SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY, KOLHAPUR

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

Literary Criticism and Appreciation

(Special English Paper-VII and XII)

For

B. A. Part-III

Semester V and VI
Centre for Distance Education
Shivaji University, Kolhapur

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INTRODUCTION

This book is published under the title 'Literary Criticism and Appreciation' specially for B. A. Part-III students offering English as their special subject. While studying this paper students feel somewhat difficult. The obvious reason is various topics are found scattered in different books. Our humble effort is to bring all the prescribed topics together in one book.

The book is designed in such a way that our students will be acquainted with firstly, the basic concepts of literary criticism and literature, secondly, some important critical and literary terms, thirdly, some critical approaches to study literature, and fourthly, practical training in literary appreciation.

Each unit in this book has its own objectives, brief introduction, explanation of texts where necessary, objective questions to check the progress of students, some tasks/exercises for further practice, glossary and some reference books for further reading. For practical training, appreciation of some poems is given and some poems are given for students to practice appreciation with the help of questions given below them.

We believe that this book would prove of immense importance and help to both students and teachers. Students will get rid of their fear and difficulties about criticism. We hope that the book will stimulate students and teachers for studying other reference books which would enrich their knowledge of literature and criticism.

We hope that all the learners will find our book userfriendly.

V. B. Kulkarni
M. G. Kadam
A. M. Jadhav
Editors
# B. A. Part-III : Special English

## Literary Criticism and Appreciation

### Semester-V : Paper-VII

#### Topics Prescribed

**Unit-1** : Introduction to Literature  
   i) The Nature of Literature  
   ii) The Function of Literature  

**Unit-2** : Introduction to Literary Criticism  
   1) The Nature of Criticism  
   2) The Function of Criticism  

**Unit-3** : Approaches to the Study of Literature  
   - Literature and Biography (Biographical Approach)  
   - Literature and Psychology (Psychological Approach)  
   - Literature and Society (Sociological Approach)  

**Unit-4** : Literary and Critical Terms:  
   - I. Figures Of Speech  
     a) Alliteration  
     b) Simile  
     c) Metaphor  
     d) Personification  
     e) Hyperbole  
     f) Onomatopoeia  
   - II. Realism  
   - III. Symbolism  
   - IV. Satire  
   - V. Paradox

### Semester-VI : Paper-XII

#### Topics Prescribed

**Unit-5** : Aristotle’s Poetics  
   i) Imitation  
   ii) Catharsis  

**Unit-6** : William Wordsworth : Preface to Lyrical Ballads  

**Unit-7** : D.H.Lawrance : Why the Novel Matters.  

**Unit-8** : Practical Criticism  
   Critical appreciation of a poem with the help of the points given below it (A poem not exceeding 20-25 lines should be given)  
   Questions on General meaning, Detailed meaning, Intention, etc of the poem along with questions on finding out Devices in the poem should be set.
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Each Unit begins with the section Objectives;

Objectives are directive and indicative of:

1. What has been presented in the Unit;
2. What is expected from you; and
3. What you are expected to know pertaining to the specific Unit once you have completed working on the Unit.

The 'Check Your Progress' with possible answers will help you to understand the Unit in the right perspective. Go through the possible answers only after you write your own answers. These exercises are not to be submitted to us for evaluation. They have been provided to you as Study Tools to help and keep you on the right track as you study the Unit.
Unit-1
Introduction to Literature

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  1.2.2 The Function of Literature
1.3 Explanation
  1.3.1 The Nature of Literature
  1.3.2 The Function of Literature
1.4 Check Your Progress
1.5 Summary
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1.8 Exercise
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1.10 Reference For Further Study
1.0 Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- summarize the writers' views on what is literature? What is not literature?
- realize the nature of literature,
- understand the function of literature.
- explain the distinction between literature and non-litterature.
- find certain popular theories regarding the nature and function of literature.

1.1 Introduction

The text of this unit is selected from the book written by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren. The name of the book is *Theory of Literature* (penguin, 1949).

Literature is a fine art. Its medium is language. It is suggestive, symbolic, figurative and meaningful. Because of this medium, literature is considered to be the finest of all fine arts. Wellek and Warren make us aware of the nature of literature. They attempt to give a distinction between literature and non-literature. The language used in literature is different from the language used in non-literature,

The nature and function of literature must be correlative. The use of poetry follows from its nature. Every object or class of objects is most efficiently used for what it is or is centrally. It acquires a secondary use only when its prime function has lapsed. For example, when the square piano no longer capable of music, is made into a useful desk. Similarly, the nature of an object follows from its use. It is what it does. Basically, the conceptions about the nature and function of literature have not changed. The function of literature has a long history. For example, the words of Horace 'dulce and utile' indicate the function of literature.

1.2 The Text

1.2.1 The nature of literature

The first problem to confront us is, obviously, the subject matter of literary scholarship. What is literature? What is not literature? What is the nature of literature? Simple as such questions sound, they are rarely answered clearly.

One way is to define 'literature' as everything in print. We then shall be able to study the 'medical profession in the fourteenth century' or 'planetary motion in the early Middle Ages' or 'witchcraft in Old and New England'. As Edwin Greenlaw has
argued, ‘Nothing related to the history of civilization is beyond our province’; we are ‘not limited to belles-lettres or even to printed or manuscript records in our effort to understand a period or civilization’, and we ‘must see our work in the light of its possible contribution to the history of culture’. According to Greenlaw’s theory, and the practice of many scholars, literary study has thus become not merely closely related to the history of civilization but indeed identical with it. Such study is literary only in the sense that it is occupied with printed or written matter, necessarily the primary source of most history. It can, of course, be argued in defence of such a view that historians neglect these problems, that they are too much preoccupied with diplomatic, military, and economic history, and that thus the literary scholar is justified in invading and taking over a neighbouring terrain. Doubtless nobody should be forbidden to enter any area he likes, and doubtless there is much to be said in favour of cultivating the history of civilization in the broadest terms. But still the study ceases to be literary. The objection that this is only a quibble about terminology is not convincing. The study of everything connected with the history of civilization does, as a matter of fact, crowd out strictly literary studies. All distinctions fall; extraneous criteria are introduced into literature; and, by consequence, literature will be judged valuable only so far as it yields results for this or that adjacent discipline. The identification of literature with the history of civilization is a denial of the specific field and the specific methods of literary study.

Another way of defining literature is to limit it to ‘great books’, books which, whatever their subject, are ‘notable for literary form or expression’. Here the criterion is either aesthetic worth alone or aesthetic worth in combination with general intellectual distinction. Within lyric poetry, drama, and fiction, the greatest works are selected on aesthetic grounds; other books are picked for their reputation or intellectual eminence together with aesthetic value of a rather narrow kind: style, composition, general force of presentation are the usual characteristics singled out. This is a common way of distinguishing or speaking of literature. By saying that ‘this is not literature’, we express such a value judgement; we make the same kind of judgement when we speak of a book on history, philosophy, or science as belonging to ‘literature’.

Most literary histories do include treatment of philosophers, historians, theologians, moralists, politicians, and even some scientists. It would, for example, be difficult to imagine a literary history of eighteenth-century England without an extended treatment of Berkeley and Hume, Bishop Butler and Gibbon, Burke and even Adam Smith. The treatment of these authors, though usually much briefer than that of poets, playwrights, and novelists, is rarely limited to their strictly aesthetic merits. In practice, we get perfunctory and inexpert accounts of these authors in terms of their speciality. Quite
rightly, Hume cannot be judged except as a philosopher, Gibbon except as a historian, Bishop Butler as a Christian apologist and moralist, and Adam Smith as a moralist and economist. But in most literary histories these thinkers are discussed in a fragmentary fashion without the proper context - the history of their subject of discourse - without a real grasp, that is, of the history of philosophy, of ethical theory, of historiography, of economic theory. The literary historian is not automatically transformed into a proper historian of these disciplines. He becomes simply a compiler, a self-conscious intruder.

