and nature, of social contacts and solitariness, together in the shape of a literary text and expresses his/her feelings through it. The author gains fame through his/her literary work by getting it printed and published and circulating it among the reading public and thus allowing them to draw their own interpretation and conclusion of the literary work.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is M.H. Abrams' definition of Linguistics?

Q 2: Mention any one feature of oral literature.

Q 3: What is Plagiarism?

Q 4: Who is an 'author'?

8.5 TEXT AND CONTEXTS

We have already discussed in the above section about the author of a text. But it should always be borne in mind that the production of a text is influenced by the environment or the social milieu in which the text is written. A text cannot be conceived in a vacuum— it is thought of and given a definite shape by the external factors like nature, politics, society, readership, the general taste of the reading public, publication strategies, and so on. The environment or the external factors together constitute the context that encourages the birth of a literary text. Let us, for instance, consider a poem by the father of modern English literature Geoffrey Chaucer. In his Prologue to 'The Canterbury Tales', Chaucer adopts an ironical tone that often disguises the serious concerns of the society of his times while giving a comic effect to his poem. His poem allegorises the vices of the clergy and the dominating attitude of the Church but without any fear of entering a controversy. The long narrative poem, therefore, is a product of the age; that is, it has been conceived in a context that necessitated its birth. It satirises the people and the society contemporary to Chaucer and emerges as a powerful document of his time. Thus, the text and the context are mutually dependent on each other. The text reflects the context, and the context moulds the text.

Another example can be cited from the Romantic age in English literature. As we all know that the Romantic age flourished during the nineteenth century and the preceding age was called the Age of Reason which observed strict norms in writing poetry. Eighteenth century poetry often imitated the Greek and Latin masters, and therefore it gave more preference to reason than to emotion. They were written against the backdrop of urban centres, more particularly England, and the usual tone of such poetry was satirical. However, nineteenth century saw a fresh gust of wind with the publication of Thomson's 'Seasons' that is believed to have ushered in Romanticism to English literature. Now, Romantic poetry was very different from that of previous age. It focused more on emotion; spontaneity replaced the strict **conventions** of poetry and therefore, the

language was also lucid and plain. Nature, rather than culture became the background of Romantic poetry and therefore, the Romantic poets were found mostly wandering in the country sides rather than residing in the urban centres. As a result, the literary texts or the poems that emerged had a close association with nature. Most of them are in the form of **eulogies** of nature— praising the abundance and enrichment of nature invoked as a mighty benevolent force controlling the universe. We have seen this tendency in the poetry of William Wordsworth whose poems like 'The Solitary Reaper', 'Michael: A Pastoral', 'Tintern Abbey' and 'Daffodils' fill one's mind with a sense of longing for a vacation away from the bustling city life. Thus, the context influences the production and shapes the tone of a literary text. In short, context is the social mould within which a text is produced.

8.6 INTENDED MEANING

The word 'intended' comes from 'intension' which means something done with a purpose, something that is calculated, premeditated or planned. 'Intended meaning', in short, is the meaning that is desired and imposed by the author on the reader. Intended meaning is author-oriented. Every author has a purpose or an intention behind his/her literary work. It is through the use of language and tone that he/she tries to communicate his/her thoughts to the reader. Therefore, it is the text that carries the meaning of its progenitor. However, the intended meaning of the text might not always be communicated wholly to the reader. That is, the meaning that the author intends to send across to the reader might not always be received exactly in the same manner in which it was originally conceived by the author. And the meaning of the text is often affected by other factors like the reader's cultural baggage, his/her previous learning experience of another text by the same author, literary conventions and prejudices of the reader, and the like (this part of the discussion has been elaborated in the next segment of this unit). Thus, the intended meaning of the text is that which is deliberated by the author to be understood and deduced by the reader in the same way in which the author had conceived it in the first place.

8.7 MEANING PERCEIVED BY READERS

Meaning perceived by the readers or 'received meaning' is just the opposite of intended meaning. In this case, the author might have a particular message encoded in the text, but the message is not necessarily received in the same manner as it was expected by the author. The meaning and interpretation of the text cannot always be manipulated and designed by the author alone; the text might be interpreted differently by the reader, without any conformity to the author's perception. The meaning that is drawn by the reader is characterised by various factors like the reader's reading experience, cultural baggage, **prejudices** and conventions, and so on. These factors influence the reader's understanding of the text, and he/she draws the meaning accordingly. Therefore, the meaning that is drawn by each individual reader becomes subjective in nature. The meaning perceived by the reader is reader-oriented, while intended meaning of a text is author-oriented.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: What is 'intended meaning'?

Q 6: What are the factors that influence the readers' understanding of a particular text?



8.8 LET US SUM UP

This unit gave us a fair idea of approaching a literary text. It is very important to understand the style and technique adopted by an author in writing a literary text. To understand literature, there are no fixed strategies that could be followed as rigid methods applied in the sciences. Since literature is a fluid discipline, flexible and subjective, the approaches to it are also varied and flexible. However, it must always be borne in mind that the meaning or conclusion that a reader draws from a particular literary text might not be similar to the conclusion drawn by another reader. Such is a

literary text. There are various factors that affect the production of a literary text— internal factors like the author's own life and environment, his/her emotions and preferences, profession and company, and external factors like socio-political environment, readership and the taste of the readers constitute the context of a literary text.



8.9 FURTHER READING

1) Abrams, M.H. (2006 rpt.). *A Glossary of Literary Terms.* New Delhi: Thomson Business International India Pvt. Ltd.

2) Barry, Peter. (2010). *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

3) Barry, Peter. (2012). *Literature in Contexts.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.



8.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Linguistics is "the systematic study of the elements of language and the principles governing their combination and organization".

Ans to Q No 2: Oral literature involves aspects like forgetfulness, omission, addition of particular incidents in a given narrative and therefore, the text emerges anew each time it is retold.

Ans to Q No 3: One who violates the authorial sanctity of the texts by adopting certain unfair means like claiming someone else's writing as one's own is said to have committed Plagiarism, and it is a punishable offence.

Ans to Q No 4: An author is one who conceives his/her own experiences of life and existence, of politics and nature, of social contacts and solitariness, together in the shape of a literary text and expresses his/

her feelings through it.

Ans to Q No 5: 'Intended meaning', in short, is the meaning that is desired and imposed by the author on the reader.

Ans to Q No 6: The factors that influence the readers' understanding of a particular text are reader's reading experience, cultural baggage, prejudices and conventions, and so on.



8.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Discuss the difference between intended meaning and meaning perceived by the reader.

Q 2: Rhetorical devices play an important role in attributing meanings to a literary text. Elaborate.

Q 3: Discuss text and context as two mutually dependent terms.

Q 4: Explain with examples the connection between language and meaning.

Q 5: Discuss the role and importance of author in a literary text.

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UNIT 9 : APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF LITERATURE II

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 Historicism

9.4 Politics of Culture and Interpretation

9.5 Gender Issues

9.6 Issues of Race

9.7 Let Us Sum Up

9.8 Further Reading

9.9 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through the unit, the learner will be able to:

- approach a literary text as a product and a mirror of a particular event in history that has been recorded by the poet, author or essayist
- discern the various socio-political factors facilitating a particular perspective peculiar to one's culture that goes into reading a literary text
- grasp the power games involved in gender issues and the political dimension that allows room for such discussion
- trace and highlight themes that have emerged out of racial difference and racial conflicts, and how and why these issues have become so popular in literature of the recent times.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

The last unit must have prepared you to formulate your basic principles and perspectives in approaching any literary text. Imagine an unseen passage given at an examination and you are directed to scan it individually. It is possible that most of us would try to read meanings in the

text by assuming the author's personality; whether it is a male author or a female. There are also possibilities of trying to establish the historical period that could be subtly hinted at in the passage. Thus, we try to attribute temporal and spatial signification to the text in order to arrive at a conclusion. Certain factors like history—political and social, gender issues and racial identity often surface in literary texts, and they become our starting points of approaching them. A text, as mentioned before in Unit II, cannot be conceived in vacuum. Therefore, a text becomes, consciously or unconsciously, both the mirror and the product of a particular time in history. Culture, race and gender politics colour the narratives of such texts and meanings are generated and drawn by the reader from these narratives accordingly.

9.3 HISTORICISM

What is historicism? It is nothing but the theory that assumes that social and cultural phenomena in any field (literature or any other arts) are determined and conditioned by history. This theory can well be extended to the field of literature if one considers that the production of literary texts is influenced by socio-political and cultural phenomena. It is the tendency to attribute historicity to texts that have produced in specific points of time. In the 1950s, a formal theory has emerged out of this tendency of understanding history through literature and literature through its cultural context. This theory is popularly known as New Historicism. A fine example of understanding this theory would be to consider Raja Rao's novel *Kanthapura* as a powerful allegory of Indian struggle against colonialism. Similarly, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is a powerful narrative that describes the Partition and a picturesque description of little histories of the freedom struggle and the Partition that followed and its aftermath, more appropriately, a picture of 'India of the streets'. One interesting fact about history that has emerged recently in the field of literary theories is that it is no longer considered to be an objective record of a collection of past events. As long as the tendency or urge of narrativising or telling historical happenings in the form of story-telling is present, history can never remain

objective or unbiased. The subjective perspective of the historian will always be present. This is what Hayden White discusses in her essay 'The Historical Text as Literary Artifact'. It is for this reason that recent authors have become so obsessed with portraying often neglected historical events than the already popular ones. The exercise of excavating little histories through literature can also be linked to historicism.

9.4 POLITICS OF CULTURE AND INTERPRETATION

What is culture? How is it related to the interpretation of a literary text? Culture is the features and knowledge of a particular group of people defined by factors like language, religion, beliefs, social customs, food habit, dress code, all taken collectively. Its relation to literature has become more articulate and powerful in recent times. It is one's culture that often becomes a prerequisite of producing a text by an author, and at the same time, affects its interpretation by the reader. For instance, let us once again consider Raja Rao's novel, *Kanthapura*, and look at the mode of narration closely. Rao consciously adopts the Indian tradition of story-telling by agents such as old women who gladly take up the role of narrators and cater to the interest of their listeners. This phenomenon is peculiar to the Indian culture, and Achakka, the narrator in *Kanthapura,* is a garrulous and often digressive narrator. Moreover, another agent, that is, the Harikatha man, Jayaramachar, is hired by their community to allegorise the story of good's victory over evil. Jayaramachar narrates the ideals and philosophy of Gandhi to be those of Hari or God Himself, in order to unite the different castes of people into one collective resistance against the evil forces allegorised by the British colonisers. This moving tales stir the people of Kanthapura because they are already accustomed to such stories and they listen attentively to him and even prepare themselves to fight against the British. As an Indian reader, it would not be much difficult to understand Raja Rao's objectives in contextualising the text within a mythical context. Someone who is already accustomed to the custom can easily identify the elements and flavour of rural South India in the pre independence era. Thus, culture plays an important role in the interpretation of a literary text.

9.5 GENDER ISSUES

As discussed in the Introduction of this unit, gender issues have become rampant in recent history of literary theories. It is the consciousness of highlighting certain issues peculiar to a particular gender. It is the tendency to discern a text as man-oriented or woman-oriented. Feminism, a theory that observes that mainstream literature conforms to a masculine canon or conventions set down by man rather than woman, has gained considerable focus in recent times. Another important area that has entered literature is queer theory (lesbianism, gay literature, transgenders' literature) that promotes the study of issues that were so long neglected or suppressed by mainstream literature. It emerged out of Queer Studies and Women's Studies in the 1990s. Queer studies challenge the established 'straight' norm in literature and other arts and try to argue that there are sexualities and related realities that exist that might not necessarily conform to the norm.

9.6 ISSUES OF RACE

What is race? The whole mankind is divided into several groups on the basis of some hereditary characteristics. Such a group is called a race. But in recent times, this has become a theme that has entered literature as voices of protest. There are certain groups that have been either wronged, marginalised, misrepresented, suppressed by other groups, and their voices appear in forms of narratives and carry the seeds of conflict in them. Colonial enterprises can be held responsible for the growth of such studies that reflect racial issues. The European grand project of 'Enlightenment' presumed that the colonies, especially those in Africa, had to be uplifted from their present state of ignorance and darkness. The white colonisers believed that the blacks lacked a history of their race and knowledge and that they were savage because their traditions and religious practices did not conform to the 'norm' or standard constructed by the Europeans. The skin colour was an important criterion that gave the colonisers the notion that the Africans were a savage race and that whatever folk beliefs and traditional customs they were observing so far had to be purged and replaced

by their own beliefs which were thought to be correct and standard. But the postcolonial trend in literature shows an obsession with preserving and celebrating one's own traditional beliefs and customs.

Various literatures like African literature, Afro-American literature, and Caribbean literature can be said to have emerged as literatures with a conscious racial identity and imperative. They have emerged as a collective resistance to years of colonial oppression and subjugation. By retaining their racial identity consciously, these literatures attempt at projecting the fact that other races and their individual characteristics (and not only those identified and defined by the Europeans) do exist. Writers like Chinua Achebe, Toni Morrison, Wole Soyinka consciously represent their culture and social life, their customs, folk beliefs and their racial concerns in their works. For instance, Wole Soyinka's satirical poem 'Telephone Conversation' is a poignant representation of a black African man and his protest against racism in the form of his reply to a white American woman. Similarly, Toni Morrison's fiction shows a revival of traditional African folk motifs that give a distinct flavour and colour to her novels.



9.7 LET US SUM UP

This unit elaborates the different factors that get highlighted in literature and often form the foundation over which certain literary texts get materialised. The social and cultural phenomena that affect the production of literature constitute its historical dimension. History also gets reflected in literature in the form of narratives. Political, racial and gender issues are some other interests that have become frequently discussed topics in literature. This unit will enable you to read your next novel with a critical perspective and read between the lines for added information and trace the socio-cultural and political events that might get reflected in it.

GLOSSARY:

Allegorise: to say something as a story with an underlying meaning.

Excavation: reveal something by digging.

Facilitating: make something easier.

Marginalised: make or treat as insignificant.

Racial: of or based on race.

Unbiased: fair; judicious.



9.8 FURTHER READING

1) White, Hayden. 'The Historical Text as Literary Artifact' in *The History and Narrative Reader.* Geoffrey Roberts, ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.

2) Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010.



9.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Literary texts reflect history and history facilitates the production of literary texts. Discuss.

Q 2: Discuss gender studies as a relevant topic in the field of literature.

Q 3: Discuss issues of race as voices of protest that get reflected in literature.

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UNIT 10 : APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction to Indian English Literature

10.3 Major Literary Forms and Works

- 10.3.1 Indian English Fiction
- 10.3.2 Modern Indian English Poetry
- 10.3.3 Indian English Drama

10.4 Some of the Prominent Indian English Writers

10.5 Let Us Sum Up

10.6 Further Reading

10.7 Answers To Check Your Progress

10.8 Model Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- gain an overview on the development of Indian English Literature
- identify some of the major writers as well as their contribution to Indian English Literature
- find out the major literary forms in Indian English Literature
- develop further interest in exploring Indian English Literature.