The study of isolated ‘great books’ may be highly commendable for pedagogical purposes. We all must approve the idea that students - and particularly beginning students - should read great or at least good books rather than compilations or historical curiosities. We may, however, doubt that the principle is worth preserving in its purity for the sciences, history, or any other accumulative and progressing subject. Within the history of imaginative literature, limitation to the great books makes incomprehensible the continuity of literary tradition, the development of literary genres, and indeed the very nature of the literary process, besides obscuring the background of social, linguistic, ideological, and other conditioning circumstances. In history, philosophy, and similar subjects, it actually introduces an excessively ‘aesthetic’ point of view. There is obviously no other reason than stress on expository ‘style’ and organization for singling out Thomas Huxley from all English scientists as the one worth reading. This criterion must, with very few exceptions, favour popularizers over the great originators: it will, and must, prefer Huxley to Darwin, Bergson to Kant.

The term ‘literature’ seems best if we limit it to the art of literature, that is, to imaginative literature. There are certain difficulties with so employing the term; but, in English, the possible alternatives, such as ‘fiction’ or ‘poetry’, are either already pre-empted by narrow meanings or, like ‘imaginative literature’ or belles-lettres, are clumsy and misleading. One of the objections to ‘literature’ is its suggestion (in its etymology from *litera*) of limitation to written or printed literature; for, clearly, any coherent conception must include ‘oral literature’. In this respect, the German term *Wortkunst* and the Russian *slovesnost* have the advantage over their English equivalent.

The simplest way of solving the question is by distinguishing the particular use made of language in literature. Language is the material of literature as stone or bronze is of sculpture, paints of pictures, or sounds of music. But one should realize that language is not mere inert matter like stone but is itself a creation of man and is thus charged with the cultural heritage of a linguistic group.
The main distinctions to be drawn are between the literary, the everyday, and the scientific uses of language. A discussion of this point by Thomas Clark Pollock, *The Nature of Literature*, though true as far as it goes, seems not entirely satisfactory, especially in defining the distinction between literary and everyday language. The problem is crucial and by no means simple in practice, since literature, in distinction from the other arts, has no medium of its own and since many mixed forms and subtle transitions undoubtedly exist. It is fairly easy to distinguish between the language of science and the language of literature. The mere contrast between 'thought' and 'emotion' or 'feeling' is, however, not sufficient. Literature does contain thought, while emotional language is by no means confined to literature: witness a lovers' conversation or an ordinary quarrel. Still, the ideal scientific language is purely 'denotative': it aims at a one-to-one correspondence between sign and referent. The sign is completely arbitrary, hence it can be replaced by equivalent signs. The sign is also transparent; that is, without drawing attention to itself, it directs us unequivocally to its referent.

Thus scientific language tends towards such a system of signs as mathematics or symbolic logic. Its ideal is such a universal language as the *characteristica universalis* which Leibniz had begun to plan as early as the late seventeenth century. Compared to scientific language, literary language will appear in some ways deficient. It abounds in ambiguities; it is, like every other historical language, full of homonyms, arbitrary or irrational categories such as grammatical gender; it is permeated with historical accidents, memories, and associations. In a word, it is highly 'connotative'. Moreover, literary language is far from merely referential. It has its expressive side; it conveys the tone and attitude of the speaker or writer. And it does not merely state and express what it says; it also wants to influence the attitude of the reader, persuade him, and ultimately change him. There is a further important distinction between literary and scientific language: in the former, the sign itself, the sound symbolism of the "word," is stressed. All kinds of techniques have been invented to draw attention to it, such as metre, alliteration, and patterns of sound.

These distinctions from scientific language may be made in different degrees by various works of literary art: for example, the sound pattern will be less important in a novel than in certain lyrical poems, impossible of adequate translation. The expressive element will be far less in an 'objective novel', which may disguise and almost conceal the attitude of the writer, than in a 'personal' lyric. The pragmatic element, slight in 'pure' poetry, may be large in a novel with a purpose or a satirical or didactic poem. Furthermore, the degree to which the language is intellectualized may vary considerably: there are philosophical and didactic poems and problem novels which
approximate, at least occasionally, to the scientific use of language. Still, whatever
the mixed modes apparent upon an examination of concrete literary works of art, the
distinctions between the literary use and the scientific use seem clear: literary language
is far more deeply involved in the historical structure of the language; it stresses the
awareness of the sign itself; it has its expressive and pragmatic side which scientific
language will always want so far as possible to minimize.

More difficult to establish is the distinction between everyday and literary language.
Everyday language is not a uniform concept: it includes such wide variants as
colloquial language, the language of commerce, official language, the language of
religion, the slang of students. But obviously much that has been said about literary
language holds also for the other uses of language excepting the scientific. Everyday
language also has its expressive function, though this varies from a colourless official
announcement to the passionate plea roused by a moment of emotional crisis.
Everyday language is full of the irrationalities and contextual changes of historical
language, though there are moments when it aims at almost the precision of scientific
description. Only occasionally is there awareness of the signs themselves in everyday
speech. Yet such awareness does appear - in the sound symbolism of names and
actions, or in puns. No doubt, everyday language wants most frequently to achieve
results, to influence actions and attitudes. But it would be false to limit it merely to
communication. A child’s talking for hours without a listener and an adult’s almost
meaningless social chatter show that there are many uses of language which are not
strictly, or at least primarily, communicative.

It is thus quantitatively that literary language is first of all to be differentiated from
the varied uses of every day. The resources of language are exploited much more
deliberately and systematically. In the work of a subjective poet, we have manifest a
‘personality’ far more coherent and all-pervasive than that of persons as we see them
in everyday situations. Certain types of poetry will use paradox, ambiguity, the
contextual change of meaning, even the irrational association of grammatical
categories such as gender or tense, quite deliberately. Poetic language organizes,
tightens, the resources of everyday language, ind sometimes does even violence to
them, in an effort to force us into awareness and attention. Many of these resources
a writer will find formed, and preformed, by the silent and anonymous workings of
many generations. In certain highly developed literatures, and especially n certain
epochs, the poet merely uses an established convention: the anguage, so to speak,
poeticizes for him. Still, every work of art mposes an order, an organization, a unity
on its materials. This unity iometimes seems very loose, as in many sketches or
adventure stories; but it increases to the complex, close-knit organization of certain
poems, in which it may be almost impossible to change a word or the position of a word without impairing its total effect.

The pragmatic distinction between literary language and everyday language is much clearer. We reject as poetry or label as mere rhetoric everything which persuades us to a definite outward action. Genuine poetry affects us more subtly. Art imposes some kind of framework which takes the statement of the work out of the world of reality. Into our semantic analysis we thus can reintroduce some of the common conceptions of aesthetics: 'disinterested contemplation', 'aesthetic distance', 'framing'. Again, however, we must realize that the distinction between art and non-art, between literature and the non-literary linguistic utterance, is fluid. The aesthetic function may extend to linguistic pronouncements of the most various sort. It would be a narrow conception of literature to exclude all propaganda art or didactic and satirical poetry. We have to recognize transitional forms like the essay, biography, and much rhetorical literature. In different periods of history the realm of the aesthetic function seems to expand or to contract: the personal letter, at times, was an art form, as was the sermon, while today, in agreement with the contemporary tendency against the confusion of genres, there appears a narrowing of the aesthetic function, a marked stress on purity of art, a reaction against pan-aestheticism and its claims as voiced by the aesthetics of the late nineteenth century. It seems, however, best to consider as literature only works in which the aesthetic function is dominant, while we can recognize that there are aesthetic elements, such as style and composition, in works which have a completely different, non-aesthetic purpose, such as scientific treatises, philosophical dissertations, political pamphlets, sermons.

But the nature of literature emerges most clearly under the referential aspects. The centre of literary art is obviously to be found in the traditional genres of the lyric, the epic, the drama. In all of them, the reference is to a world of fiction, of imagination. The statements in a novel, in a poem, or in a drama are not literally true; they are not logical propositions. There is a central and important difference between a statement, even in a historical novel or a novel by Balzac which seems to convey 'information' about actual happenings, and the same information appearing in a book of history or sociology. Even in the subjective lyric, the 'I' of the poet is a fictional, dramatic 'I'. A character in a novel differs from a historical figure or a figure in real life. He is made only of the sentences describing him or put into his mouth by the author. He has no past, no future, and sometimes no continuity of life. This elementary reflection disposes of much criticism devoted to Hamlet in Wittenberg, the influence of Hamlet's father on his son, the slim and young Falstaff, 'the girlhood of Shakespeare's heroines', the question of 'how many children had Lady Macbeth'.

Time and space in a novel
are not those of real life. Even an apparently most realistic novel, the very ‘slice of life’ of the naturalist, is constructed according to certain artistic conventions. Especially from a later historical perspective we see how similar are naturalistic novels in choice of theme, type of characterization, events selected or admitted, ways of conducting dialogue. We discern, likewise, the extreme conventionality of even the most naturalistic drama not only in its assumption of a scenic frame but in the way space and time are handled, the way even the supposedly realistic dialogue is selected and conducted, and the way characters enter and leave the stage. Whatever the distinctions between *The Tempest* and *A Doll's House*, they share in this dramatic conventionality.

If we recognize ‘fictionality’, ‘invention’, or ‘imagination’ as the distinguishing trait of literature, we think thus of literature in terms of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Balzac, Keats rather than of Cicero or Montaigne, Bossuet, or Emerson. Admittedly, there will be ‘boundary’ cases, works like Plato’s *Republic* to which it would be difficult to deny, at least in the great myths, passages of ‘invention’ and ‘fictionality’, while they are at the same time primarily works of philosophy. This conception of literature is descriptive, not evaluative. No wrong is done to a great and influential work by relegating it to rhetoric, to philosophy, to political pamphleteering, all of which may pose problems of aesthetic analysis, of stylistics and composition, similar or identical to those presented by literature, but where the central quality of fictionality—will be absent. This conception will thus include in it all kinds of fiction, even the worst novel, the worst poem, the worst drama. Classification as art should be distinguished from evaluation.

One common misunderstanding must be removed. ‘Imaginative’ literature need not use images. Poetic language is permeated with imagery, beginning with the simplest figures and culminating in the total all-inclusive mythological systems of a Blake or Yeats. But imagery is not essential to fictional statement and hence to much literature. There are good completely imageless poems; there is even a ‘poetry of statement’. Imagery, besides, should not be confused with actual, sensuous, visual image-making. Under the influence of Hegel, nineteenth-century aestheticians such as Vischer and Eduard von Hartmann argued that all art is the ‘sensuous shining forth of the idea’, while another school (Fiedler, Hildebrand, Riehl) spoke of all art as ‘pure visibility’. But much great literature does not evoke sensuous images, or, if it does, it does so only incidentally, occasionally, and intermittently. In the depiction even of a fictional character the writer may not suggest visual images at all. We scarcely can visualize any of Dostoyevsky’s or Henry James’s characters, while we learn to know their states of mind, their motivations, evaluations, attitudes, and desires very completely.
At the most, a writer suggests some schematized outline or one single physical trait - the frequent practice of Tolstoy or Thomas Mann. The fact that we object to many illustrations, though by good artists and, in some cases (e.g. Thackeray's), even by the author himself, shows that the writer presents us only with such a schematized outline as is not meant to be filled out in detail.

If we had to visualize every metaphor in poetry we would become completely bewildered and confused. While there are readers given to visualizing and there are passages in literature where such imaginings seem required by the text, the psychological question should not be confused with analysis of the poet's metaphorical devices. These devices are largely the organization of mental processes which occur also outside of literature. Thus metaphor is latent in much of our everyday language and overt in slang and popular proverbs. The most abstract terms, by metaphorical transfer, derive from ultimately physical relationships (comprehend, define, eliminate, substance, subject, hypothesis). Poetry revives and makes us conscious of this metaphorical character of language, just as it uses the symbols and myths of our civilization: Classical, Teutonic, Celtic, and Christian.

All these distinctions between literature and non-literature which we have discussed - organization, personal expression, realization and exploitation of the medium, lack of practical purpose, and, of course, fictionality - are restatements, within a framework of semantic analysis, of age-old aesthetic terms such as ‘unity in variety’, ‘disinterested contemplation’, ‘aesthetic distance’, ‘framing’, and ‘invention’, ‘imagination’, ‘creation’. Each of them describes one aspect of the literary work, one characteristic feature of its semantic directions. None is itself satisfactory. At least one result should emerge: a literary work of art is not a simple object but rather a highly complex organization of a stratified character with multiple meanings and relationships. The usual terminology, which speaks of an ‘organism’, is somewhat misleading, since it stresses only one aspect, that of ‘unity in variety’, and leads to biological parallels not always relevant. Furthermore, the ‘identity of content and form’ in literature, though the phrase draws attention to the close interrelationships within the work of art, is misleading in being overfacile. It encourages the illusion that the analysis of any element of an artefact, whether of content or of technique, must be equally useful, and thus absolves us from the obligation to see the work in its totality. ‘Content’ and ‘form.’ are terms used in too widely different senses for them to be, merely nixta posed, helpful; indeed, even after careful definition, they too simply dichotomize the work of art. A modern analysis of the work of art has to begin with more complex questions: its mode of existence, its system of strata.
1.2.2 The function of literature

The nature and the function of literature must, in any coherent discourse, be correlative. The use of poetry follows from its nature: every object or class of objects is most efficiently and rationally used what it is, or is centrally. It acquires a secondary use only when its prime function has lapsed: the old spinning-wheel becomes an ornament or a specimen in a museum; the square piano, no longer capable of music, is made into a useful desk. Similarly, the nature of an object follows from its use: it is what it does. An artefact has the structure proper to the performance of its function, together with whatever accessories time and materials may make it possible, and taste may think it desirable, to add. There may be much in any literary work which is unnecessary to its literary function, though interesting or defensible on other grounds.

Have conceptions of the nature and the function of literature changed the course of history? The question is not easy to answer. If one goes far enough back, one can say yes; one can reach a time when literature, philosophy, and religion exist undifferentiated: among the Greeks, Aeschylus and Hesiod would perhaps be instances. But Plato can already speak of the quarrel between the poets and the philosophers as an ancient quarrel and mean by it something intelligible to us. We must not, on the other hand, exaggerate the difference made by doctrines of 'art for art's sake' at the end of the nineteenth century or more recent doctrines of Poesie Pure. The 'didactic heresy', as Poe called the belief in poetry as an instrument of edification, is not to be equated with the traditional Renaissance doctrine that the poem pleases and teaches or teaches through pleasing.