10.2 INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE

The present unit briefly traces the development of Indian English Literature and highlights some of the important literary practices, as well as, some of the representative Indian English writers. The relatively new domain of Indian English Literature has just seen only a century and a half in terms of its growth and development. But it is interesting to note the way in which it has undergone remarkable changes in relation to narratives,

stylistic techniques and literary trends. The learner will be interested to know that the term 'Indian English Literature' has witnessed lot of debates among critics and intellectual thinkers before it came to be used widely. In an introduction to *Indian Writing in English* (2007), A.K. Srinivasan takes up the difficulty that lies in the usage of certain terms such as 'Anglo-Indian' Literature which might strike many as a rather "racial connotation" (2) or another term namely "Indo-Anglican Literature" which "strikes many as a not altogether happy expression" (3). However, the terms Indian Writing in English (IWE) or Indian English Literature (IEL) are more readily accepted terms and shall be referred to in the present unit.

It is important to note that the first published literary work in the history of Indian English Literature is considered to have been Sake Dean Mahomet's *Travels of Dean Mahomet* in 1793 which was based on his travel experiences. Some of the early crop of Indian English writers and poets are namely Ram Mohan Roy, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Kisari Mohan Ganguli, Dhan Gopal Mukherji, Romesh Chunder Dutt, Manmohan Ghosh, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Henry Loius Vivian Derozio, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Das and Manohar Malgonkar among others. These writers had variously enriched the treasures of Indian English writings through their foresight, intellectual engagements and literary contributions. Most of their works encompassed themes of nation and nationalism, individualism and patriotism, nostalgic memories and multiplicity of experiences in their own cultural milieu. Those were the early beginnings of Indian English Literature and in addition to that the movement of Bengal Renaissance had a shaping influence on it. The Bengal Renaissance took place in the late 19th century and the early 20th century when India was still struggling for independence.

The privileged noble or aristocratic families of the nineteenth century were exposed to both the Eastern and Western worlds in terms of education which also explains their exposure to Indian English Literature. It is significant to note that the Renaissance that first took place in Bengal had brought a wave of change in the socio-cultural and intellectual perspectives of the

privileged and elite classes of Bengal who had access to education, opportunities and the keys to the outer world. The word Renaissance (*Rinascimento* in Italian), means "rebirth" or "to be reborn" and it refers to the rebirth of learning. It also refers to the concept of "enlightenment" in a particular period of history or rather the flowering of new knowledge. The period of intellectual 'enlightenment' was defined by great Indian figures such as Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee among several other leading figures.

The movement characterised significant changes in the older modes of practices, conventions and traditions which were replaced by enlightened consciousness. Thus, the Renaissance was both 'reformist' and 'revisionist' in spirit and during this period certain practices were completely abolished. The practice of 'polygamy' was prevalent in the Indian society in which a man was entitled to marry several women, along with the 'dowry system' in place which involved a customary 'bride-price' or financial offers from the bride's side of the family to the groom. To make it worse, there was no protest against the prevalent practices of 'Sati', a social custom in which widows were to walk into their husband's pyre. That was when leading figures such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy advocated against such practices in the name of social customs and introduced social reformation that uprooted these ill-practices from the society.

Thus, in time, changes had swept across all sections of Indian society, starting with the intellectuals of Bengal whose ideals literally defined the spirit of the movement. As an offshoot of the Renaissance, the socio-religious movement of the 'Brahmo Samaj' had developed significantly which was led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy with its unique confluence of spiritual and intellectual thought. Finally, the major contribution of the Bengal Renaissance was the growth and development in Indian Writings in English. The surge of enlightenment that took place in Bengal during this period had greatly enriched Indian English Literature.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Who is considered to be the first Indian English writer? Name his work.

Q 2: When did the Bengal Renaissance take place?

Q 3: What did the movement of Bengal Renaissance characterise?

10.3 MAJOR LITERARY FORMS AND WORKS

The following subsection will provide you with a glimpse of some of the important literary forms in Indian English Literature such as fiction, poetry and drama. Although, it is not covered in the present unit, Indian English Literature is also enriched with various significant literary forms such as non-fictional prose, essays, short stories, children's literature and biographies among various other genres which the learner may further explore.

10.3.1 Indian English Fiction

Fiction is one of the most prominent literary genres in the area of Indian English Literature, given the fact that the nineteenth century western influences had stirred the interests of Indian English writers to explore and also to come up with their own original works in English. With the translation of world classics, the growing readership and the influence of intellectual movements such as the 'Bengal Renaissance', English fiction came to be accorded as much importance, as the well-established literary practices which were in the form of the regional novels written in a wide variety of Indian vernacular languages. Some of the famous early names in novel writing were Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and Rabindranath Tagore while the trio- Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao are recognized as the most prominent novelists of the 19th century.

Some of the renowned novelists of the twentieth and twenty first century are Kamala Markandaya, V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Shashi Deshpande, Githa Hariharan, Jhumpa Lahiri, Arundhati Roy,

Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Aravind Adiga, Kiran Desai, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Namita Gokhale, Anjum Hassan, Bharati Mukherjee, Sudha Murthy, Amish Tripathy, Amit Chaudhuri, Rohinton Mistry, Romila Thapar, Shashi Tharoor among several others. While the early narratives included themes on the nation, nationalism, social realism and portrayal of everyday Indian experiences, the modern novels introduced themes of multiculturalism, individualism, alienation, marginal discourses, gender discourses, eco critical perspectives and experiences of modern life.

Here, you may also note that two of the Indian Nobel Laureates in the field of Literature were Rabindranath Tagore in 1913 "because of his profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse, by which, with consummate skill, he has made his poetic thought expressed in his own English words, a part of the literature of the West" and V.S. Naipaul in 2001 "for having united perceptive narrative and incorruptible scrutiny in works that compel us to see the presence of suppressed histories" as mentioned in their citations.

10.3.2 Modern Indian English Poetry

The growth or development of Modern Indian English poetry or Indo-English poetry opens up fresh perspectives on both the collective commonalties and differences of everyday experiences in the Indian cultural milieu. Modern Indian English poetry encompasses a variety of Indian themes and aspects of the modern Indian mindscape that finds itself at the crossroads of change and experience of cultural shifts. A glimpse of the multiple-facets of Indian life and the Indian experience is reflected through the creative chips of distinct 'poetical expressions' that are put together in the form of an interesting mosaic. Also, this mosaic is well inclusive of the Indian diaspora which experience the tug and pull of 'longing' and 'belonging' as we find in the poetry of Indian poets such as A.K Ramanujan, Agha Shahid Ali or Vikram Seth among others.

Some of the well-known nineteenth century poets who had emerged from Bengal were Aurobindo Ghose (better known as Sri Aurobindo), Rabindranath Tagore (referred to as 'Gurudev') and Sarojini Naidu (popularly known as the 'Nightingale of India'). The early poetical writings developed in the hands of several other poets from Bengal such as Kashi Prosad Ghosh, Nobo Kissen Ghosh, Harindranath Chattopadhyay, Romesh Chunder Dutt and Michael Madhusudan Dutt. Toru Dutt was yet another promising talent from Bengal who suffered an untimely demise at a very young age. In its initial stages of development, Indian English Poetry reflected historical and mythological themes but it also came to embody a nationalistic spirit, charged with a patriotic fervour during the period of pre-independence.

One of the leading poets of the early 19th century was the Anglo-Indian poet Henry Louis Vivian Derozio who was influential in leading the 'Young Bengal Movement.' It comprised a group of radical intellectuals charged with patriotism and intellectual fervour, many of whom also included Derozio's college students notoriously known as 'Derozians.' Some of the prominent 20th century poets are A. K. Ramanujan, Jayanta Mahapatra, Nissim Ezekiel, Keki N. Daruwalla, Kamala Das, Eunice De Souza, Dom Moraes, R. Parthasarathy, Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, Arun Kolatkar, Dilip Chitre, Adil Jussawala, Vikram Seth and Gieve Patel. Several of these poets wrote/write poetry in two or more languages besides being involved in translation. Some of the Indian English poets to have received the Sahitya Akademi Award are: Jayanta Mahapatra for his anthology titled *Relationship* (1981), Nissim Ezekiel for *Latter Day Psalms* (1983), Keki N. Daruwalla for *The Keeper of the Dead* (1984), Kamala Das for *Collected Poems* (1985), Dom Moraes for *Serendip* (1994) and A.K Ramanujan for *Collected Poems* (1999). Also, Rabindranath Tagore was one of the first Indian to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, for his collection of poetry titled *Gitanjali* (1910) translated from Bengali into English as *Song Offerings.* You may consider

reading some of these anthologies or select poems based on your interest and subjective choice.

10.3.3 Indian English Drama

Indian English Drama draws heavily from the rich Indian dramatic traditions that were well-defined in the Indian treatise of dance and drama also known as the *Natyashastra*, written by Bharata Muni between 200 BCE to 200 CE. Although, the Sanskrit dramatic traditions saw wide practices in the 15th century, yet it was interrupted by several invasions that took place in India following that period. However, an interest in regional theatre came to be developed and the 17th century saw the rise of the 'folk theatre' which were mostly located in a wide variety of cultures across various states of India in the form of colourful and dramatic performances.

Some of these folk performances were: *Bhandya Thar* in Kashmir; *Bhangra* in Punjab; *Tamasha* in Maharashtra; *Nach* in Madhya Pradesh; *Videshiya* in Bihar; *Raas* and *Jhoomar* in Rajasthan; *Bhavai* in Gujarat; *Ram Leela* in Northern India; *Hari Katha* in Southern India, *Yakshagana* in Karnataka, *Kudiyattam* in Kerala; *Jatra* in Bengal; *Abhiyanat* and *Ankiyanat* in Assam; *Waari Leeba* in Manipur among other regional variations of folk theatre. However, Indian English Drama gained a formidable shape owing to the significant influence of the Bengal Renaissance as well as, the establishment of 'Rangmanch Theatre' by Prasanna Kumar Thakur at Calcutta in 1831 which staged several dramatic works including the plays of Rabindranath Tagore.

The learner may note that some of the leading Indian English dramatists of the 19th and 20th century were Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Sri Aurobindo, Harindranath Chattopadhyay, A.S.P Ayyar, T.P. Kailasam, Bharati Sarabhai, Badal Sircar, Mohan Rakesh, Asif Currimbhoy among others. The trio of contemporary Indian English drama – Girish Karnad, Mahesh Dattani and Vijay Tendulkar are considered to have taken modern Indian English Drama to newer

heights. They not only began portraying significant social issues of contemporary times in their writings but also broadened the scope of dramatic and theatrical performances by introducing unconventional subject and themes, innovative methods of performance and stagecraft derived widely from the practices of world theatre.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Who were considered the most prominent trio of Indian English novelists?

Q 5: Name the two Indian Nobel Laureates for Literature?

Q 6: Make a list of some of the prominent Indian English poets of the 20th century.

Q 7: Name the modern trio of Indian dramatists who took Indian English drama to newer heights.

10.4 SOME OF THE PROMINENT INDIAN ENGLISH WRITERS

The present subsection shall take up a few of the leading writers in Indian English Literature spanning several decades. The learner must note that within the scope of the unit, it is rather difficult to include many of the important writers, yet there is an attempt in this subsection to provide you with a brief glance into the representative works of some of the writers in the literary genres of short stories, novel, poetry and drama. It is suggested to the learner to explore the remarkable works of the other prominent writers in English.

Rabindranath Tagore (7 May 1861- 7 August 1941)

Rabindranath Tagore was raised in a prominent Zamindari family at the Jorasanko Mansion which was the patriarchal home of the Tagores in Calcutta. As a young boy, Tagore grew up in a cultural atmosphere enriched by his exposure to literature, music and theatre from an early age. Tagore was a man of multiple talent and abilities as a poet, author, philosopher, playwright, painter, music composer, educationist, and a social reformer.

He believed in taking the best of both the eastern and the western worlds, embodying what is considered as some of the broadened ideals of the Renaissance.

He wrote his first set of poems at the tender age of eight under the pseudonym of "Bhanusingha". It was in the year 1913 that he had received the 'Nobel Prize for Literature' for his anthology of poems titled *Gitanjali* translated from Bengali to English as *Song Offerings*. Also, Tagore wrote both novellas and novels, some of his best works are *Kal Mrigaya* (1882), *Rajarshi* (1887), *Noukadubi* (1906), *Ghare Baire* (*The Home and the World*) (1916), *Choker Bali* (*A Grain of Sand*) (1923), *Sravan Gatha* (1934), *Malancha* (1934), *Char Adhyay* (1934), *Shesher Kobita* (*Farewell My Friend*) (1929). In his novels, Tagore portrayed the Bengali society centering on themes of man and nature, traditions and social concerns, relations and emotions. Some of his well-known plays are *Dak Ghar* (*The Post Office*) (1912), *Phalguni* (1916), *Muktadhara* (1922), *Raktakarabi* (The Red Oleanders) (1926) and *Natir Puja* (1926) among others.

R. K. Narayan (10 October 1906 - 13 May 2001)

One of the most renowned figures in the realm of Indian English writings is R.K. Narayan. He is famed for his novels, short fiction and non-fiction writings which gave him world wide acclaim. His complete name is 'Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami.' Born in Madras, Narayan spent much of his childhood in the care of his maternal grandmother. From an early age, he developed a keen interest in observation and writing that had eventually led him to be discovered by his future mentor and guide, the English novelist Graham Greene. It was Greene who had first sent the manuscript of *Swami and Friends* (1935) for publication in London. It was in this novel that Narayan had first created the fictional town of 'Malgudi' with some of the most memorable characters in Indian English fiction.

To list a few of his best novelistic works, they are *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The English Teacher* (1945), *The Financial Expert* (1952), *The Guide* (1958), *The Man Eater of Malgudi* (1961), *The Vendor of Sweets* and *Grandmother's Tale* (1992) among others. His short stories were as striking as his novels such as *Malgudi Days* (1942), *An Astrologer's Day*

and Other Stories (1947), *Lawley Road and Other Stories* etc. Moreover, the non-fictional works such as *My Dateless Diary* (1960), *My Days* (1974), *The Story-Teller's World* (1989) provide some interesting glimpses on the writer's life. Narayan received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1958 and the Padma Bhushan in the year 1964.

A.K. Ramanujan (16 March 1929 – 13 July 1993)

A. K. Ramanujan was brought up in a traditional Srivaishnava Brahmin family. Although, we know the poet by his abbreviated name, his complete name was Attipate Krishnaswami Ramanujan. He had first developed his love for poetry during his college years when he read Kannada poetry and began to experiment with the form in Kannada, Tamil and English, for which he came to be considered as a talented tri-lingual poet. He was proficient in several languages such as Sanskrit, Kannada, Tamil, Telegu apart from English. The kind of knowledge he had acquired with his interests as a 'philologist' and a 'researcher', equipped him with an ability to write and experiment across these languages and a variety of literary forms.

Some of his major works are: *The Striders* (1966), *Relations* (1971), *Second Sight* (1986), *The Interior Landscape: Love Poems from a Classical Tamil Anthology* (1967), *Speaking of Siva, Kannada Bhakti Poems by Virasaiva Saints* (1973), *Hymns for the Drowning* (1981), *Poems of Love and War* (1985), *Folktales From India*, *Oral Tales From Twenty Indian Languages* (1991) and *Samskara* (1976) among others. He received a Mac Arthur Fellowship and was also awarded the Padma Shri in the year 1976 by the Indian Government.

Kamala Das (31 March 1934-31 May 2009)

Kamala Das is one of the most prominent voices to have emerged in the history of English Literature. She was born in Thrissur, Kerala to a Malayali family and was mostly brought up in Calcutta and their ancestral home at Punnyurkulam. Kamala Surayya was her maiden name before her marriage and she wrote under the pen name of 'Madhavikutty'. She was a talented writer and a columnist who wrote in both Malayali and English. However, from her early years she was particularly drawn towards poetry and her creations revealed that she was a gifted poet. One of her inspirations

was her poet-uncle, Nalapat Narayana Menon. Some of her most powerful writings are reflected in the volumes of her poetry. Owing to her bold and fearless writings, she is considered to be a 'confessional poet', often compared to women poets like Sylvia Plath and Margaret Dumas.

Some of her best literary works are *The Sirens* (1964), *Summer in Calcutta* (1965), *The Descendants* (1967), *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems* (1973), *The Anamalai Poems* (1985), *Only the Soul Knows How to Sing* (1996), *Yaa Allah* (2001), *Alphabet of Lust* (1977), *Tonight, This Savage Rite* (1979), *Padmavati the Harlot and Other Stories* and her own autobiography *My Story* (1976). She was nominated and shortlisted for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1984. Her awards include Award of Asian PEN Anthology in 1964, Kerala Sahitya Academy Award in 1969, Sahitya Academy Award in 1985, Asian Poetry Prize in 1998 and Kent Award for English Writing from Asian Countries (1999) among a few others.

Girish Karnad (19 May 1938 present)

Girish Raghunath Karnad is a contemporary Indian playwright, writer, activist, director and actor who has received wide acclaim for his dramatic works, stagecraft and his theatrical performances. Karnad was born in Matheran, Maharashtra to a Brahmin family and spent his childhood days in Dharwad, Karnataka to where his family had shifted. From an early childhood, he was fascinated by the theatrical folk performances in the villages of Karnataka which were the shaping influences not only upon his dramatic personality but also the plays which he authored.

Karnad largely draws inspiration from Indian history and mythology while also raising significant issues through his works. Some of his major works are " *Tughlaq* (1964), *Hayavadana (The Transposed Heads)* (1971), *Naga Mandala* (*Play with Cobra*) (1988), *Agni Mattu Male* (*Fire and the Rain*) (2002). Karnad was conferred Padma Shri in 1974, Padma Bhushan (1992) and the Jyanpith Award in the year 1998.



10.5 LET US SUM UP

After having gone through the unit, the learner will be able to gain a brief idea on some of the early developments in Indian English Literature. Through this unit, you are able to explore some of the major literary forms and trends. Also, the unit has familiarised you to some of the prominent Indian English writers and their selected literary works. Therefore, a detailed reading of the unit will enable you to gain an insight into both the historical and intellectual developments in the context of Indian English Literature.



10.6 FURTHER READING

1) Iyengar, K.R. Srinivasa. (2007). *Indian Writing in English.* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited.

2) Naik, M.K and Shyamala A. Narayan. (2007). *Indian English Literature 1980-2000: A Critical Survey.* New Delhi: Pencraft International.



10.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Sake Dean Mahomet. His work titled *Travels of Dean Mahomet* in 1793.

Ans to Q No 2: It took place in the late 19th and the early 20th century.

Ans to Q No 3: It characterised significant changes in the older modes of practices which were replaced by enlightened consciousness.

Ans to Q No 4: Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao.

Ans to Q No 5: Rabindranath Tagore and V.S. Naipaul.

Ans to Q No 6: A. K. Ramanujan, Jayanta Mahapatra, Nissim Ezekial, Keki N. Daruwalla, Kamala Das, Eunice De Souza, Dom Moraes, R. Parthasarathy, Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, Arun Kolatkar, Dilip Chitre,

Adil Jussawala, Vikram Seth and Gieve Patel.

Ans to Q No 7: Girish Karnad, Mahesh Dattani and Vijay Tendulkar



10.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Give a detailed explanation of the major literary forms in Indian English Literature.

Q 2: Write short notes on the following:

a. Bengal Renaissance

b. Indian English Novel

c. Indian English Poetry

d. Indian English Drama

Q 3: Write a detailed note on some of the prominent Indian English writers as prescribed in your course.

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UNIT 11 : INTERPRETING POETRY

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning Objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 What is Poetry?

11.4 Language and Syntax in Poetry

11.5 Use of Words in Poetry

11.6 Interpretation of a Poem

11.7 Let Us Sum Up

11.8 Further Reading

11.9 Answers To Check Your Progress

11.10 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- identify poetry as a major literary genre
- discuss the art of writing and receiving poetry
- analyse the language of poetry
- interpret a poem.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

The response to poetry as the impulse to write it, is often innate. That is perhaps not surprising. After all, even the most significant scientific discoveries are ultimately intuitive. So why not get to know what it is all about? But why poetry? Can't we do it all with good old prose? The answer, history tells us, is a definitive 'no'. Our earliest extant literature is poetry, be it the *Ramayana* or the *Illiad*. It would not do either to ignore the centuries of oral literature before the first word came to be written. Poetry gives us pleasure and an insight into reality. It enriches our understanding of life. Poetry, as W. B. Yeats says, is the social act of the solitary man. It is about man in society. A poem is 'an answering look' given back by the poet to life:

"Life fixed him, wandering on the stair of glass,
With its attentive eyes….
A hatching that stared and demanded an answering look."
(Wallace Stevens)

The best way to know poetry and to equip ourselves to receive it is by studying its history and evolution. Not every one can be a musician but an idea of its elements makes our response richer. Poetry is written with words and it is, therefore, limited. It is limited because the words belong to a particular language. Poetic language and the special use of words in poetry are crucial areas of our study. A word in a poem is different from a lexical entry. It has an emotional hinterland. Poetry extends the significance of words.

No theme is inherently poetic. There is, in fact, a movement in poetry from the Romantics till our day against the conventionally poetic. Poetic images and expressions are allowed to harden to bring them closer to the struggles of life. Life in the country is different from life in the city as Romantic poetry, written with the ease and assurance of the countryside is different from modern poetry reflecting contemporary urban disillusion. The locale or setting of poetry also determines its character. City poetry is often more celebratory. We will also familiarise ourselves with the 'grammar' or technicalities of poetry and its vitally metaphoric language. We shall look at some poets at work to see how practitioners revise and rework their material. In the end, it is an invitation to pleasure or else why bother with it at all.

11.3 WHAT IS POETRY?

Poetry is a major **genre** or branch of imaginative literature. It is the most concentrated and intense form of communication. With a poem, we want to communicate something to someone, or to many. A successful communication is that where meanings are mutually available. We have, therefore, to underline the primacy of meaning in poetry. A paraphrase of a poem may give us some idea about the poem but it is not the poem. A close reading or critical appreciation may make the poem more immediately available to us but nothing can be a substitute for the poem. Let us consider

the last of Wordsworth's *Lucy Poems*, 'A Slumber did my Spirit Seal', called the 'sublime epitaph' by Coleridge.

"A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.
No motion has she now, no farce;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round is earth's diurnal course,
With rocks and stones and trees. "

The structural basis of the poem is clearly the contrast between the two verses. Verse one deals with the past (there are no less than four verbs in the past tense- *did*, *had*, *seemed*, *could*). Lucy had been such a vital person that the possibility of her growing old or dying had not crossed Wordsworth's mind. Verse two concerns the present (in addition to the 'now' in the first line, there are three main verbs in the present tense- *has*, *hears*, *sees*). Lucy is dead. The invulnerable creature is now as lifeless and immobile as rocks and stones. The contrast is emphasised by the repetition of 'earth'. Lucy, who had seemed immune from the passage of 'earthly years', must now, submit to 'earth's diurnal course'. So, far from escaping the 'touch' of years, she is now undergoing a daily contact with the earth. The use of the solemn Latinism 'diurnal', the only three-syllable word in this mainly monosyllabic poem, completes the contrast. But the final impression the poem leaves is not of two contrasting moods, but of a single mood mounting to a climax in the pantheistic magnificence of the last two lines. The identity of the metrical pattern in the two verses is paralleled by the virtual identity of the word-order, helping to reconcile the moods. The gap between the two verses is also bridged by the negatives. As the first line really means 'I was not mentally awake', all the sentences are essentially negative propositions, until we reach the tremendous positive of the last two lines. The **alliteration** in the last two lines implies that the **pantheistic** universe is solidly one. The all importance of meaning and the comparative insignificance of sound may be seen from the above analysis.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Can poetry be considered a form of communication?

Q 2: Who holds the view that a poem is 'an answering look' given back by the poet to life?

On the other hand, Pope demanded that 'the sound must seem an echo to the sense', and we can see that when Coleridge writes of ice:

"It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swond."

The sounds, likewise, support the meaning in the following lines from Tennyson:

"The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees."

A similar function of sound and internal rhyme is noticeable in the following poem by Louis MacNeice:

"The sunlight on the garden
Hardens and grows cold,
We cannot cage the minute
Within its nets of gold,
When all is told
We cannot beg for pardon.
Our freedom as free lances
Advances towards its end;
The earth compels, upon it
Sonnets and birds descend;
And soon, my friend,
We shall have no time for dances.
The sky was good for flying
Defying the church bells
And every evil iron
Siren and what it tells:

The earth compels,
We are dying, Egypt, dying
And not expecting pardon,
Hardened in heart anew,
But glad to have sat under
Thunder and rain with you,
And grateful too
For sunlight on the garden."

Rhyme, which is repetition of terminal sounds, adds to the cohesion of a poem. This poem was written in the late 1930s under the shadow of the impending war. MacNeice makes his limited but compelling affirmation in the face of chaos. Whatever lies ahead, the part has been good. The very achievement of pattern is itself a kind of affirmation in the face of chaos. Shelley, in "The Cloud", exploits sounds and internal rhymes for pure, simple description. His descriptions, however, are also scientifically exact.

"I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet birds everyone,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain
And laugh as I pass in thunder."

Such rhyming lines may attract too much attention to themselves and they appear mechanical. It can be used unexpectedly to add emphasis and cohesion. Shakespeare's "Sonnet 86" and Eliot's "The Dry Salvages" will serve to illustrate the point.

"Was it the proud full saile of his great verse,
Bound for the prize of (all too precious) you,

That did my ripe thoughts in my braine inhearce,

Making their tombe the wombe wherein they grew?"

'Tomb' and 'Womb' are tied together by the rhyme emphasizing them as important concepts in the statement. There is a more complex use in Eliot's 'The Dry Salvages':

"Also pray for those who were in ships, and

Ended their voyage on the sand, in the sea's lips

Or in the dark throat which will not reject them……"

Rhyme, rhythm, metre, music are used and exploited in poems for different purposes. The examples above are serious, even too serious. But it is not necessary to be solemn to be serious. Chaucer (1340- 1400), in the late Middle Ages, writes in rhyme, and rhyme adds to the surprise element of his lines and underscore their humour:

"She was a worthy womman all her lyve,

Housebonds at churche- dore she hadde fyve."

W. H. Auden's rhymes, unexpected as they often are, highlight his irony and use of paradox, as in the poem "The Unknown Citizen (To JS/ 07/ M/ 378 This Marble Monument Is Erected by the State)" which is a satire on a bureaucratic and mechanistic society and uses clichés to clinch an argument against such a society.



LET US KNOW

Poems are different from prose pieces. It is more formal and its look on the page is different. What Auden or MacNeice says in verse cannot be said in prose and never so effectively. Poems have their own grammar and a familiarity with it improves understanding and appreciation and should help one with the impulse to write poetry. You can pick your choice and have your own preferences. Only the auctioneer is equally enthusiastic about all the products. But who on earth would dislike the following piece by Ogden Nash:

'The Turtle'

The turtle lives 'twixt plated decks
Which practically conceal its sex,
I think it clever of the turtle
In such a fix to be so fertile.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: What is rhyme? Show its uses.

Q 4: What does "The Unknown Citizen" satirise?

11.4 LANGUAGE AND SYNTAX IN POETRY

In this section, we will discuss the question of language and syntax in poetry. Let us begin with the question: 'Why do poets write in verse?' It may be because that is the way they are, which is to say that what they say is not different from how they say it. Coleridge said: 'I write in metre because I am about to use a language different from that of prose." Wordsworth is not too keen to agree. Both of them wrote poetry as well as prose and should know the difference. Poetry and prose are different though both draw from the same resource base- the language of the community. Metre makes poetry purposely formal and the reader is invited to and warned about a different kind of writing than prose. When we try to reduce a poem to a prose statement or make a paraphrase of it, we tend to separate the form from its content. Cleanth Brooks calls it the 'heresy of paraphrase'. In poetry and the arts in general, intuition and expression are not separate. It is through the medium that the poet intuits and expresses. A paraphrase also ignores metre and misconceives metaphor.

Let us now look at the paraphrase of a very well known poem by Wordsworth. ('Upon Westminster Bridge')

The earth has nothing more fair to show. He who could pass by a night so moving in its majesty must be dull of soul. The city now wears the beauty of the morning like a garment. It is silent and bare. Ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples lie open unto the fields and unto the sky. All of them lie bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

The sun never stopped valley, rock, or hill more beautifully in his first splendor. I never saw, never felt so deep a calm! The river glides at his own sweet will. Dear God! The very houses seem asleep. The mighty heart of the city is lying still.

If this is all Wordsworth meant, he would have said so in the first place and in good old prose. Even when we retain almost all the original words, the effect is entirely different and nowhere near so compelling as in the poem which follows:

Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! The very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

Hopkins, in his 'Spring and Fall', seems to throw a challenge to the heretics of paraphrasing. He, in effect, says, "Now try and paraphrase this!"

Spring and Fall:
to a young child

Margaret, are you grieving
Over Goldengrove unleaving?
Leaves, like the things of man, you
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?
Ah! as the heart grows older
It will come to such sights colder

By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;
And yet you will weep and know why.
Now no matter child, the name:
Sorrow's springs are the same.
Nor mouth had, no nor wind, expressed
What a heart heard of, ghost guessed:
It is the blight man was born for,
It is Margaret you mourn for.

It definitely is a syntactically complex poem, but it is further complicated by a few individual words coined by compounding: "Goldengrove", "unleaving", "wanwood", "leafmeal". "Goldengrove" with a capital "G" may simply be a proper name. But we happen to know that the stages of man's life are often compared to the seasons. The title refers to 'Spring' and 'Fall' (Autumn) and is addressed to a 'young child'. Spring is the golden period of life and in Fall or Autumn, leaves grow yellow or golden. The compounding is justified and not just a gratuitous invention. But another **'neologism'** "unleaving" immediately follows it and the unleaving of Goldengrove does not remain a mere fact of nature. Now, as the poem develops, we come across two lines which could be meaningful independently or in isolation. But in the context of the development of the poem, the lines also qualify the 'Fall' of the title and the fall of man is implied unobtrusively. When it does that, "Goldengrove" gains a general significance while remaining a proper name. It could very well be Eden. As a young girl, Margaret can well grieve for the unleaving of Goldengrove, because for her, the leaves are like "the things of man". But,

"Now no matter child, the name:
Sorrow's springs are the same."

What Margaret weeps for is the inescapable process of ageing, decay, and dying. That is the "blight man was born for".

Poetry uses language precisely and exploits all its resources. Some words lose their contours because of constant and varied use. Poets often have to create words to express their ideas and feelings.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: What is implied by the term 'heresy of paraphrase'?

11.5 USE OF WORDS IN POETRY

It is a cliché to say that poetry is written with words. We use it because rejecting everything as old fashioned would rule out the sunshine. But everything is written in words. Words in a poem are different because they exploit many areas of meaning and are more suggestive. This we get to know by reading varieties of poetry. Each individual poet has his/ her own idiom. S/he must be placed in the historical context to bring us closer to the poem. The poem looks different on the page and that is deliberate. This is added to by rhythm and music.