On the whole, the reading of a history of aesthetics or poetics leaves one with the impression that the nature and the function of literature, So far as they can be put into large general conceptual terms, for comparison and contrast with other human activities and values, have not basically changed.

The history of aesthetics might almost be summarized as a dialectic in which the thesis and counter-thesis are Horace's *dulce* and *utile*: poetry is sweet and useful. Either adjective separately represents a polar misconception with regard to the function of poetry - probably it is easier to correlate *dulce et utile* on the basis of function than on that of nature. The view that poetry is pleasure (analogous to any other pleasure) answers to the view that poetry is instruction (analogous to any textbook). The view that all poetry is, or should be, propaganda is answered by the view that it is, or should be, pure sound and image -arabesque without reference to the world of human emotions. The opposing theses reach their subtlest versions.
perhaps, in the views that art is ‘play’ and that it is ‘work’ (the ‘craft’ of fiction, the ‘work’ of art). Neither view, in isolation, can possibly seem acceptable. Told that poetry is ‘play’, spontaneous amusement, we feel that justice has been done neither to the care, skill, and planning of the artist nor to the seriousness and importance of the poem; but told that poetry is ‘work’ or ‘craft’, we feel the violence done to its joy and what Kant called its ‘purposelessness’. We must describe the function of art in such a way as to do justice at once to the *dulce* and the *utile*.

The Horatian formula itself offers a helpful start if, remembering that precision in the use of critical terms is very recent, we give the Horatian terms an extension generous enough to encompass Roman and Renaissance creative practice. The usefulness of art need not be thought to lie in the enforcement of such a moral lesson as Le Bossu held to be Homer’s reason for writing the *Iliad*, or even such as Hegel found in his favourite tragedy, *Antigone*. ‘Useful’ is equivalent to ‘not a waste of time’, not a form of ‘passing the time’, something deserving of serious attention. ‘Sweet’ is equivalent to ‘not a bore’, ‘not a duty’, ‘its own reward’.

Can we use this double criterion as a basis of definition of literature, or is it rather a criterion of great literature? In older discussions, the distinctions between great, good, and ‘sub-literary’ literature rarely appear. There may be real doubt whether sub-literary literature (the pulp magazine) is ‘useful’ or ‘instructive’. It is commonly thought of as sheer ‘escape’ and ‘amusement’. But the question has to be answered in terms of sub-literary readers, not in those of readers of ‘good literature’. Mortimer Adler, at least, would find some rudimentary desire for knowledge in the interest of the least intellectual novel reader. And as for ‘escape’, Kenneth Burke has reminded us how facile a charge that may become. The dream of escape may assist a reader to clarify his dislike of the environment in which he is placed. The artist can . . . become ‘subversive’ by merely singing, in all innocence, of respite by the Mississippi.

In answer to our question, it is probable that all art is ‘sweet’ and ‘useful’ to its appropriate users: that what it articulates is superior to their own self-induced reverie or reflection; that it gives them pleasure by the skill with which it articulates what they take to be something like their own reverie or reflection and by the release they experience through this articulation.

When a work of literature functions successfully, the two ‘notes’ of pleasure and utility should not merely coexist but coalesce. The pleasure of literature, we need to maintain, is not one preference among a long list of possible pleasures but is a ‘higher pleasure’ because pleasure in a higher kind of activity, i.e. non-acquisitive
contemplation. And the utility - the seriousness, the instructiveness - of literature is a pleasurable seriousness, i.e. not the seriousness of a duty which must be done or of a lesson to be learned but an aesthetic seriousness, a seriousness of perception. The relativist who likes difficult modern poetry can always shrug off aesthetic judgement by making his taste a personal preference, on the level of crossword puzzles or chess. The educationist may falsely locate the seriousness of a great poem or novel, as in the historical information it purveys or the helpful moral lesson.

Another point of importance: Has literature a function, or functions? In his Primer for Critics, Boas gaily exposit a pluralism of interests and corresponding types of criticism; and, at the end of his The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, Eliot sadly, or at least wearily, insists on the ‘variety of poetry’ and the variety of things the kinds of poetry may do at various times. But these are exceptions. To take art or literature or poetry seriously is, ordinarily at least, to attribute to it some use proper to itself. Considering Arnold’s view that poetry could supersede religion and philosophy, Eliot writes: ‘. . . nothing in this world or the next is a substitute for anything else. . . .’ That is, no real category of value has a real equivalent. There are no real substitutes. In practice, literature can obviously take the place of many things - of travel or sojourn in foreign lands, of direct experience, vicarious life; and it can be used by the historian as a social document. But has literature a work, a use, which nothing else does so well? Or is it an amalgam of philosophy, history, music, and imagery which, in a really modern economy, would be distributed? This is the basic question.

The defenders of literature will believe that it is not an archaic survival but a permanence, and so will many -who are neither poets nor teachers of poetry and who therefore lack the professional interest in survival. The experience of unique value in literature is basic to any theory concerning the nature of the value. Our shifting theories attempt to do progressively better justice to the experience.

One contemporary line asserts the use and seriousness of poetry by finding that poetry conveys knowledge - a kind of knowledge. Poetry is a form of knowledge. Aristotle had seemed to say something like that in his famous dictum that poetry is more philosophical than history, since history ‘relates things which have happened, poetry such as might happen’, the general and probable. Now however, when history, like literature, appears a loose, ill-defined discipline, and when science rather is the impressive rival, it is contended rather that literature gives a knowledge of those particularities with which science and philosophy are not concerned. While a Neo-Classical theorist like Dr Johnson could still think of poetry in terms of the ‘grandeur of generality’, modern theorists of many schools (e.g. Bergson, Gilby, Ransom,
Stace) all stress the particularity of poetry. Says Stace, the play *Othello* is not about jealousy but about Othello’s jealousy, the particular kind of jealousy a Moor married to a Venetian might feel.

The typicality of literature or the particularity: literary theory and apologetics may stress one or the other; for literature, one may say, is more general than history and biography but more particularized than psychology or sociology. But not only are there shifts in the stress of literary theory. In literary practice, the specific degree of generality or particularity shifts from work to work and period to period. Pilgrim and Everyman undertake to be mankind. But Morose, the ‘humorist’ of Jonson’s *Epicoene*, is a very special and idiosyncratic person. The principle of characterization in literature has always been defined as that of combining the ‘type’ with the ‘individual’ - showing the type in the individual or the individual in the type. The attempts at interpreting this principle, or specific dogmas derived from it, have not been very helpful. Literary typologies go back to the Horatian doctrine of decorum, and to the repertory of types in Roman comedy (e.g. the bragging soldier, the miser, the spendthrift and romantic son, the confidential servant). We recognize the typological again in the character books of the seventeenth century and in the comedies of Moliere. But how to apply the concept more generally? Is the nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* a type? If so, of what? Is Hamlet a type? Apparently, for an Elizabethan audience, a melancholiac, something as described by Dr Timothy Bright. But he is many other things also, and his melancholy is given a particular genesis and context. In some sense, the character which is an individual as well as a type is so constituted by being shown to be many types: Hamlet is also a lover, or former lover, a scholar, a connoisseur of the drama, a fencer. Every man is a convergence or nexus of types — even the simplest man. So-called character types are seen ‘flat’ as all of us see people with whom we have relations of a single kind; ‘round’ characters combine views and relations, are shown in different contexts — public life, private, foreign lands.

One cognitive value in the drama and novels would seem to be psychological. ‘The novelists can teach you more about human nature than the psychologists’ is a familiar kind of assertion. Horney recommends Dostoyevsky, Shakespeare, Ibsen, and Balzac as inexhaustible sources. E. M. Forster (*Aspects of the Novel*) speaks of the very limited number of persons whose inner life and motivations we know, and sees it as the great service of the novel that it does reveal the introspective life of the characters. Presumably the inner lives he assigns his characters are drawn out of his own vigilant introspection. One might maintain that the great novels are source books for psychologists, or that they are case histories (i.e. illustrative, typical examples). But here we seem to come back to the fact that psychologists will use
the novel only for its generalized typical value: they will draw off the character of Pere Goriot from the total setting (the Maison Vauquer) and context of characters.

Max Eastman, himself a minor poet, would deny that the ‘literary mind’ can, in an age of science, lay claim to the discovery of truth. The ‘literary mind’ is simply the unspecialized, amateur mind of pre-scientific days attempting to persist and taking advantage of its verbal facility to create the impression that it is uttering the really important ‘truths’. Truth in literature is the same as truth outside of literature, i.e. systematic and publicly verifiable knowledge. The novelist has no magic short cut to that present state of knowledge in the social sciences which constitutes the ‘truth’ against which his ‘world’, his fictional reality, is to be checked. But then, believes Eastman, the imaginative writer — and especially the poet - misunderstands himself if he thinks of his prime office as that of discovering and communicating knowledge. His real function is to make us perceive what we see, imagine what we already, conceptually or practically, know.

It is difficult to draw the line between views of poetry as realization of the given and views of poetry as ‘artistic insight’. Does the artist remind us of what we have ceased to perceive or make us see what, though it was there all the time, we had not seen? One remembers the black-and-white drawings in which there are concealed figures or faces composed of dots and broken lines: they were there all the time, but one did not see them as wholes, as designs. In his *Intentions*, Wilde cites Whistler’s discovery of aesthetic value in fog, of the Pre-Raphaelite discovery of beauty in types of women hitherto not seen as beautiful or as types. Are these instances of ‘knowledge’ or ‘truth’? We hesitate. They are discoveries of new ‘perceptual values’, we say, of new ‘aesthetic qualities’.

One sees generally why aestheticians hesitate to deny ‘truth’ as a property and a criterion of art: partly, it is an honorific term, and one registers one’s serious respect for art, one’s apprehension of it as one of the supreme values, by the attribution; and partly, one is illogically fearful that if art isn’t ‘true’ it is a ‘lie’, as Plato, in violence, called it. Imaginative literature is a ‘fiction’, an artistic, verbal ‘imitation of life’. The opposite of ‘fiction’ is not ‘truth’ but ‘fact’ or ‘time-and-space existence’. ‘Fact’ is stranger than the probability with which literature must deal.

Among the arts, literature, specifically, seems also to claim ‘truth’ through the view of life (*Weltanschauung*) which every artistically coherent work possesses. The philosopher or critic must think some of these ‘views’ truer than others (as Eliot thinks Dante’s truer than Shelley’s or even than Shakespeare’s); but any mature philosophy of life must have some measure of truth - at any event it lays claim to it. The truth
of literature, as we are now considering it, seems to be the truth in literature - the philosophy which exists, in systematic conceptual form, outside of literature but may be applied to or illustrated by or embodied in literature. In this sense, the truth in Dante is Catholic theology and scholastic philosophy. Eliot’s view of poetry in its relation to ‘truth’ seems essentially of this sort. Truth is the province of systematic thinkers; and artists are not such thinkers, though they may try to be if there are no philosophers whose work they can suitably assimilate.

The whole controversy would appear, in large measure, semantic. What do we mean by ‘knowledge’, ‘truth’, ‘cognition’, ‘wisdom’? If all truth is conceptual and prepositional, then the arts - even the art of literature - can’t be forms of truth. Again: if positivist reductive definitions are accepted, limiting truth to that which can be methodically verified by anyone, then art can’t be a form of truth experimentally. The alternative to these seems some bi-modal or pluri-modal truth: there are various ‘ways of knowing’. Or there are two basic types of knowledge, each of which uses a language system of signs: the sciences, which use the ‘discursive’ mode, and the arts, which use the ‘presentational’. Are these both truth? The former is what philosophers have ordinarily meant, while the latter takes care of religious ‘myth’ as well as poetry. We might call the latter ‘true’ rather than ‘the truth’. The adjectival quality would express the distinction in centre of balance: art is substantively beautiful and adjectively true (i.e. it doesn’t conflict with the truth). In his Ars Poetica, MacLeish attempts to adjust the claims of literary beauty and philosophy by the formula, a poem is ‘equal to: not true’: poetry is as serious and important as philosophy (science, knowledge, wisdom) and possesses the equivalence of truth, is truth-like.

Mrs Langer stresses the plastic arts and, still more, music, rather than literature, in her plea for presentational symbolism as a form of knowledge. Apparently she thinks of literature as in some way a mixture of ‘discursive’ and ‘presentational’. But the mythic element, or archetypal images, of literature would correspond to her presentational.

From views that art is discovery or insight into the truth - we should distinguish the view that art specifically literature - is propaganda, the view, that is, that the writer is not the discoverer but the persuasive purveyor of the truth. The term ‘propaganda’ is loose and needs scrutiny. In popular speech, it is applied only to doctrines viewed as pernicious and spread by men whom we distrust. “The word implies calculation, intention, and is usually applied to specific, rather restricted doctrines or programmes.” So limiting the sense of the term, one might say that some art (the lowest kind) is propaganda, but that no great art, or good art, or Art, can possibly be. If, however, we stretch the term to mean ‘effort, whether conscious or not, to influence readers
to share one's attitude towards life’, then there is plausibility in the contention that all artists are propagandists or should be, or (in complete reversal of the position outlined in the preceding sentence) that all sincere, responsible artists are morally obligated to be propagandists.

According to Montgomery Belgion, the literary artist is an ‘irresponsible propagandist’. That is to say, every writer adopts a view or theory of life. . . . The effect of the -work is always to persuade the reader to accept that view or theory. This persuasion is always illicit. That is to say, the reader is always led to believe something, and that assent is hypnotic - the art of the presentation seduces the reader. ...

Eliot, who quotes Belgion, replies by distinguishing 'poets whom it is a strain to think of as propagandists at all' from irresponsible propagandists, and a third group who, like Lucretius and Dante, are ‘particularly conscious and responsible’ propagandists; and Eliot makes the judgement of responsibility depend on both auctorial intention and historic effect. ‘Responsible propagandists’ would seem to most people a contradiction in terms; but, interpreted as a tension of pulls, it makes a point. Serious art implies a view of life which can be stated in philosophical terms, even in terms of systems. Between artistic coherence (what is sometimes called ‘artistic logic’) and philosophical coherence there is some kind of correlation. The responsible artist has no will to confuse emotion and thinking, sensibility and intellect, sincerity of feeling with adequacy of experience and reflection. The view of life which the responsible artist articulates perceptually is not, like most views which have popular success as ‘propaganda’, simple; and an adequately complex vision of life cannot, by hypnotic suggestion, move to premature or naive action.

It remains to consider those conceptions of the function of literature clustered about the word ‘catharsis’. The word — Aristotle’s Greek, in the Poetics — has had a long history. The exegesis of Aristotle’s use of the word remains in dispute; but what Aristotle may have meant, an exegetical problem of interest, need not be confounded with the problem to which the term has come to be applied. The function of literature, some say, is to relieve us — either writers or readers — from the pressure of emotions. To express emotions is to get free of them, as Goethe is said to have freed himself from Weltschmerz by composing The Sorrows of Werther. And the spectator of a tragedy or the reader of a novel is also said to experience release and relief. His emotions have been provided with focus, leaving him, at the end of his aesthetic experience, with 'calm of mind'.