In oral or folk literature, the poet was often anonymous and verses were made up instantly. Since they were transmitted only by word of mouth, there were many versions of the same poem or song or story. Whatever a singer or story teller said was immediately understood by the community. There was a strong sense of community then that the Romantic poets (19th century) feel nostalgic about. The Romantics of the nineteenth century and the earlier sixteenth- seventeenth century Romantic Movement were more individualistic. That subjective emphasis not only continued but became more intense in the modern age. No one seems to speak for the community. Everyone speaks for himself/ herself. Consequently, poetry could no longer communicate so easily. It became increasingly more complex and difficult, even obscure. We have shown that if we know the history and development of poetry down the ages, we can receive poetry better and that is a necessary step in learning to write poetry. We have also said that the faculty of writing poetry is often intimate. But even those who are 'born' poets have to learn. A person who can sing has to learn music to be a musician or even a singer. If one is sensitive and observant there is much poetry to be gathered from the life around us. This is what Wallace Stevens seems to imply when he calls poetry an 'answering look'; Marianne Moore is deliberately 'prosaic'

in her “poetry’ to underline the fact that nothing is inherently ‘poetic’ or ‘unpoetic’. The poet purifies the language of the tribe and leaves it richer. That is primarily because of the use of metaphoric language. Like poetry, its medium, that is language, too changes. But the roots in speech, especially in the spoken language of the rural folk, must never be forgotten. Folk language is vitally metaphoric. This is evident in expressions like ‘her face clouded over’. Poetry tries to be consciously metaphoric. Not that there are no attempts to the contrary. In fact, however inspired a poet may be, s/he must learn his craft and must master his language in such a way that he can make the ‘traditional’ into something ‘novel’. It also, at the same time, must be personal, i.e. the poet creates his own idiom. It is not necessarily a question of coining new words. It is a fresh way of saying things that we find in the poetry of Hopkins, Emily Dickinson, Ogden Mash and others.

The eighteenth century English poets— the neo- classicists, as they are called, underlined this craft or rhetoric of poetry. Alexander Pope had in fact defined poetry as “what oft was thought but never so well expresst”. The Romantics did not quite agree. Attitudes to poetry and its definitions continue to change and because it changes and grows, it remains so vitally alive and interesting.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: What is the significance of ‘words’ of a poem?

11.6 INTERPRETATION OF A POEM

The subject of poetry and its nature and function will be found addressed in the following poem by W. H. Auden on W. B. Yeats’ death:

In Memory of W. B. Yeats (d. Jan 1939)

“He disappeared in the dead of winter
The brooks were frozen, the airports almost deserted,
And snow disfigured the public statues;
The mercury sunk in the mouth of the dying day.

What instruments we have agree
The day of his death was a dark cold day."

As Elizabeth Drew (Drew, 1959) says, the beginning of the first part of the poem, besides evoking the natural and cultural weather of the time of Yeats' death uses a metaphoric language where landscape is symbolic of inner qualities. While the first part concerns the man and his environs, the second distinguishes between the man and the poet. Yeats was also quite fallibly human and the death of the man is not the important part. What is important is that the poetry survives:

"You were silly like us: you survived it all;
……...it survives
In the valley of its making where executives
Would never want to tamper; flows on south
From ranches of isolation and the busy griefs,
Raw towns that we believe and die in; it survives,
A way of happening, a mouth."

Poetry can make nothing happen in the world of political and bureaucratic action but it survives language, in the words in which it is said.

The concluding part of the poem is positive, even celebratory. He, therefore, exploits the use of rhyme and the assurance of a simple, traditional pattern. What Auden does with it is something forceful, urgent and concentrated:

"Earth, receive an honoured guest;
William Butler Yeats is laid to rest:
Let the Irish vessel lie
Emptied of its poetry.
……...
Follow, poet, follow right
To the bottom of the night,
With your unconstraining voice
Still persuade us to rejoice;
With the farming of a verse
Make a vineyard of the curse,

Sing of human unsuccess
In a rapture of distress;
In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountains start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise."

The metaphoric language and the exploitation of the landscape symbolically is sustained. The abiding values of poetry are contrasted to the contemporary situation. The creative, affirmative voice of the poet which liberates us from the dark confusion of the war and its violence will strive against all odds. Poetry can grow out of even the tragic and human failures are celebrated as all too human. The dark cold day of the poets' death is transfigured into joy and freedom and human achievement.



11.7 LET US SUM UP

After going through this unit, you have been acquainted with the three basic aspects of poetry, viz., 'writing and receiving poetry', language of poetry' and the 'nature of poetry'. All these topics under discussion in the unit have been dealt with in detail. The best way to know and receive poetry is studying its history and evolution. Poetry is written in words, and words belong to particular language. But in poetry, the use of words is rather special. We may call it 'poetic language'. Images and expressions used in poetry bring it closer to us, just as the poetry on the countryside is different from the poetry of the urban realties. The unit goes into the fundamentals of poetry by asking the question 'what poetry is'. A major genre of imaginative literature, poetry can be called a communication of something to someone or to many. We have illustrated profusely from the poetry of Wordsworth, Louis MacNeice, Shelley, Shakespeare and T. S. Eliot to buttress the point that the primacy of meaning is an important element of poetry, but a paraphrase may give us some idea of a poem, but it is not the poem. Finally in the unit, you have come across a discussion on the use of words in

poetry for which a number of illustrations are given from many a celebrated poet of the English language.



11.8 FURTHER READING

1) Sanders, Andrew. (1994). *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
2) Beaty, Jerome and Matchett, William H. (1965). *Poetry from Statement to Meaning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3) James, R. A. Scott. (1973). *The Making of Literature*.
4) Scholes, Robert E. et al. (1982). *Elements of Literature*. Oxford University Press.



11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Yes, being a major genre or branch of imaginative literature, poetry is the most concentrated and intense form of communication.

Ans to Q No 2: Wallace Stevens.

Ans to Q No 3: Rhyme is a repetition of terminal sounds. Basically, it adds to the cohesion of a poem.

Ans to Q No 4: "The Unknown Citizen" by W.H. Auden satirizes a bureaucratic and mechanistic society.

Ans to Q No 5: Metre makes poetry purposely formal and the reader is invited to and warned about a different kind of writing than prose. But while trying to reduce a poem to a prose statement or make a paraphrase of it, we tend to separate the form from its content. This is called the 'heresy of paraphrase' by Cleanth Brooks. A paraphrase also ignores metre and misconceives metaphor.

Ans to Q No 6: Words in a poem are different because they exploit many areas of meaning and are more suggestive. Each individual poet has his/ her own idiom and must be placed in the historical context to bring us closer to the poem. This is added to by rhythm and music.



11.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Considering its variety, is a comprehensive definition of poetry possible? Discuss with reference to what you have read above.

Q 2: How are words used differently in a poem? How does context change the character of poetry?

Q 3: Contextualise the lines quoted form Chaucer in the text and consider him as a satirist.

Q 4: Analyse a poem of your choice to illustrate the point that a poem has meaning.

Q 5: Write what you understand of the poem 'Spring and Fall' in about 50 words.

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UNIT 12 : INTERPRETING DRAMA

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 What is a Play?

12.3.1 Types of Drama

12.4 The Theory of Drama

12.5 Component Parts of a Play

12.6 Modes of Theatrical Representations

12.7 Let Us Sum Up

12.8 Further Reading

12.9 Answers To Check Your Progress

12.10 Model Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- define a play
- explain the different types of drama
- state the constituent parts of a play
- discuss the theory of drama
- identify the various modes of theatrical presentations.

12.2 INTRODUCTION

You must have surely heard the word ‘play’ in your lifetime. Here ‘play’ is not what you mean in the simple sense of the term i.e. taking part in game or sports. So, in its literary context its meaning is to act on a stage, to perform a role of a character. We can also say that a play is a dramatic composition that tells a story by means of dialogue and action to be performed on the stage. So in this unit, we will help you to understand the concept of a play. Further, we shall discuss the constituent parts of a play as well as the theory of drama. Now let us move to the concept of the *play*.

12.3 WHAT IS A PLAY?

A play is a dramatic composition that tells a story by means of dialogue and action to be performed on the stage. It is thus a dramatic representation and its equivalent word is drama. In Greek language, drama also meant simply to act or perform. So, the good old name for drama is *play.*

Plays are fundamentally different from other literary forms. Stories and poems are written only for reading. But plays are designed for performance, not for reading alone. Words are written to be spoken by actors and heard by an audience. So it has both the aural and visual aspects. Actors are the vehicles as well as the instruments for the playwrights. The word *'*Playwright*'* is etymologically to be noted. It falls in the same line as that of a 'shipwright', a 'cartwright', or a 'wheelwright', carrying the sense of a craft person, a maker of crafts. Similarly, a playwright is also a maker of a script for the stage- a text. But that does not mean that it will not carry literary elements or aesthetic complexity. Let us note that a play should contain a story, usually of human conflicts, and fully exists in production and should have its access to the theatre at the stage. This is crucial to the structure of the play.

You should note that a play is to be acted before an audience. We cannot conceive of a play without an audience. The author has both actors and audience in view when he is penning his lines. No doubt it is a story or fiction or fact told to an audience, but *it is in essence a story or fact interpreted before an audience by a body of actors.* A Play has thus a plot, characters, dialogue, an atmosphere, an outlook on life. Its full qualities are revealed in presentation on the stage before an audience.

Considering all these aspects and features for distinguishing Drama as an art-form from other arts, Allardyce Nicoll in his book *Theory of Drama* has framed its rough definition in this way:

"Drama is the art of expressing ideas about life in such a manner as to render that expression capable of interpretation by actors and likely to interest an audience assembled to hear the words and witness the action."



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is a play?

Q 2: What is the good old name of drama?

12.3.1 Types of Drama

Let us now delve into the different kinds of play. From the earliest times, drama has been broadly divided into two kinds, namely, Tragedy and Comedy. The tragedy and the comedy of the ancient Greeks are still accepted as the prime and model achievements in this form of art.

Tragedy is a sad or unlucky event in human life in the ordinary sense of the term. In drama it deals with the tragic and dark side of life, aiming at inspiring the people with a sense of pity and awe. Characters are faced with tragic situations and finally there is catastrophe and an unhappy fate.

Generally speaking, tragedies are classified in two forms- Classical and Romantic- the former is based on Greek conventions, the latter on its own standards.

The word 'comic' or comedy, as you know, is ordinarily used for something which is funny or laughable and deals with the lighter side of life. It has a pleasant atmosphere and is entertaining. In some cases, you can see that there are some tragic situations, but ultimately, there is happy ending. Some are again, satirical. Satire and Comedy are closely related.

Like tragedies, comedies are also of several types. There are some 'romantic comedies' as recognised by the critics, like Shakespeare's romantic comedies. There are also comedy of 'humours', comedy of 'manners', sentimental comedies, black or dark comedies, etc. Apart from these, there are tragi-comedies, containing comic relief and at the same time possessing some potentially tragic background.

12.4 THE THEORY OF DRAMA

As you have come to know that since drama is an art, so like all arts it must have its conventions, principles and some theories. A play must deliver the whole message within a very few hours. A playwright has to exercise great economy in the handling of the plot, in the delineation of character, in use of choicest words rejecting all superfluous and unnecessary details. Only those essential materials are required which lead to the growth of dramatic characters and situations and which are conducive to the intended dramatic effect. So you can see that from the point of view of structure, a play must have some divisions as shown below.

(i) **An Exposition:** This forms the introduction, explaining the circumstances or situation from which the action is to start. The exposition gives the audience an idea of when and where the action is about to take place, who are the characters involved, what is their relation with each other and what has taken place before the curtain goes up.

(ii) **The Complication or Rising action:** After the exposition is developed, the play gradually involves in complication or in progress of the story which must be resolved in the play itself. This is called the complication.

The complication creates suspense. The action then proceeds to the point of greatest emotional impact, which is called the climax.

(iii) **Climax (or Crisis):** In the climax, it takes a turn for the better or worse (according to the kind of play- tragedy or comedy). It is called, then, the denoument.

(iv) **Denoument (or Falling Action):** The falling action unravels the solutions to the problems raised and helps the movement towards the resolution of the conflicts presented in the play, which is called Resolution.

(v) **Solution or Catastrophe:** Here the problem of the play is solved, outcome of the situation is made clear, and the fate of the characters is decided. In case of comedy it is ***solution*** and in the tragedy it is ***catastrophe.***

These constitutional parts in the composition of a play is proportionately structured according to the length of the drama. In a five-act play the ***Exposition*** occupies the first act or so; the ***Complication*** the next two acts or so; the ***Climax*** is a part of the third act; the ***Denoument*** and resolution is in the rest of the third act, the fourth act and a part of the fifth; the **Solution** or **Catastrophe** is in the rest of the fifth act. In shorter plays it is reduced accordingly. In **one-act plays** these parts are further reduced. The first three or four speeches form the exposition after which it moves into conflict or complication. The action proceeds to the climax and then quickly goes to denoument and then to the final solution.

The five-fold divisions are almost universally accepted and can be shown in a diagram in the following way:

A. a = Introduction or Exposition
b = Complication or Rising action
c = Climax, crisis or turning point
d = Denoument or Falling action or Return
e = Catastrophe or Solution

B. a = Exposition
b= Initial incident
c = Growth of action to its crisis
d = Crisis or turning point
e = Resolution
f = Catastrophe

Here in the diagram B we have seen that there are six divisions. Diagram A is a pyramidal structure for five-fold divisions, as symbolised by Gustav Freytag (1816-1875), a renowned German critic and dramatist. But W. Hudson in his book, *An Introduction to the Study of Literature* provided another minor division after introduction or exposition. To him, there are certain conditions or certain relations of character which are to be explained to the audience for better intelligibility and this distinguishes the introduction of the dramatic plot. This is called the *Initial incident*.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: What is the function of an exposition in a play?

Q 4: What is 'initial incident'?

12.5 COMPONENT PARTS OF A PLAY

Let us now look at the most important aspect of drama i.e. the component parts of a play.

A play has a plot, character, dialogue (or language), an atmosphere, thought and song. Aristotle long back in his book *Poetics* mentioned about six main parts in a play– **Plot, Character, Diction, Thought, Spectacle** and ***Song.*** Of course, he referred to these elements in case of a tragedy only, though in general these are applicable in all types of play.

The Plot : The plot is the most important and unavoidable element on which the narrative or the play is constructed. It is the frame-work of the incidents or chain of events in a story, simple or complex, which are knit together. When the incidents or episodes of life are linked through some principle, this becomes a plot. To achieve a certain objective, the playwright binds with a principle, these events of human life. In life there is variety, inconsistencies and disorders. The ancient Greek dramatists connected these formless varieties or inconsistencies with the theory of fate or destiny and linked them with a chain of order and unity. This application of form to human life is then, the plot.

In India, Bharata's *Natya Sastra* also gave much importance to the plot. It is mentioned in the book as 'Itibritta', which is the body of the drama *(Itibrittam tu natyashya sariram parikirtitam).* The latter rhetoricians called it the matter *(Vastu).*

Character : If some actions or incidents and the ideas they contain are to be made lively and breathing before us through dramatic situation, then some free human personality is needed. In other words, it needs something that will function as its motor characters. So character is the important element of a play. To some critics, characters constitute the soul of a play because they are the agents that enact the story of the plot.

Aristotle described four characteristics for a character. First and foremost is (i) *goodness*. The good characters will be good, but even the bad characters should posses some goodness. Secondly, character should be appropriate, (ii) *appropriateness or propriety*. The hero or the king must

be courageous, he should not be otherwise. Women are supposed to be soft and sweet. Slaves are meant be loyal and respectful. If these traits are available accordingly in them, then they are appropriate. Otherwise they will lose propriety. Thirdly, characters must be true to life (iii) *likeness*. They must not be created on unreal elements. This is, however, not the same as making characters good or appropriate as said by Aristotle. The fourth point is (iv) *consistency*. If the subject of imitation is inconsistent, then even consistency of inconsistency must be maintained. Aristotle observed in this way.

Again the characters must be presented as necessary and as probable. Though in modern dramas, today, these rigidities or rules are not strictly adhered to, theoretically and primarily these points were taken as fundamental in those days.

Dialogue (Diction) : In a sense dialogue is the soul of the play. Dialogues given to the characters give movement to the play and allow it to advance. Whether the dialogues thrown by the characters mutually in different situations are natural, relevant or shortened or not, whether these are pertinent or favourable to arouse dramatic curiousity or not, all these should be considered in the framing of dialogues.

There has been a lot of discussion regarding dialogues. Aristotle has included in it diction, which refers to the spoken rhythm of the language in general. Through words, the meaning or purpose becomes expressive. The style will be dependent on the kinds of dramatic themes and according to the types of characters. Grand style is not applicable in all cases. He has also analysed the parts of speech, and other grammatical details–the words and modes of speech including metaphor. He has shown how poetry combines elevation of language with perspicuity. Similarly, Bharata in the *Natya Sastra* has also directed as to what type of language and in what style should be spoken by certain type of characters. That this should be separate and distinct from our daily use has been emphasized by both the rhetoricians.

But in accordance with the changes of time, reasoning and ideas in subsequent ages, the language of the dialogue is also undergoing changes–

from poetry to prose, prose to poetry and then again, to prose in modern times. Thus language has been the distinguishing feature in today's theatre. A critic has justly said that "in most effective plays, the dialogue is not only suited to the speaker, but carries along the conflict more than any physical action on the stage." Even in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Hamlet himself told his players how the dialogue should be suitable to the action.

"Suit the action to the word, the word to the action. With this special observance, that you overstep not the modesty of nature'.... 'The end of the play is to hold the mirror upto nature". [Act. III. Sc II]

Thus, dialogue must have an indispensable link with the plot, character and action.

You must have note here that Aristotle has not discussed so much about 'thought' in the *Poetics*. According to him thought is very much internally linked with character and dialogue. The matter is included in 'rhetoric'. When a character in a play discusses an aspect of a matter, when a character likes to prove or disprove some action through reasoning or by creating sensations of pity, fear or anger_ all these are revealed by 'thought' through dialogue. If something is to be exaggerated or to be ignored or demeaned, the character expresses thought and purpose. When the character is in the midst of perplexities for taking a final decision, the decision is reflected through the action and thought of the character. Aristotle laid down similar precepts, while discussing the element of thought in the composition of tragedy.

Spectacle : The next element of a play is spectacle. Aristotle wrote that s*pectacular equipment will be a part of tragedy.* He actually referred to spectacle as the stage-appearance of the actors. Since the play is visible and spectacular, so it is very important as to how actors through their dress, costume and make-up create the scenes. Through their make-up, gestures and postures and movements they can very easily create the desired effects in the minds of the audience even without their dialogues. Aristotle perhaps meant this when he mentioned about 'Spectacle'.

In ancient Greece and in India too, scenes were not available in the stages. Scenaries were also absent. So actors had the great responsibility

to express the dramatic situational descriptions through their costume, dress, make-up and movements. The audience visualised these features and reacted accordingly.

Even during Shakespeare's time in England in the sixteenth century, the Elizabethan stage was a bare one without props, curtains or wings. Visual imagination was necessary for the spectators to realise, and our actors provided that by their spectacles and acting. Shakespeare wrote *:*

'And so our scene must to the battle fly' (*Henry V.* Prologue to Act V). Also, Shakespeare normally used beautiful and effective image laden language in the form of the dialogue for describing scenes of mountains, rivers or such other dramatic situations, whenever necessary. Sun-rise, nightfall, noon, etc. were beautifully described through language; whereas in modern dramas, nowadays, light effects and technical devices would have been applied to produce these required spectacles.

Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to the rocky wood;
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
While night's black agents to their preys do rouse. [*Macbeth,* III. II]

The modern dramatists again, usually give instructions for producing detailed scenery and stage directions, which can be presented in today's developed stages.

When there were actions in the play so violent or distressing that they could not be represented on the stage, characters i.e. actors through their movements and gestures and acting tried to depict all the appropriate signs of horror and revulsion.

The Indian drama-rhetoricians were also conscious about the spectacular parts of dramatic representations. So they talked of and discussed the various types of acting-methods by the actors. They talked of four kinds of acting which were defined and explained in detail.

To-day, however, in the context of availability of developed stage and technical amenities, spectacle has been an important element in the production of a drama.

Song : Music was the source of inspiration and basis for the birth

of a play. Hence it was an important mark of a play. In ancient India acting was also accompanied with music and instrument. In Greek drama the role of chorus was very important and essential. Aristotle has said "of the remaining elements song holds the chief place among the embellishment." "The chorus too should be regarded as one of the actors, it should be an integral part of the whole and share in the action." *(Poetics)*. Thus, song was to be found in the choric part of a tragedy.

But, gradually, as time elapsed, the chorus and music began to lose its importance. In different periods of dramatic history as in Elizabethan Age, the Restoration period and in later times, in the Western dramas music was not the essential element. Of course in the *Operas*, in Indian *Jatras* and in moving theatres in lyrical dance-dramas, song and music still hold the premier roles. For instance in the Epic theatres of Bertolt Brecht, the music has retained its decisive place. Again, in Indian Sanskrit dramas 'Sentiment's (*Rasas*) were the soul of the dramas and each sentiment had its appropriate music.

Thus the role of music cannot be undermined outright. Its relevance depends on the nature of the particular drama. In case of lyrical or poetic plays or in dramas which are mostly allegorical, symbolic or folk in nature, the dramatist utilises music in a creative manner. You must be aware of the fact that in India some dramas written by Rabindranath Tagore or Jyoti Prasad Agarwalla, exist only on music.

Music is the medium of articulation of the human heart and drama is the imitation of human experience and situations presented in order to please and give enjoyment to human hearts; so the utility of music, as suitable to the type of dramas, will always be there.

We have thus discussed the essential elements of a play as referred to by critics. But Aristotle divided these six elements of a tragedy in two ways:–

The external, namely *spectacle*, *song* and *diction*; and three internal, namely *plot, character* and *thought.*

Today in writing a script for the stage, a writer does not grammatically think of these elements, but cannot also ignore them because they are still relevant.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: What, according to Aristotle, are the main parts of a play?

Q 6: Who is the major exponent of Epic theatre?

12.6 MODES OF THEATRICAL REPRESENTATIONS

a) Realistic Dramas: Domestic and Social Problem Plays

The dramatic movement traversing a long path from the time of its birth to the present day has undergone changes in all matters concerning subject-matter, structure, design and technique so as to suit the contemporary tone and taste of the modern age. The playwrights wanted to reveal the social human situations, their predicaments against the complexities and problems in the society.

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), the renowned Norweigean dramatist, became the greatest force in bringing out the desired revival of the modern theatre. He not only brought about an epoch-making change in the subject-matter and in treatment, but also introduced new technique with detailed stage directions and cast aside the *Soliloquies* and the *Asides* substituting the subtle treatment of dialogue. His famous plays, *A Doll's House* (1879), *Ghost* (1881), *An Enemy Of the People (1882), The Wild Duck (1884)* are some of the masterpieces dealing with domestic problems, women's emancipation, individuals' conscience against the background of social forces.

The English theatre developed in the manner of the prose-plays of Ibsen and the movement was advanced by English dramatists like George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), John Galsworthy (1867-1933) and many others.

b) Poetic Plays:

As a reaction to realistic prose-plays the movement of poetic drama came into existence in the early twenties of the twentieth century in the hands of some young dramatists like W.B. Yeats, James Flecker, etc. and finally in the hands of T.S. Eliot (1889-1965) who was its greatest champion. To these dramatists, poetry *is the natural and complete medium for drama,*

that prose-play is a kind of abstraction capable of giving you only a part of what the theatre can give, and the verse-play is capable of something much more intense and exciting. Murder in the Cathedral (1935), *The Family Reunion* (1939) , *The Confidential Clerk* (1949) are some of Eliot's verse-plays that are most effective and successful. In the *Murder in the Cathedral* T.S. Eliot borrowed some classical methods like chorus, song and dance and placed them in the modern perspective. This proved highly effective.

c) Brechtian Plays:

In the latter part of the twentieth century social and political ideas began to inspire the creation of modern plays. Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), the German poet and dramatist motivated by Marxian philosophy struck a new note and began to influence the dramatic world by his plays which dealt with the presentation of socialistic subject-matter in a new and easy technique combined with *alienation* effect-which is now commonly known as Epic-theatre.

d) Theatre of the Absurd: Absurd Dramas

Somewhat in a parallel way, on the basis of some ideas nourished from the philosophies of Existentialism and Surrealism and from the theories of Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus etc., a kind of drama emerged which lack formal logic in subject-matter and is somewhat distanced from the conventional dramatic structure. This movement is known as the Theatre of the Absurd.

The playwrights mostly associated with the movement are Samuel Beckett (1906 - 1989), a French-Irish dramatist, Eugene Ionesco (1909-1994), Jean Genet, Arthur Adamov, etc.

In viewing these plays we must forsake the theatre of regular, developed and coherent situation; we must forget characterisation in a logical theme and forget natural settings that bear the realistic relationship of the drama; we must also forget the use of language as a tool of logical communication and the cause-and-effect relationship found in traditional dramas. There are a number of puzzling devices used for the acting. The playwrights try to accustom the audience to a new kind of relationship between theme and presentation. *Waiting for Godot* (1953) by Samuel

Beckett, *The Chairs* (1952), *Rhinoceros* (1959), *The Bold Prime Donna*, by Eugene Ionesco are some of the most famous absurd dramas in this line in the twentieth century.

e) Third Theatre:

A kind of theatre movement in between the city theatre and the village theatre (folk theatre) arose in the latter part of the 20th century to create a link between the two. It is a kind of synthesis both in thematic and structural way. The term was, however, coined by Eugenio Barba to describe his own group. It was so called by analogy with the 'Third World'– deprived, neglected and short of resources. Similarly in production of those plays, expenses are kept low and plays are written accordingly to suit the technique. A Polish dramatist J. Grotowski had considerable influence in the creation of such plays and formation of a troupe. In India, Badal Sarkar was the first dramatist to espouse the cause of this theatre. Some of his well known plays are *Pagla Ghora , Abong Indrajit, Bhuma,* etc.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: Name the poetic plays of T. S. Eliot.

Q 8: What is third theatre?



12.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have given you a brief note on what a play is and discussed its component parts. It must be noted that a play is a dramatic composition that tells a story by means of dialogue and action to be performed on the stage. As you have finished reading the unit, you must be able to categorise the different types of drama and articulate the theory of drama. A play has a plot, character, dialogue (or language), an atmosphere, thought and song and we have dealt these component parts of a play in details here. By now you must be able to analyse the varied modes of theatrical presentations.



12.8 FURTHER READING

1) Allardyce Nicoll. (1931). *The Theory of Drama.* New York: G. G. Harrap.

2) Worth, Katharine. (1973). *Revolutions in Modern English Drama*. London: G. Bell and Sons.

3) Zarhy-Levo, Yael. (2008). *The Making of Theatrical Reputations: Studies from the Modern London Theatre.* Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.



12.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: A play is a dramatic composition that tells a story by means of dialogue and action to be performed on the stage.

Ans to Q No 2: Play.

Ans to Q No 3: The exposition gives the audience an idea of when and where the action is about to take place, who are the characters involved, what is their relation with each other and what has taken place before the curtain goes up.

Ans to Q No 4: Refer to Section 12.4

Ans to Q No 5: Plot, Character, Diction, Thought, Spectacle and Song.

Ans to Q No 6: Bertolt Brecht.

Ans to Q No 7: *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), *The Family Reunion* (1939) and *The Confidential Clerk* (1949).

Ans to Q No 8: A kind of theatre movement in between the city theatre and the village theatre (folk theatre) arose in the latter part of the 20th century to create a link between the two. It is a kind of synthesis both in thematic and structural way.



12.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Comment on the various component parts of a drama.

Q 2: What is a play? Discuss the different types of drama with examples.

Q 3: Write short notes on :

a) Realistic drama

b) Brechtian drama

c) Theatre of the absurd

Q 4: Describe in details the Theory of Drama.

Q 5: What is meant by the term realistic drama? Explain.

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UNIT 13 : INTERPRETING THE NOVEL

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 What is a Novel?

13.4 Characteristics of the Novel

13.5 Major Types of Novel

13.6 Setting, Space and Time

13.7 Points of View and Use of Perspectives

13.8 Let Us Sum Up

13.9 Further Reading

13.10 Answers To Check Your Progress

13.11 Model Questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- get an idea of the novel as a genre
- enlist the features of the novel
- describe the importance of setting, space and time in a novel
- indentity the major types of novel
- discuss important concepts as points of view and use of perspectives in a novel.

13.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we are going to look at various aspects of the novel as a literary form. As you are aware there are various literary forms that have enriched the traditions of literature in different languages of the world. One of the ways in which we can understand the nature of literature is by studying the different literary genres. The novel is an important literary genre. Here we shall consider the various characteristics of the novel. There are certain special features which distinguish it from other literary types. It is also

important to take note of the major types of the novel in order to see its variety and different modes of practice. We shall also be focussing on the significance of concepts like setting, space and time in the novel. In some cases, the novelist may invent a wholly new region within which to place the characters, or he/she may re-imagine a historically recognisable space for the setting. The usage of time is one of the most important elements of a story. Some stories may span years, decades and even centuries while some may be confined to a few hours. The unit shall also emphasize on points of view and use of perspectives in a novel.

13.3 WHAT IS A NOVEL?

At a very basic level, a novel is a literary type of certain length that presents a 'story' in fictionalized terms. It can be distinguished from other literary forms by its immense flexibility. There have been numerous experiments with the form and it is difficult to say which phase is more important as its relevance has been changing from time to time. In literature we find different literary types which are extremely rigorous and form-oriented. But the novel is not so. As Chris Baldick points out, "the novel as a literary genre is itself exceptional: it disregards the constraints that govern other literary forms, and acknowledges no obligatory structure, style, or subject-matter. Thriving on this openness and flexibility, the novel has become the most important literary genre of the modern age, superseding the epic, the romance, and other narrative forms. Novels can be distinguished from short stories and novellas by their greater length, which permits fuller, subtler development of characters and themes." (Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Second edition, Oxford: OUP, 2001 p.73) Certain conditions are present in all novels: plot, character and action. The plot is important because it provides a sense of chronology. Ian Watt has observed that unlike the plots of plays, epics or poems novels usually do not rely on traditional sources. This may not be applicable to all novels (the historical and the mythological novels are exceptions) but often fictional narratives have a degree of inventiveness that isn't quite the dominant feature in the other literary genres. Moreover, we find that novels have

complicated plot structures because it is possible for the novelist to develop and elaborate the themes in ways that other genres do not allow. The mode of narrative is an important aspect of the genre of the novel. We find many novels that experiment with the narrative mode, which is related to the style of storytelling. So, along with the issue of what the story is about, we have the issue of how the story is told occupying the genre of the novel. All of this is afforded by the length of the novel. No modern literary genre can be as lengthy as the novel.