But does literature relieve us of emotions or, instead, incite them? Tragedy and
comedy, Plato thought, 'nourish and water our emotions when we ought to dry them up'. Or, if literature relieves us of our emotions, are they not wrongly discharged when they are expended on poetic fictions? As a youth, St Augustine confesses, he lived in mortal sin; yet 'all this I wept not, I who wept for Dido slain. . . .' Is some literature incitory and some cathartic, or are we to distinguish between groups of readers and the nature of their response? Again: should all art be cathartic? These are problems for treatment under 'Literature and Psychology' and 'Literature and Society'; but they have, preliminarily, to be raised now.

To conclude: the question concerning the function of literature has a long history - in the Western world, from Plato down to the present. It is not a question instinctively raised by the poet or by those who like poetry; for such, ‘Beauty is its own excuse for being’, as Emerson was once drawn into saying. The question is put, rather, by utilitarians and moralists, or by statesmen and philosophers, that is, by the representatives of other special values or the speculative arbiters of all values. What, they ask, is the use of poetry anyhow — cut bono? And they ask the question at the full social or human dimension. Thus challenged, the poet and the instinctive reader of poetry are forced, as morally and intellectually responsible citizens, to make some reasoned reply to the community. They do so in a passage of an A. rs Poetica. They write a Defence or Apology for poetry: the literary equivalent of what is called in theology 'apologetics'. Writing to this end and for this prospective audience, they naturally stress the 'use' rather than the 'delight' of literature; and hence it would be semantically easy today to equate the 'function' of literature with its extrinsic relations. But from the Romantic movement on, the poet has often given, when challenged by the community, a different answer: the answer which A. C. Bradley calls 'poetry for poetry's sake'; and theorists do well to let the term 'function' serve the whole 'apologetic' range. So using the word, we say, poetry has many possible functions. Its prime and chief function is fidelity to its own nature.

1.3 Explanation

1.3.1 The nature of literature

The first problem to confront us is the subject matter of literary scholarship. Obviously, the questions like, what is literature? What is not literature? arise before us. Wellek and Warren discuss certain popular theories regarding the nature of literature. According to them, one way is to define 'literature' as everything in print. In this connection, De Quincey distinguishes between literature of knowledge and literature of power. Literature of knowledge includes books on travel, biography, auto - biography, philosophy and so on. In literature of knowledge, we are concerned with
the facts. The books that give us knowledge are included in literature of knowledge.

Sometimes, literature of knowledge is called *Applied literature*. The other kind of

literature is pure literature or *literature of power*. Pure literature includes novels,

plays, poems, epics etc. It creates the world of imagination. Supernatural world,

abstract ideas, imaginary things are described in pure literature. In short, the word

‘literature’ means ‘books that are written’. For the sake of clear understanding, we

attempt to give definitions of literature by different writers. In the words of W. H.

Hudson (1979 : 10), ‘Literature is composed of books in which there is human appeal

and human interest. According to matthew Arnold, ‘Literature is a criticism of life. It

is an interpretation of life, as life shapes itself in the mind of the interpreter’. It is

impossible to give a concrete definition of literature. To define is to limit and literature

is boundless and limitless. Literature is ever widening because it deals with endless

life. The books of literature have human interest. There is pleasure in literature. The

elements of form and pleasure are two essentials of literature. A piece of literature

differs from a specialised treatise on astronomy, political economy, philosophy, history

etc. Edwin Grrenlaw also gives us similar interpretation. He believes that, ‘a literary

work must be seen in the light of its possible contribution to the history of culture’.

Literature appeals not to a particular class of readers but ut appeals to all men and

women belonging to different classes. It gives aesthetic pleasure and satisfaction.

According to Wellek and Warren, another way of defining literature is to limit it
to 'great books' on any subject, 'notable for literary form or expression'. This definition
is based on two criterions : 1) Aesthetic worth alone and 2) Aesthetic worth in
combination with general intellectual distinction. For example : lyric poetry, drama,

fiction, the greatest works are selected on aesthetic grounds ; other books are picked
for their reputation on intellectual quality together with aesthetic value of a rather

narrow kind. We consider their style, composition general force of presentation. This

is a common way of distinguishing or speaking of literature. In other words

The epics of Homer, Virgil and Milton, the plays of the Greek dramatists,

Shakespeare and other modern dramatists the poems of Wordsworth, Keats and

Shelley, the novels of Dickens and Hardy are called 'the great works' purely on

aesthetic grounds.

However, Gibbon's books on history entitled, 'Decline and fall of Roman Empire',
is called as the greatest work because it has very high intellectual quality and is also

notable for style, composition and general force of presentation. Hence, it is described

as literature. Thus Wellek and Warren suggest that, "the term 'literature' seems best
if we limit it to the art of literature, that is, to imaginative literature." There are certain
difficulties in using the term in the sense; but, in English, the possible alternatives,
such as 'fiction', or 'poetry' are misleading and have narrow meanings. There is one objection to the term 'literature' that it suggests only printed or written literature (because it has come into English from 'litera' which means only written or printed literature) and does not include 'oral literature'. The simplest way of solving the question is by distinguishing the particular use made of language in literature. According to Wellek and Warren, "Language is the material of literature as stone or bronze is of sculpture, paints of picture or sounds of music". But, we must always bear in mind that, language is itself a creation of man and is thus charged with the cultural heritage of a linguistic group. The appeal of literature is deep-rooted in its lasting human significance. As W. H. Hudson remarks, "Literature is a vital record of what man has seen in life, what they have thought and felt about life through the medium of language". Literature fulfils man's emotional curiosity.

There are three different uses of language. They are:

1) the literary
2) the everyday
3) the scientific

- The literary language is highly connotative, full of ambiguities, irrational categoris like grammatical gender, historical accident, memories and associations. It is more than merely referential, has its expressive side, influences the attitude of the reader, stresses on the sign itself, makes use of different techniques like metre and has intellectual element.

- The everyday language has its varieties. It has its expressive function. It is not a uniform idea. It is full of irrationalities and changes of context. It aims at almost the precision of scientific description.

- The scientific language is purely denotative. It aims at a one-to-one correspondence between sign and referent. The sign is completely arbitrary, hence it can be replaced by equivalent signs. The sign is also transparent. It means, there are intellectual, emotional, imaginative and technical elements of literature. In all the different types of literature there are certain elements of composition. Life is the raw material of literature. Then there are the elements contributed by the author when he shapes the raw material in a particular form of literary art. We believe that literature only works in which the aesthetic function is dominant.

Wellek and Warren believe that the nature of literature emerges most clearly under the referential aspects. The impulses which have given birth to the various forms of literary expression. The impulses are
a) Our desire for self-expression
b) Our interest in people and their doings.
c) Our interest in the world of reality in which we live, and in the world of imagination which we bring into existence
d) our love of form as form.

In this way literature is born. Thus, the distinguishing characteristic of literature is its ‘fictionality’. We can call it as 'invention' or 'imagination'. This aspect is most clearly found in the works of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Balzac, Keats etc. However, ‘imaginative literature’ need not use images. They mean to say that organization, personal expression, realisation and exploitation of the medium, lack of practical purpose and fictionality are different aspects of literature which we do not find in non-literature. At least one result should emerge, 'a literary work of art is not a simple object but rather a highly complex organization of a stratified character with multiple meanings and relationships.' It means, they give semantic analysis of the nature of literature.