13.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NOVEL

Today, one of the ways in which we define a novel is that it is a prose narrative. This is its first characteristic. A novel, however, may not adopt or rely on such frames to develop its subject. This brings us to the second characteristic of the novel: it is a modern development. The third characteristic of the novel is that it has a plot or a structure. Even those novels which seem to lack an apparent structure actually have one. Without a plot, the subject of the novel cannot be organised properly. The plot makes it possible for the novelist to arrange different points of the novel in a coherent way. The plot is that which holds the various elements of the novel together. We must remember that all fictional prose narratives which tell stories are not novels. For example, in the essays of the nineteenth century writer, Charles Lamb, we find him presenting fictional situations in narrative form. In Lamb's essays we have fictional episodes but they do not become a novel. This brings us to the fourth characteristic of the novel: it must be of a certain length. This feature is important because only when the story spans some length can the theme be expanded and developed. There is no definite rule about how long a novel should be. But if it is too short, then the different conditions of the story cannot be developed properly. Without characters we cannot have a novel. This is the fifth characteristic of the novel: it must have characters and action. The action in a novel may be of different kinds. Sometimes we see a lot of developments in the plot. In some other cases, especially in the modernist novel the action is often internal and cannot be described in terms of external change or transformation. The novel tries to

deal with and present some form of reality in a credible way. This is its sixth characteristic. Of course, we find that all novels cannot be placed with the category of realism. But in one way or the other the representation of reality (ideas about the real may be different and even contradictory) is one of the important issues in a novel. There are various kinds of realistic representations in fiction: magic realism and social realism are two such examples. We also find novels that experiment with the question of reality in ways that make it the central issue in the novel. The novel of ideas is one such type where the ideas are more important than the situation of the characters. Some postmodern novels examine the issues of reality that are quite opposed to the way it is presented in the classic realist novels. In Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), the reality cannot be taken for granted. The narrative of Saleem Sinai in the novel raises questions about the nature of the subject quite vehemently.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: How is plot important in a novel?

Q 2: Give two examples of realistic representation in fiction.

Q 3: What is the novel of ideas? Give an example.

13.5 MAJOR TYPES OF NOVEL

There are different ways of categorizing the novel. Two of the most common ways of doing so are in terms of the historical and the technical aspects of the form. These categories do not mean that the placement of a novel in one excludes it from being placed in another. For example, the eighteenth century novel like Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* can be both a picaresque and a satirical novel. We find such overlapping in all forms of fiction. The awareness of these categories, however, enables us to consider various aspects of the form and explore its characteristics.

(a) The Picaresque Novel: The word picaresque is derived from the Spanish word *picaro*, a word that means a rogue or a scoundrel. These narratives are episodic in nature and present the adventures of the

central character (called a picaroon) who may be either male or female. This picaroon is shown to move across a wide variety of social scales as they engage in different escapades. The plot of a picaresque novel is very loose and the different episodes are bound together only by the presence of the central character. The anonymous Spanish narrative *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) is one of the earliest examples of the type. Other notable specimens of this genre include Alain-Rene Lesage's *Gil Blas* (1715-35), *Moll Flanders* (1722) and *Tom Jones* (1749). Various other novels have picaresque elements even though they are not completely placed in the genre. Cervantes' *Don Quijote* (1604) and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) are two such examples.

(b) The Epistolary Novel: The narrative of the epistolary novel is presented through the medium of letters (epistles). In this type of novel the plot moves forward through the process of exchange of letters between the characters. In addition to it sometimes extracts from the diaries or journals are also inserted into the narrative. This type of novel was primarily the product of the eighteenth century and Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1840) and *Clarissa* (1847-48) and Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloise* (1761), and Laclos's *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (1782) are the most famous example of the type. In 1979 the American novelist John Barth published *Letters*, which was written in the epistolary mode.

(c) The Historical Novel: The historical novel takes as its setting events and developments that have a clear historical framework. The historical novel can include both actual and fictionalized characters. The novelist tries to present actual situations, manners, landscape and settings in such a way that they reflect the circumstances of the given time in both a representative and a credible manner. The protagonist of the historical novel is placed in a situation of conflict where the questions of loyalty are engaged in a political or a social context. Walter Scott was one of the pioneers of the genre in England. The novels of the American writer James Fenimore Cooper are also examples of this

type. The historical novel genre has flourished in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Many **pulp fiction** writers have tried their hand at the genre in our time.

(d) The Regional Novel: The regional novel takes as its setting a particular space or location, which may be either fictionalised or actual, and places the characters in that region. Often, the regional novel takes as its setting a rural place or territory. The novels of Thomas Hardy – placed in a fictional place called 'Wessex' – and those of William Faulkner – in 'Yoknapatawpha County' – are the most famous Western examples of this type. R. K. Narayan's novels that take Malgudi as its setting also belong to this genre.

(e) The Satirical Novel: The satirical novel, which may be in either prose or verse, is defined by the critical sense with which it examines the subject and one of its primary objectives is exposure of follies. The novels of Jonathan Swift and Henry Fielding can be placed in this genre. We may also distinguish between subtypes within this genre such as the political and social satirical novel. The political satirical novel takes for its subject the critique of political establishment by exposing the inadequacies in the system. Many novels written during the early decades of the twentieth century in Russia and Germany tried to show the regimentation of the political establishment. Writings in this genre have flourished in contemporary literature, with different novelists from the Caribbean, Latin America and the Third World literature making use of this form to critically expose certain problems in the political system. The novels of the English writer George Orwell, especially *Animal Farm* and *1984* are well-known for their attack on the political establishment. Social satirical novels are directed towards the exposure of social evils and problems. The novels of the Russian writer Nikolai Gogol and some texts of the English novelist W. M. Thackeray (notably *Vanity Fair*) can be placed in this category.

(f) The Existential Novel: Many novels written in the twentieth century have veered away from the conventional themes of family, society, love and marriage and they display a preoccupation with the questions

of human existence. There is a questioning of accepted values and an exposure of the different cultural institutions that supposedly 'veil' the basic existential situation of life. This kind of novel flourished in France with writers like Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre posing issues of human survival within a novelistic frame. The writings of Franz Kafka are also part of this genre.

(g) **The Self-Reflexive Novel:** In contemporary literature, there has been an attempt to consider issues relating to the form of the novel itself as part of the novel's subject. This type of novel, which examines the novel's form and character as its theme is known as the self-reflexive novel. John Fowles' publication of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* in 1969 was an important landmark for this genre in terms of literary production in English. In fact, the eighteenth century novel by Laurence Sterne *Tristram Shandy* displays some characteristics of this genre. The novels by American writers such as Donald Barthelme and John Barth are considered to be examples of this literary type. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* also contains self-reflexive elements.



LET US KNOW

Pulp Fiction: Pulp fiction is a pejorative term for certain kinds of fiction. Pulp fiction books are often badly written and intended to shock people. These books are usually trash or nearly rubbish, and often include soft porn, the kitsch, poor Westerns, the lower forms of crime fiction and third-rate sentimental romances.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: What are two most common ways of categorising the novel?

Q 5: How does the plot move in an epistolary novel? Name one such novel.

Q 6: What is the concern of an existential novel?

Q 7: Name one political satirical novel.

13.6 SETTING, SPACE AND TIME

(a) Location: Location in the novel may not operate in the same way. In the early history of the novel, for example, especially when the picaresque novel was in vogue, the plot moved with the protagonist. There is hardly any sense of definite place in the novels such as *Don Quixote* by Cervantes or in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*. By the nineteenth century, however, when the novel form consolidated, narratives are set in specific locations which grant them their special character. The London of Dickens or the countryside of the novels of George Eliot provides significant insights into the way the characters respond to the worlds around them. Often a neighbourhood development or incident propels the story forward. In the Miss Marple adventures of Agatha Christie's detective novels, the location plays an important part. We can also judge a character from the location in which he/she is placed. In the novels of D. H. Lawrence, the residents of the mining town districts are often looked down upon by the urban population. This is a deliberate choice on part of Lawrence as he draws attention to the plight of his characters by doing so.

(b) Setting and the Sense of Place: Location and setting are not always the same. Location is actually the idea of geographical space, while the setting may be more specific such as street or a room or even the seaside. In the novel titled *Kiss of the Spiderwoman* by the Argentinean writer Manuel Puig the narrative is set inside a prison where the convicts talk about different issues. The prison becomes the setting and provides them the sense of place. The exact geographical location is not specified. Many thrillers belonging to the pulp fiction genre employ indoor settings where the drama and the intrigue take place and often the context is imaginary or non-existent.

(c) Different Aspects of Time: The management of time is of crucial importance in the novel. It does not really matter whether the story has a linear narrative or a fragmented one. But the reader must be able to make sense of the time-plane where you place your story.

One of the ways in which time functions in a novel relates to the orientation of the characters. This could be achieved through a reference to various conventional time-devices such as memory, flash-backs and flash-forwards and recollection. In Umberto Eco's *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana* the protagonist moves through the past to the present only on the basis of the memory of the books he has read. Memory serves as the agency through which he makes sense of time in the novel. If we leave out memory in the novel then the various episodes that he refers to have no connection with one another.

(d) The Temporal and the Spatial Planes: As you will be aware by now, the planes of time (temporal) and space (spatial) control the movement of the story. They may act and function in conjunction and operate in the same plane or there may be an altogether different scheme of things in the way they are managed. In Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* two parallel narratives move forward: the first addresses the reader and the other is the telling of story that constitutes the actual novel. Both the narratives operate in two extremely different planes and seem to be completely disconnected; but as we read on, we realise that they converge towards the end of the novel and both the narratives find meaning in the way they come together. Many postmodern novels play around with the spatial and the temporal planes in order to complicate the sense of reality. This is not quite the case with the novels written in classic realist tradition. In the novels of Jane Austen or George Eliot we find the space and time operating in the same plane. For a reader accustomed to conventional narratives, the playfulness of the postmodern text (where time/space confusion is more common) may be the source of surprise, but it is after a matter of structuring that shows careful deliberation on the part of the author.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8: What is the setting of the novel *Kiss of the Spiderwoman*?

Q 9: Give an example of how memory helps make sense of time in a novel.

13.7 POINTS OF VIEW AND USE OF PERSPECTIVES

A novelist may choose a first-person narrator or an objective, omniscient narrator or even an unreliable narrator as discussed below :

(a) **The First-person Narrator:** The first-person narrator is the speaking subject that presents first-hand information on the basis of what he/she observes, sees, hears or experiences. The nature of the first-person narrator may be very different from author to author. One of the conventional ways in which this is done is by winning the trust of the reader. The conventional first-person narrator is reliable and trustworthy. He/she creates a sense of authenticity by describing episodes to which he/she has been witness or about which he/she had definite information. The first-person narrator can provide the insider's view as he/she is directly involved with the subject that is narrated. There are, however, certain disadvantages with this mode of narration. For example, the first-person narrator cannot describe everything pertaining to the subject of the novel, for he/she must be present at the scene for the information to be relayed to the reader.

(b) **The Omniscient Narrator:** The omniscient narrator is the objective narrator who is usually placed outside the scene of action. Whatever happens does not affect him and he takes an objective view of things. He is in complete control of the narrative process and can modulate and determine the pace of the narrative according to the demands of the story. Such a narrator is useful in a wide canvas or a broad narrative framework. The omniscient narrator can also provide a sense of critical distance in terms of how the subject is viewed or represented. Usually this kind of narrator does not display any bias towards any character

and presents the story quite objectively. The narrative voice in this case can be the source of scrutiny or satire depending on how the novelists orient it.

(c) **Using different Perspectives:** One of the interesting ways in which narrative point of view is modulated in a novel is through the use of different perspectives. A point of view indicates the position from which a object is scrutinized or observed. Quite often, the narrator may present things through different perspectives or points of view. For example, the same incident may be reported by different characters from alternative perspectives. This happens quite often in detective fiction where a murder, for instance, is presented in such ways that do not privilege any particular perspective. It is the eventual unknotting that resolves the matter. Different perspectives may also be employed to create the conflicts and crises in different episodes in the novel.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 10: What are the disadvantages of a first-person narrator?

Q 11: In which type of fiction are different perspectives generally used?

Q 12: Who is an omniscient narrator?



13.8 LET US SUM UP

We have looked at the various aspects of the novel in this unit. We have seen that it is a modern development which is considerably different from other literary genres. There are certain characteristics that are common to most novels which we have discussed here. There are various types of novel which have been elaborately described in this unit. Apart from these, the unit also deals with other important aspects like setting, space and time as well as points of view and use of perspectives.



13.9 FURTHER READING

1) Burroway, Janet. (1992) *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft*. New York: Harper Collins.
2) Dibell, Ansen. (1988). *Plot*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Writer's Digest Books.
3) Hale, Dorothy. (2006). The *Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*, 1900-2000, Oxford: Blackwell.
4) Mukherjee, Meenakshi Ed. (2002) *Early Novels in India*, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.
5) Mullan, John. (2006) *How Novels Work*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
6) Walder, Denis. (1995). *The Realist Novel*, London and New York: Routledge.



13.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Without a plot, the subject of the novel cannot be organised properly. The plot makes it possible for the novelist to arrange different points of the novel in a coherent way. The plot is that which holds the various elements of the novel together.

Ans to Q No 2: Magic realism and social realism.

Ans to Q No 3: The novel of ideas is one such type where the ideas are more important than the situation of the characters. Some postmodern novels examine the issues of reality that are quite opposed to the way it is presented in the classic realist novels as in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981).

Ans to Q No 4: Two of the most common ways are in terms of the historical and the technical aspects of the form.

Ans to Q No 5: In epistolary novels, the plot moves forward through the process of exchange of letters between the characters. Example,

Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1840).

Ans to Q No 6: They display a preoccupation with the questions of human existence.

Ans to Q No 7: George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *1984.*

Ans to Q No 8: The setting of the novel *Kiss of the Spiderwoman* is the prison.

Ans to Q No 9: Refer to Section 13.6

Ans to Q No 10: The first-person narrator cannot describe everything pertaining to the subject of the novel, for he/she must be present at the scene for the information to be relayed to the reader.

Ans to Q No 11: Detective fiction.

Ans to Q No 12: The omniscient narrator is the objective narrator who is usually placed outside the scene of action. Whatever happens does not affect him and he takes an objective view of things. He is in complete control of the narrative process and can modulate and determine the pace of the narrative according to the demands of the story.



13.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: What is a novel? Discuss the significance of this genre in literature.

Q 2: What are the major characteristics of the novel? Provide a critical reading of these features.

Q 3: Into how many categories can the novel be divided? Give a detailed account of the major types of novel.

Q 4: Why is the issue of 'reality' so important to the novel?

Q 5: How is time important in a novel?

Q 6: Explain the various types of narrator/ point of view.

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UNIT 14 : INTERPRETING SHORT STORY

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.1 Learning Objectives

14.2 Introduction

14.3 What is Short Story?

14.4 Basic Characteristics of a Short Story

14.5 Elements of a Short Story

- 14.5.1 Plot
- 14.5.2 Character
- 14.5.3 Setting
- 14.5.4 Point of View

14.6 Let Us Sum Up

14.7 Further Reading

14.8 Answers To Check Your Progress

14.9 Model Questions

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the short story as a literary form
- describe the basic characteristics of a short story
- explain the various elements of a short story such as plot, character, etc.

14.2 INTRODUCTION

Everyone loves a story. You must have listened to your grandmother's stories on cold wintry nights and felt happy or sad on hearing it. A story sometimes takes you to a world other than the one you are living in and you are left fascinated by it. A short story is perhaps easier to read and less time- consuming than a novel which takes a long time to finish reading. But a short story also is perhaps harder to write than a novel as it has to create its effect in a limited number of words. Like miniature paintings, they are

tightly wound and every detail counts.

This unit introduces you to the short story as a literary form and also elaborates on the different characteristics which a good short story needs to have. You may also have noticed that stories differ in their atmosphere; for example you may have love stories, ghost stories, detective stories etc., each of which creates the mood characteristic to it. You may also notice that the characters in a short story do not develop in the course of the narrative, because there is little scope for it. Let us now have a look at the evolution of the short story and what goes to make a good short story.

14.3 WHAT IS SHORT STORY?

The short story is a form of narrative fiction. Like the novel, the short story evolved from various sources of narrative from all over the world; hence it is difficult to determine where exactly it originated.

Let us now see what **H. G. Wells** has to say about a short story: "A short story is or should be a simple thing; aims at producing one single vivid effect; it has to seize the attention at the outset, and never relaxing, gathers it together more and more until the climax is reached. The limits of the human capacity to attend closely, therefore, set a limit to it; it must explode and finish before interruption occurs or, fatigue sets in." A short story has to make an impression upon the mind of the reader within a short period of time, say an hour or two. In fact someone once said that a short story is something which can be "read in an hour and remembered for a lifetime." The aim of all good literature, as you might know, is to delight its readers and expand their understanding of men and manners. The short story is not different in this aspect. Today it is a very popular form of study and its popularity owes itself to various causes. In this age of rush and restlessness, a lot of factors draw a reader to the sweet pleasure of reading a short story. A long novel like Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*, Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* cannot provide immediate pleasure to the modern reader and so hardly suits his time and temper (this is the age of instant coffee, instant messaging, instant food after all!). Here, a short story amply serves the purpose of the modern man

in providing pleasure. However, this is not to say that a short story is a rival or a substitute for a novel. Each has its own place and importance in the history of literary genres. It would also be gravely wrong to brand a short story as a brief novel. The short story also cannot compete with the novel in the sense that it cannot exhibit life in all its variety and complexity for it requires a broader canvas.

As a matter of fact, the short story is very difficult to classify as it is one of the most elusive forms, and it is also very difficult to define it within a particular limit. There are 'long' short stories and 'very short' short stories. Somerset Maugham commented in his preface to his *Complete Short Stories* that "the shortest item runs to about 1600 words and the longest to about 20,000 words." In fact most short stories fall somewhere between these two extremes.



LET US KNOW

You will be interested to know that the short story has many 'relatives' in different parts of the world. The French have a variation of the short story called *conte* and *nouvelle*, the Spanish call it *novela*, the Italians, *novella*, the Germans, *Nouvelle* and *Kurzgeschichte* and the Russians term it *skaz*.

14.4 BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF A SHORT STORY

We have already learnt that a short story is not easy to define precisely. Poe has described the short story as a prose narrative, "requiring from half an hour to one or two hours for its perusal." William Henry Hudson says that a short story is something which "can be easily read at a single sitting." Whereas the novel is an extended piece of narrative fiction, the short story is limited in length and scope. But this is not to say that brevity is the only characteristic of a short story.

A short story is basically a narrative which deals with certain incidents and which involves certain characters around which the story revolves. It should create a single impression and effect upon the reader's mind. Generally a short story deals with incidents covering a short period of time.

But in stories like Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle," Maupassant's "La Parure," even "The Bet" by Anton Chekhov, the narrative covers a long period of time. However, the concentration of interest and the singleness of impression must be maintained in order to classify the short story as a really good one.

In keeping with the oral story telling tradition, a short story tells a story. So, story telling forms an important aspect of a short story. A story should have a plot which is constituted of events and actions and which achieves certain artistic and emotional effects. And if the plot is stirring, then the story without doubt will be beautiful. A good plot is also commonly said to have unity of action. This means that the parts of the story must be so well connected that any restructuring will upset the story as a whole.

But let us not forget that a good plot in a short story depends upon the characters who act out the incidents. Plot and character are interdependent concepts. Henry James, the novelist, once commented: "What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?" However, a short story cannot have a huge cast of characters as in a novel and also the characters' traits cannot be delineated in a detailed manner. As a result, the short story begins close to or at the height of the action, and develops only one character at length. Also, there are some epiphanic moments which the character experiences, i.e. a moment of illumination in which something hidden or not understood becomes suddenly very clear. But you must understand that the greatest short story writers have beautifully portrayed characters that are truly remarkable and unforgettable. Some characters like Rahamat in Rabindranath Tagore's "Kabuliwallah," Old Behrman in O. Henry's "The Last Leaf", the giant in Oscar Wilde's "The Selfish Giant" are to be cherished forever.

The plot, characters and the atmosphere must work **in tandem** for a short story to be effective. The short story also must have a beginning, a middle and an end, i.e., it should have a proper structural design. The world's best known short stories adhere to this dictum and delight us with their descriptions of men and manners.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is Somerset Maugham's view on the length of a short story?

Q 2: Why is it that a short story develops only one character at length?

14.5 ELEMENTS OF A SHORT STORY

It is very essential to know the basic elements of a short story. This section shall acquaint you with the various constituents of short story.

14.5.1 Plot

It is a generally accepted fact that stories are read by almost everyone in this world; if not, people at least listen to a story. So, what is the first thing you look for in a short story? Obviously, we look for the plot, i.e. the way in which the events in the story relate to one another, and how they relate to the story as a whole. We also look for conflicts which may occur in the story, and we are eager to know the way in which these conflicts are developed and resolved. Sometimes we may notice that the story is told in flashback or sometimes it may look forward to events in a possible future culmination.

Whatever the case may be, plots are necessary for a story to achieve a desired effect, whether it is tragic, comic, satiric, melodramatic, etc. Plot is shaped by the way in which the events of the story are connected causally, by the way in which the characters interact with each other and also by the juxtaposition of the events. Conflicts in a story may be of various types and readers' interest in the story is heightened by the author's ability to present these conflicts in a nuanced manner. The conflict is generally a clash between the protagonist and the antagonist. The antagonist may be a person or a situation; in some stories, the conflict may occur in the

characters' minds. This mainly happens in the stream of consciousness type of fiction, e.g. the stories of William Faulkner and James Joyce. The plot moves from an exposition through a series of developments to a climax, then finally, it leads to a **denouement**. The exposition sets the tone for the story, by introducing a character, or setting a scene, or perhaps even through a hint of the events to be expected. Ismat Chughtai's "Housewife" begins thus: "The day Mirza's new maid ambled into his house, there was a sensation in the neighbourhood." We are left expecting what will happen next.

As the plot progresses, the events build up to a climax, which is the point of greatest tension in the story, the scene which proves to be a decisive element. The denoument or resolution draws the actions to a close, and ties up all the loose ends. In some stories however, there is no resolution provided, and is left open ended. This leads the readers to decide how the conflicts could have ended. Sometimes, the resolution is achieved with the help of **deus ex machine** or 'god from a machine' in which a hard- pressed author thinks up implausible or extraneous events to resolve the plot.

In Greek drama, a god was lowered onto the stage by a mechane so that he can untangle the plot or get the hero out of difficulties. This phrase is applied to an unanticipated intervener who resolves a difficult situation in a story or in any literary genre.

Generally, the events in a story are presented in a logical and chronological manner. But modern short stories often subvert the order of events; the story may begin in the middle, or even at the end, and then move back to the beginning to reconstruct the incidents. Faulkner's " A Rose for Emily" is a good example. As already mentioned, stories may be told in flashback, which may provide vital information to the readers that will help one to understand the story better. Some stories also involve foreshadowing, i.e. the introduction of events, situations or characters early on in the story which hint at things to come. This encourages

and entices readers to get more involved in the story. Experimental stories always arouse interest in the readers as they try to decipher or interpret the meaning in their own ways.



ACTIVITY 14.1

1. Think of a plot, say some event of your own life, and make it the subject of a story.

14.5.2 Character

After plot, let us now look at how the characters play a pivotal role in the story. What is meant by a 'character'? A character is a fictional representation of a person; readers interpret them as possessing certain attitudes, characteristics, moral, intellectual and emotional qualities, mainly with reference to what they say and do. Characterization is the way in which the writers develop their characters and reveal their traits to the readers. Sometimes even the names of some characters mirror their particular traits. Characters can be developed either by *telling* the readers about them, as in the case of stories with third- person narrators, or, first person narrators can tell their readers about themselves or other characters. For example, Mr. Watson in Arthur Conan Doyle's stories reveals aspects about himself, the fact that he is a doctor with a good practice, and also about the idiosyncrasies and brilliant powers of detection of his famous friend, Sherlock Holmes. In other cases, we can also guess Mr. Watson's personality from his actions, even though he tells us nothing about it.

You must have heard about the famous English writer, E. M. Forster, who wrote *A Passage to India*. His book *Aspects of the Novel* (1927) classified characters as being flat and round. A flat character is one which does not develop much during the course of the story, what you can call a 'stereotypical' character. Sherlock Holmes is a flat character as he is already developed and does not need to bring about much variation in his personality. On the other

hand, a round character is a well developed one, who is closely involved in and responsive to the action. Real life and real people are not that perfect. So it cannot be expected that readers will believe in 'too- perfect' characters. Flaws in a character add to its believability. The young banker in Chekhov's "The Bet" is a rounded character for the fact that there is a growth of the mind and outlook of the character. Some flat characters are stock characters in the sense that they are very easily identifiable types; they behave in a predictable manner; so it is not difficult for the reader to recognize them. Round characters, on the other hand, behave very unpredictably, reacting to situations in their own exclusive way. So they are sometimes very difficult to understand. But we need to understand the motivation behind the character's action, so that it is easy for us to believe them. Rosemary Fell in Katherine Mansfield's "A Cup of Tea", behaves quite unpredictably with the poor girl, Miss Smith because, despite her good intentions, her jealousy is aroused when her husband praises Miss Smith. The tension which develops as readers wait to see how Rosemary will react is what makes the story so interesting.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Describe the importance of plot in a short story.

Q 4: What is the difference between character and characterisation?

14.5.3 Setting

The setting of a story helps the writer in creating the texture of his imagined world with its character, locale and environment. It establishes the story's historical, geographical and physical location. In some stories, the setting is almost a character, perhaps influencing the characters' behaviour, as in the stories by Ruskin Bond, where his place of residence Mussorie is a pervasive 'presence'. A conflict between the events of the story and its setting can also add to the

interest in the story. For example, if modern inventions are thrust into an old- fashioned village, where residents are still carrying on with age- old methods of living, it is interesting to see how they react to it. This enriches a story.

A particular historical setting can create the appropriate mood for the readers to appreciate the story. If we know that a particular story is set during, say, the French Revolution, we can understand the characters' behaviour, their mannerisms and dress code etc. Sometimes the atmosphere of some stories might almost seem to be anachronistic in today's context, but if the author is able to handle the plot skillfully, the story will be a success. In addition to knowing *when* a work takes place, it is equally important to know *where* something happens. Gothic stories are set in dungeons, castles with hidden passages and creaking doors which create an atmosphere of supernatural terror and fear. Stories may be set in cities or villages, in advanced countries like the United States or in underdeveloped countries like Kenya. This makes the readers understand why the characters behave in ways which are unfamiliar to us. Sometimes even regional differences within a country may account for differences in plot development and characters' motivation. Also, the size of a city or town is sometimes important. If the town has a small population, the characters' behaviour will be subject to intense scrutiny, like in Ruskin Bond's stories, whereas in a large city, the characters can lose themselves in the crowd.

It is also seen that sometimes stories are set in a fantasy world, say in science fiction stories by H. G. Wells, or in "The Selfish Giant" by Oscar Wilde. Harriet Beecher Stowe in "Miss Katy- Did and Miss Cricket" sets the story in the insect world of nature. Such settings enable the writers to experiment with situations and characters without caring much for readers' expectations.

The *time of the day* can also influence a story's mood and development. In detective stories, the time of a murder, for instance, can help unravel the mystery of the murder and the murderer. In

Mansfield's "Her First Ball", a ballroom serves as the setting for a young girl's initiation into the rules and realities of adult society. Weather can also be indicative of a situation in the plot. A storm may indicate danger descending upon the character's life; a sunny day may indicate a prelude to a happy event, etc. The various physical attributes of the setting combine to create a story's atmosphere. A story's atmosphere also influences a character's state of mind, leading them to react in different ways in different settings. So, what do you think are the functions of atmosphere in a story? First of all, the atmosphere binds the story together and sets the time- frame. It also provides the background to the story and makes for economy and authenticity.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: Where are Gothic stories set?

14.5.4 Point of View

As you know, all stories are narrated by a person or persons. Point of view signifies the way a story is told- the vantage point from which the events are presented. Point of view is extremely important, particularly in detective stories, because the perspective of the narrator affects the plot. Stories are mostly told either in the first-person or the third - person. The second - person narration is a rarely used mode. It should be kept in mind however that even when the writer uses the first - person 'I', the narrator of the story may be completely different from the writer, as writers create narrators to tell their story.

The narrator is sometimes a character who uses the first-person 'I' to tell a story. For example, we have Leo Tolstoy's story "After the Dance", in which he narrates a conversation between himself and some of his friends. You should keep in mind that along with narration of a story, there is also narration in a story. A character

may relate his tale, which in turn may consist of other tales. In William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily", the narrator speaks as we instead of I, thus speaking on behalf of all the residents of the town. The first-person narrator is thus, to a greater or lesser degree, a participant in the story or is the protagonist of the story. "Memories of an Indian Childhood" and "A Candle for St. Jude" by Qurratulain Hyder, in the first- person, are believed to be inspired to a large extent by her own personal experiences. First- person narrators are able to present the events convincingly, and hence readers tend to believe them easily. However, there is a certain limitation in first- person narration, as the narrators cannot relate the story of their own death, or they cannot enter into the minds of the other characters. They may also sometimes distort facts either by mistake, or by being confused. Hence they become unreliable. Discerning readers are able to decipher the irony in the disparity between the narrator's interpretation of the events and their own. If you, as readers, are able to discover the discrepancies between the narrator's view of events and your own, you will get an insight into the story, and also learn something about the writer's purpose in writing the story.

Let us now look at third - person narration, which is by far the most common form of narration in stories. In this kind of narration, the narrator is someone who is outside the story, and refers to the characters either by name, or, by "he", "she" or "they". Thus, "The Rocking Horse Winner" by D. H. Lawrence begins: "There was a woman who was beautiful, who started with all the advantages, yet she had no luck. She married for love, and the love turned to dust. She had bonny children, yet she felt they had been thrust upon her, and she could not love them….." Third- person narrators are *omniscient*, in the sense that they can move at will from one character's mind to the other. They are a privileged lot as they have access to the characters' thoughts, motives and states of consciousness. Third- person narrators can present a more inclusive overview of the happenings in the story than first- person narrators

can. Sometimes, the third- person narrators are *intrusive*, who along with reporting the events, also comments on them and sometimes offers personal views on human life. Others are *unintrusive*, i.e. they tell the story from an entirely objective point of view, without commenting on the events, and also allowing the readers to interpret them without any interference. Instances of objective narrators can be found in Hemingway's short stories e.g. "A Clean, Well- Lighted Place", and "The Killers."

The second person narration is that in which the story is told as an address by the narrator to someone he calls as "you". This is not a very common form of narration. The second person may either be a fictional character, or the reader, or even the narrator himself. The story unfolds by shifting between telling the narratee what he/she is doing at present, what he/she has done in the past, or may do in the future.