1.3.2 The function of literature

We read literature. We are interested in literature. Literature represents life and it appeals to human mind. Life is origin and basis of literature. Life and literature are closely connected with each other. The supreme values in life form the foundation of literature. There is an important place of art and beauty in human life. Human beings have natural affinity for art and beauty. Literature is one of the fine arts. There is beauty and art in literature. We are attracted towards it and naturally we are delighted at art and beauty. Great literature has something universal. It teaches us something and it has the power to transform the entire human nature. Broadly speaking, the function of literature is threefold

1) To delight the readers
2) To teach or to instruct the readers
3) To move or to transform the readers

1) To delight the readers

This is the major function of literature. Pure literature or literature of power gives us aesthetic pleasure. Human life is full of sorrow and hardships. There is a burden of work and responsibilities. Therefore, human life becomes dull, tedious and uninteresting. It becomes like a desert but literature is an oasis in the desert. Literature takes us away from this dull and tedious life. The life in literature, the world in
literature is artistic and beautiful. This art and beauty gives aesthetic pleasure. The best type of literature makes us to forget the dull routine life in which we live. It delights human beings. It gives us the highest type of joy i.e. ecstasy. Mental satisfaction is there. It is incomparable.

When we read Wordsworth's poems or Shakespeare's plays, we are become part and parcel with them. Each form of literature that gives us aesthetic pleasure (pleasure from art and beauty). Our mental curiosity and hunger are satisfied by literature. In this way, literature delights us.

2) **To instruct the readers**

Great literature instructs and teaches the readers. It gives us a moral lesson. Literature is based on moral and universal values. They form the basis of literature. When we read literature, our experience is enhanced. We begin to think over the characters and experiences in literature. Literature gives some moral instructions. Preaching is not the ultimate purpose of literature. When we read the masterpieces of fiction like Thomas Hardy's *Tess*, Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, we seem to feel that our command of life, our insight into life are greatly enhanced. The moral instructions given by literature are more superior to the instructions given by the moral teacher. Complete awareness of life is possible only through literature. This is morality in art and literature. But art cannot be sacrificed on the altar of morality, on the altar of moral teaching or instructions. The power of literature lies in its capacity to move and to transform our entire nature. Great literature is moral in itself. Moral teaching, moral values, moral influence is always there. Thus, literature teaches us to look into the life of others. Selfish emotions are removed away. Literature makes us wise to live life successfully. This is the teaching of literature.

3) **To move the readers**

This is the third function of literature. Literature moves the readers. The word 'poetry' in general, stands for literature. Its medium is language, words, word symbols are used by the poet. They are effective and powerful. They have the capacity to deal with the feelings. Poetry alone deals with imagination. It has the power to inspire emotions and feelings. The professionals, moral teachers, advisors don't influence as powerfully as the poet or literary artist. That's why, one great poet can influence more effectively than a dozen moral teachers. In this way literature delights, instructs and moves the readers.

There are different theories regarding the function of literature. Literary books are not written to throw away in the waste paper basket. They have some purpose and the purpose of literature differs from person to person, age to age. In ancient
days, plato charged the poets to be immoral. According to plato, poetry feeds and waters emotions that are to be dried up. Poetry raises unnecessary emotions. Those who read poetry, get a lot of emotions. Their normal routine of life is disturbed. Plato attacks poets in this way and wants to banish them from his ideal state. **This was the purpose of literature according to plato.** Plato's disciple Aristotle tried to answer his master's theory. According to Aristotle, poetry raises emotions but the excess emotions get a natural relief and outlet and there is the **catharsis** or the emotional effect of tragedy. Literature gives a healthy outlet to human emotions. **This is one more purpose of literature according to Aristotle.** The words of Horace 'dulce and utile' indicate the function of literature. He uses the words 'dulce and utile' which mean that poetry is **sweet and useful.** It suggests that poetry gives both pleasure and instruction. It means, the words 'dulce and utile' speak of the function rather than the nature of literature. Some say that poetry has the use and seriousness because it conveys knowledge - a kind of knowledge. Poetry is a form of knowledge. Literature gives knowledge of those particularities with which science and philosophy are not concerned. For example : W. T. Stace in his book, 'The meaning of Beauty' (1929 : 161) points out 'the play Othello is not about jealousy but about Othello's jealousy, the particular kind of jealousy a moor married to a Venetian might feel.'

The function of literature has a long history. In other words, the function of literature in this way is varied from plato, Aristotle to the modern age. A. C. Bradley calls, 'Poetry for poetry's sake' as an important function. It means literature has many possible functions. Its prime and chief function is fidelity to its own nature.

### 1.4 Check Your Progress

You have read the unit carefully and you have read the 'explanation' given above and now you should be able to answer the self assessment questions (SAQs) given below :

**I) Choose the correct option.**

1. According to Wellek and Warren, one way is to define 'literature' as ....
   a) everything in history of civilization
   b) everything in print
   c) everything in the medical profession
   d) everything in the early middle ages
2. The ideal scientific language is purely .......... 
   a) denotative  b) connotative  
   c) referent  d) arbitrary

3. Another way to defining literature is to limit it to 'great books', books which, whatever their subject, are .......... 
   a) notable for imagination  
   b) notable for expression  
   c) notable for judgement  
   d) notable for literary form or expression

4. Horace uses the words 'dulce and utile' which mean that .......... 
   a) poetry is not useful  
   b) poetry is sweet and useful  
   c) poetry is sweet and imaginative  
   d) poetry is useful and imaginative

5. According to Wallek and Warren, 'In a work of art the two 'notes' of .......... should unite. 
   a) pleasure and utility  b) sorrow and pleasure  
   c) sorrow and utility  d) pleasure and comfort

6. The prime and chief function of literature is .......... 
   a) acceptability to its own nature  
   b) non-accuracy to its own nature  
   c) mortality to its own nature  
   d) fidelity to its own nature

II) Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each.
   1. What is meant by 'denotative'?  
   2. While considering only works as literature, which function is dominant, according to Wellek and Warren?  
   3. What is Edwin Greenlaw's theory?  
   4. Who calls 'Poetry for poetry's sake', as an important function?  
   5. What is meant by 'Catharsis' according to Aristotle?  
   6. What are the names of modern theorists who have stressed the particularity of poetry?
1.5 Summary

1.5.1 The nature of literature

There is a close relationship between life and literature. Literature is a reflection of life. It is an expression of life through the medium of language. But, literature is not mere imitation of life. It is something more or less than life. There is something more or less than life. There is romantic imagination or realistic imagination. Wellek and Warren mean that the language used in literature is different from the language used in non-literature. Language is itself a creation of man and is thus changed with the cultural heritage of a linguistic group. There are three different uses of language.

a) the literary
b) the everyday
c) the scientific

However, the nature of literature emerges most clearly under the referential aspects.

1.5.2 The function of literature

Literature is one of the fine arts. Its purpose is manifold. Its nature is complex. Literature represents life. Life and literature are closely connected with each other. The supreme universal values in life form the foundation of literature. Basically, the conceptions about the nature and function of literature have not changed. The function of literature has a long history. For example: the words of Horace ‘dulce and utile’ indicate the function of literature which mean that poetry is sweet and useful. Wellek and Warren point out that, ‘the function of literature must be ‘pleasure and utility’. The two ‘notes’ of pleasure and utility should not only coexist but combine in one’. According to Aristotle, ‘Literature gives a healthy outlet to human emotions’. This is one more purpose of literature. The function of literature in this way is varied from Plato, Aristotle to the present. But, its prime function is fidelity to its own nature.