You must remember that it is not necessary for authors to maintain a single point of view throughout the entire story. Although one point of view is dominant, writers sometimes introduce other points of view to achieve a level of complexity.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: Which narrators are called intrusive narrators?

Q 7: What is point of view? Distinguish between first person and second person point of view?



14.6 LET US SUM UP

After going through this unit, you have learnt that the short story is one of the most popular forms of literature today. You have seen how the short story differs from the novel and also learnt about the beginnings of the genre to the present day. The characteristics of the short story have

also been discussed to enhance your knowledge about this popular literary type. The important elements which are essential in a short story have been dwelt upon, and four of them, plot, character, setting and point of view have been discussed in a detailed manner. We have therefore seen that the short story has evolved as a specific form of literary art like any other form of art, having its own characteristics and its own laws. The genre has been instrumental in providing its readers pleasure and wisdom and all that a good art must offer.



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14.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Somerset Maugham commented in his preface to his *Complete Short Stories* that “the shortest item runs to about 1600

words and the longest to about 20,000 words."

Ans to Q No 2: It is because a short story cannot have a huge cast of characters as in a novel and also the characters' traits cannot be delineated in a detailed manner.

Ans to Q No 3: Refer to Section 14.5.1

Ans to Q No 4: A character is a fictional representation of a person whereas characterization is the way in which the writers develop their characters and reveal their traits to the readers.

Ans to Q No 5: Gothic stories are set in dungeons, castles with hidden passages and creaking doors which create an atmosphere of supernatural terror and fear.

Ans to Q No 6: Who along with reporting the events, also comments on them and sometimes offers personal views on human life.

Ans to Q No 7: Refer to section 14.5.4



14.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: The short story can be "read in an hour and remembered for a lifetime". Comment on this statement.

Q 2: What are the important characteristics of a short story? Discuss.

Q 3: How is the beginning, middle and end important in the plot of a story?

Q 4: What are flat and round characters? Give examples.

Q 5: "The writer creates a place." How, do you think, setting influence a story?

Q 6: Write short notes on:

a. Elements of short story

b. Point of view in short story

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UNIT 15 : INTERPRETING TRAVEL WRITING

UNIT STRUCTURE

15.1 Learning Objectives

15.2 Introduction

15.3 Travel Writing as a Literary Form

15.4 Two Distinct Types of Travel Writing

15.5 Travel Writers and Travel Writing

15.6 Some Assamese Travel Writers

15.7 Examples of Travel Writing

15.8 Let Us Sum Up

15.9 Further Reading

15.10 Answers To Check Your Progress

15.11 Model Questions

15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain travel writing as a literary form
- classify travel writing
- get an idea about some of the travel writers
- describe the various aspects of travel writing.

15.2 INTRODUCTION

Ever since the beginning of civilization, travelling has always been a human desire. In the earlier times men use to travel for a variety of reasons– for the purpose of satisfying his curiosity, for adventure, for pleasure, for political reasons as well as in search of food and jobs. Some of these travellers who possessed alert and methodical minds often recorded their experiences and observations in the form of writing which eventually led to the development of the genre known today as “travel writing”. It is seen that the world’s ancient and medieval travel literature is quite rich. In India too, we are acquainted with the travel books and accounts of Chinese

travellers like Fahien and Huein Tsang, and French travellers like Tavernier and Bernier. These travels books serve as the documents of religious, political, cultural history of India of that time. You must have surely heard about Marco Polo, Ibn Batuta and others who are also great travel writers. During the colonial period, travel writing got a boost when scores of books were written on India by British and European travellers. Though many of these fitted into the image of India as an exotic oriental land, yet quite a few of them presented detailed insights into the land and its people. In modern times, interesting travel books have been written by authors like V. S. Naipaul, Paul Theroux, Graham Greene, Vikram Seth and others. Our country is also rich in wide range of travel literature written in the regional languages. The travel books serve a variety of purposes because they not only provide valuable information of a place but also give us an insight into the history and culture of people. So, in this unit an idea would be given about travel writing as a literary genre and the learners will be acquainted with the history of travel writing. Some examples of travel writing have also been provided in the unit.

15.3 TRAVEL WRITING AS A LITERARY FORM

Over the years, travel writing has emerged as an important genre of contemporary writing. Travel writing has always played an important role in the current socio-political life of the world community. As a literary form, it expresses the self-definition of the author who tries to place his cultural experience parallel to the experiences of other cultures to create world openness and assist the process of socialization.

As a literary form, travel writing has a threefold characteristic which may be divided into the aesthetic, the political, and the scientific. It depicts the culture at its source, which includes admiration of works of art, comparison of society at home and abroad and observation of the nature of many processes taking place in the society. By combining all these three forms of educative processes, travel writing can effectively draw the reader's attention to the economic potential of a place or its political prospects and history. In doing this, it emulates its goal of integrating diverse forms of

observation into a complex whole. Travel writing can serve as a raw material out of which one may draw conclusions about indigenous peoples, trajectories of development, evolution and preservation of traditions, courses of events, etc. Travel writing is in many ways, a means of on-the-spot recording. All observations of men and events should be described with truth and clarity within a credible frame of relationships. In travel writing, both art and science are skillfully combined in bringing about a synthesis of the visual and literary imagination.

Aesthetics and precision are the two dominant categories for the experience of Travel writing. A historical look on Travel writing discovers strains of literality that can enrich our own conception of cultural encounters. It might even encourage reflection on whether we have left behind the older methods or might better think of ourselves as historical tourists following the paths laid down by previous generations of Travel writing.

Modern anthropologists, historians, geographers, philologists have never stopped relying heavily on the travellers' memoirs as sources of information about people whose culture have been damaged or destroyed.

Here it would be necessary to point that travel narrative is much harder than it looks. The beauty of travel writing lies in its simplicity. It needs to be kept in mind that travel writing is not the same thing as writing guidebooks. Finally, it can be said that travel writing has evolved as a literary form and it has now become an integral part of popular contemporary writing.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What are the three fold characters of travel writing?

15.4 TWO DISTINCT TYPES OF TRAVEL WRITING

We can say that there are two distinct kinds of travel writing that exists today. One kind of travel writing speaks of travel as a personal experience and is termed sometimes as travelogue or itinerary and the other one which provides information to travellers falls under the category of travel guides.

Travel writing can be specialised as well as a creative craft. Specialised travel writing is more specific and it generally concentrates on one particular area of interest. For example, a person may write only on business travels or on places of cultural/historical interest. Nowadays this comes into the category of specialized travel writing. Again, creative travel writing is a class by itself. This kind of writing is mainly a piece of imaginative prose which is a record of lively experience. Travel writing must be based on actual experience. Creative travel writing is a class by itself. In such writing the author gives full expression to his or her creativity and spontaneity in re-creating the experience of travel. In doing this, the author's sensibility, sharp objective power, eye for detail and capacity to knit together a story in an engrossing style– all come into play. In such writing, the author's individuality and his particular style of expression have a major role to play.



LET US KNOW

Naipaul's travel books, *The Middle Passage*, *An Area of Darkness*, *India: A Wounded Civilization*, *Among the Believers*, *India: A Million Mutinies Now* and *A Turn in the South* have been discussed widely and are popular among the readers.

15.5 TRAVEL WRITERS AND TRAVEL WRITING

Travel writing is a broad category of writing concerned with various aspects of travel. Travel writing is often associated with tourism and happens to include works of a rather ephemeral nature such as guide books. But that is only one aspect of travel writing. Over the ages, different types of travellers such as missionaries, explorers, scientists, pilgrims and immigrants have all enriched travel writing by incorporating their experiences and observations. That sort of travel writing which possesses a creative content is generally valued as literature and referred to as travel literature. Apart from its creative content, such writing also quite often reveals the individual's interpretation of men and events surrounding a particular geographical location.

It should be noted that the urge to travel and see and experience new lands and people has always been a human desire right from the beginning of civilization. Since the earliest of times people have been traveling for variety of reasons. These range from the urge to satisfy one's curiosity or sense of adventure or the simple pleasure of traveling to moving from place to place in search of food or jobs or because of political compulsions. Some travellers who possessed a sense of alertness and a methodical mind often recorded their traveling experiences and facts as they appeared to them and these ultimately formed the corpus of what today we refer to as travel writing. Some of the more famous travel writers of modern times include Vikram Seth who has, in his *From Heaven Lake*, written an exciting and highly interesting account of his hitch-hiking trip through China's Sinkiang province to Tibet and then finally to Nepal. Similarly, American writers like Paul Theroux and William Least Heat-Moon, the Welsh writer Jan Morris and English author Eric Newby have all made their livings through writing travelogues. Morris, however, is more famous as a historian while Theroux is a popular novelist. The *Great Railway Bazaar* by Paul Theroux is a well known and popular piece of writing. V. S. Naipaul's *India: A Wounded Civilization* and *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* are well known travelogues where the author's trips to India and Iran become occasions for deep and extended observations on the nations and their people and civilizations, their past glories and present predicaments. Ved Mehta is another well known travel writer.



LET US KNOW

National Geographic Emerging Explorer and PEN award winning journalist Kira Salak first reached acclaim by travelling to the world's remotest locations and writing about them for National Geographic publications and travel books.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: Say true or false:

a) Ved Mehta has written *India: A Wounded Civilization.*

b) Travelling has always been a human desire right from the civilization.

Q 3: What does travel literature refer to?

15.6 SOME ASSAMESE TRAVEL WRITERS

Assamese literature is quite rich in travel writing. Perhaps you will be interested to know as to who may be the pioneers of modern travel writing in Assamese. We can start with the name of Jnanadabhiram Barua who wrote travel memoirs titled as “Bilator Chithi” (Letters from the Foreign Country) in the journal but published in 1948 in book form. Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua’s travelogue *Switzerland Bhraman* (1948) (Journey to Switzerland) may be a trend-setter in this line. Hem Barua, a reputed poet, critic, educationist and illustrious parliamentarian, became quite popular and well known through his travelogues like *Sagar Dekhisa* (*Have you seen the sea?)*, *Ranga Karabir Phul* (The Red Flower Karabi), ‘*Mekong Nai Dekhilo (I have seen the river Mekong*), *Israel*, etc. These books are the result of his travels to various countries at different times. Written in a literary style, these travelogues are frequently accompanied by relevant poetic quotations in lightness of touch and personal appeal which make for their lively reading. Amalendu Guha’s *Soviet Deshat Abhumuki* (A peep into the land of Soviet) contains descriptions about Tashkand and his experiences there. Similarly, Sayed Abdul Malik’s *Majat Mathu Himalayas* (Himalaya only in Between) and Naba Kanta Barua’s *Deshe Deshe Mor Desha* (My country in different countries), Gautam Barua’s *Nana Desh, Nana Rang* are well known travel writings which have earned merit, popularity and interest. Of late, many books on travel writing have been available in Assamese literature. But mostly, many of them are travel diaries with narration and descriptions providing information of different places of visit.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Name a few writers who have contributed to travel writing in Assamese literature.

Q 5: What is specialised travel writing?

Q 6: Explain creative travel writing.

Q 7: What are the two distinct types of travel writing?

15.7 EXAMPLES OF TRAVEL WRITING

The following are some of the excerpts from renowned travel writers. The learners are however, advised to go through other such travel writings to have a better grasp of the style and language used in this kind of writing.

Excerpts from V.S. Naipaul's An *Area of Darkness*

(Source: *An Area of Darkness* by V. S. Naipaul, published in 1964)

On the train to Cairo the man across the aisle hawked twice, with an expert tongue rolled the phlegm into a ball, plucked the ball out of his mouth with thumb and forefinger, considered it, and then rubbed it away between his palms. (AAD 14).

Nowhere do I see the India I know: those poor fields, those three legged dogs, those sweating red coated railway porters carrying heavy tin trunks on their heads (AAD 71).

Ten months later I was to revisit Bombay and to wonder at my hysteria. It was cooler, and in the crowded courtyards of Colaba there were Christmas decorations, illuminated stars hanging out of windows against the black sky. It was my eye that had changed. I had seen Indian villages : the narrow , broken lanes with green slime in the gutters , the choked back to back mud houses , the jumble of filth and food and animals and people , the baby in the dust , swollen –bellied , black with flies , but wearing its good luck amulet . I had seen the starved child defecating at the roadside while mangy dog waited to eat the excrement. (AAD 48).

A child was squatting in the mud of the street; the hairless pink –skinned dog waited for the excrement. The child the big bellied, rose; the dog ate (AAD 215).

The camp was a chaos of tents and guy –ropes and cooking stones and pilgrims defecating behind every bush. The woods were already littered with uncovered excrement; hanks and twists of excrement crowned every accessible boulder of the lidder river, beside which we had camped (AAD 167).

Excerpts from Verrier Elwin's essay "A Pilgrimage to Tawang"

(Source: Verrier Elwin's autobiography *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin* published in 1964 by Oxford University Press)

Tawang, with its great monastery is a beautiful upland valley in a corner between Bhutan and Tibet, came into world-news as the first place of importance visited by the Dalai Lama, when sought political asylum in India four years ago. It came again, more tragically, into the headlines when it was captured by the Chinese and yet again as the scene of rejoicing when it was reoccupied by its Lamas and the Indian administrators a few weeks later.

Tawang is a long way off, and when I went there the journey had to be made on foot or pony: now a wonderful mountain road makes it accessible. Lila and I went there in May 1956 and, since we covered the exact route taken by the Dalai Lama and his party when they travelled down to the plains. I will describe our experiences, for he saw the same places and met the same people that we did, though in a reverse order.



15.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt about travel writing as a literary genre and also about travel writers and travel writing. We have also provided you an idea about some of the renowned travel writers. You are now familiar with travel writing as a broad category of writing concerned with various aspects of travel. The travel books serve various purposes. They not only provide information about the place but also give an insight into the history as well as the culture of the people. The Americans Paul Theroux and William Least Heat-Moon, Welsh author Jan Morris and Englishman Eric Newby all

made their livings writing travelogues. You have learnt how Assamese literature is also rich in travel writing.



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15.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Travel writing has a threefold characteristic which may be divided into the aesthetic, the political and the scientific.

Ans to Q No 2: a) False b) True

Ans to Q No 3: That sort of travel writing which possesses a creative content is generally valued as literature and referred to as travel literature. Apart from its creative content, such writing also quite often reveals the individual's interpretation of men and events surrounding a particular geographical location.

Ans to Q No 4: Jnanadabhiram Barua, Birinchi Kumar Barua, Hem Barua, Amalendu Guha, Sayed Abdul Malik, etc.

Ans to Q No 5: Specialised travel writing is more specific and it generally concentrates on one particular area of interest. For example, a person may write only on business travels or on places of cultural/historical interest.

Ans to Q No 6: Creative travel writing is a class by itself. In such writing the author gives full expression to his or her creativity and spontaneity in

re-creating the experience of travel. In doing this, the author's sensibility, sharp objective power, eye for detail and capacity to knit together a story in an engrossing style– all come into play. In such writing, the author's individuality and his particular style of expression have a major role to play.

Ans to Q No 7: One kind of travel writing speaks of travel as a personal experience and is termed sometimes as travelogue or itinerary and the other one which provides information to travellers falls under the category of travel guides.



15.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Describe travel writing as literary genre.

Q 2: Elaborate with examples the various aspects of travel writing.

Q 3: Write a short note on "travel writers of Assam".

Q 4: Broadly describe the two distinct types of travel writing.

Q 5: Point out the significance of travel writing in the current socio-political life of the world community.

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