1.6 Glossary

1.6.1 The nature of Literature

- to confront: to stand or come in front of
- Witchcraft: magical influence
- extraneous: external
• **adjacent**: lying near, close or contiguous; adjoining neighbouring.
• **aesthetic**: concerned with beauty pure emotion and sensation as opposed to pure intellectuality
• **theologian**: one versed in theology
• **Perfunctory**: without interest, care or enthusiasm
• **historiography**: the body of techniques, theories and principles of historical research and presentation, an official history
• **compiler**: a person who compiles
• **Pedagogical**: pertaining to a pedagogue or pedagogy
• **Obscure**: not clear to the understanding
• **expository**: the nature of exposition, serving to expound
• **denotative**: signful, indicative or having power to denote
• **referent**: the object or even to which a term or symbol refers
• **deficient**: insufficient, inadequate
• **Connotative**: the associated or secondary meaning of a word
• **colloquial**: conversational
• **coherent**: consistent, sticking together
• **ambiguity**: doubtfulness or uncertainty of meaning
• **epochs**: a point of time distinguished by a particular event or state of affairs.
• **sermon**: a discourse for the purpose of religious instruction or any serious speech on a moral issue.
• **discern**: to perceive by the sight or some other sense
• **assumption**: something taken for granted
• **relegate**: to send or consign to an interior position, place or condition
• **culminate**: to rise to an apex or to terminate at the highest point.
• **scarcely**: probably not, not quite
• **conventionality**: conventional remark, attitude
• **arbitrary**: based on personal opinion or impulse
unequivocally: state one's intentions clearly
homonyms: words spelt and pronounced like another words but with a different meaning
latent: present but not visible, apparent
overt: open to view; not concealed or secret
stratified: arrange in strata or grades
juxtaposed: to place close together or side by side, esp. for comparison or contrast.
dichotomize: to divide or separate into two parts

1.6.2 The function of literature

correlative: having mutual relation
heresy: the maintaining of such an opinion or doctrine
didactic: intended for instruction
edification: moral improvement
facile: moving, easily done
reverie: a state of dreamy meditation or fanciful musing, a fantastic idea
coalesce: to grow together
contemplation: full or deep consideration; reflection
idiosyncratic: peculiarity, mannerful
decorum: something that is proper or suitable, propriety
spendthrift: a person who spends his possessions
fencer: a person who builds or repairs fences
introspective: a person who looks within himself / herself
vigilant: keenly watchful to detect danger; wary or ever awake and alert
amateur: a person who engages in a study sport or other activity for pleasure
honorific: indicating respect for the person being addressed
discursive: passing aimlessly from one subject to another; digressive
- **purveyor**: a person who provides; supplies
- **pernicious**: ruinous; injurious; deadly; fatal
- **propagandist**: a person devoted to the propagation of particular or authorized
- **illicit**: unlawful, not permitted or authorized
- **connoisseur**: a person with good judgement on matters in which beauty is needed
- **exegesis**: critical explanation or interpretation
- **cathartic**: causing catharsis or purgative
- **extrinsic**: not essential or being outside of a thing; outward or external
- **fidelity**: particularity, accuracy, loyalty.

1.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

I) 1. everything in print
   2. denotative
   3. notable for literary form or expression
   4. poetry is sweet and useful
   5. pleasure and utility
   5. fidelity to its own nature

II) 1. indicative or signful
    2. aesthetic
    3. Greenlaw’s theory is ‘a literary work must be seen in the light of its possible contribution to the history of culture.
    4. A. C. Bradley
    5. the emotional effect of tragedy
    6. Bergson, Gilby, Ransom and Stace

1.8 Exercise

1. What, according to Wellek and Warren, is the nature of literature?
2. Bring out the difference between the scientific language and literary language.
3. Write a critical note on the function of literature.
4. 'In a work of art the two 'notes' of pleasure and utility should unite' explain it.
5. 'Literature delights, instructs and moves the readers'. Discuss it.
6. Write a critical note on the distinction between literature and non-literature.

1.9 Activities/Field Work
1. Write an essay on 'Life and Literature'.
2. Write any essay on 'Literature and society'.
3. Make a list of various definitions of literature.
4. Write an essay on 'Literature should reflect the spirit of the times'.
5. Make a list of great/classical literature.
6. Write a paragraph on memorable work of art which taught you something and changed your life.

1.10 Reference for further study
Unit-2

Introduction to Literary Criticism

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2.0 Objectives

After reading this unit you will be able to
- understand what literary criticism is
- understand nature of literary criticism
- learn about function of literary criticism

2.1 Introduction

The Objective of this unit is to make students familiar with the concept of literary criticism. Literature is the most common of fine arts shared by most people and it is therefore imperative that we have to decide the quality of literature that we read, if we really have to enjoy literature reading. It is here we come to the field of literary criticism because it is the study of literature and we cannot keep ourselves away from it whether we read literature in order to enjoy or study it in all its aspects in order to appreciate it fully. It is literary criticism that helps us appreciate literature fully.
2.1.1 The need for literary criticism

Let us take some common and familiar situations. Ask anyone who has read a good book or seen a good movie, why he/she likes the book/novel. You will generally find the person fumbling for words, uncertain about what to say. Tell anyone who is a voracious reader of bestsellers to read either Kiran Desai’s *Inheritance of Loss* or Steven Cuvie’s *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and then ask him/her earlier question; you will probably get the same reaction. This clearly proves that our responses to literature needs to be strengthened by insights that literary criticism can offer us, without which we will love good books but will fail to know why we love them, and what precisely are their good qualities.

2.1.2 What is literary criticism

Literary criticism is a journey of exploration into the nature of literature in all its forms. It enables us to distinguish between a good book and a bad book. It trains us through its insights to distinguish for ourselves between a good book and great one. Literary criticism helps us recognize its literary quality, opening up for the whole world of pleasure and imaginative experience and intellectual stimulus.

The purpose of literary criticism is to quicken and refine our perceptiveness so that we can understand the exact nature of pleasure we derive from what is the best in literature. A Critic’s task, according to Schreiber, is “of easing or widening or deepening our response to literature”. We share of his insights to become a critic, a judge of literature as the original Greek word ‘Crites’ suggests. Even if every reader is a critic in his own right, what he gives is only a personal response to literature and mere subjective reaction is not criticism. In fact, it is literary criticism that helps every reader to become a good critic of literature - a critic whose subjective response is modified / corrected / sensitized / upgraded / strengthened by the objective standards offered him by the insights in Criticism. In this sense, literary criticism continually helps a reader which within him an amalgam of his subjective response and the objective standardized evaluation of a work of art and this process of help-enrichment-goes on till the reader himself becomes ‘his own critic’ in the true sense of the term.

Socrates was the first person to distinguish between the ability to criticize and the ability to compose literature. He pointed out that criticism is a distinct species of literary activity and also why it is distinct species of literary activity and also why it is distinct. This is probably the beginning of a discussion on literature (in fact, all fine arts), its enjoyment and literary criticism in the western world.

The realm of literature is occupied by the activities of three distinct powers: the power to create, the power to enjoy and the power to criticize. The chief distinction
of the power to criticize from the other two is the fact that it can be acquired. Though criticism is an intuitive as well as conscious activity, its process appeals to certain intellectual principles that can be set out, studied and put into practice in an orderly system. But there are no principles that will tell you how to create literature or how to enjoy it. That is to say, criticism assumes the fact that literature exists and then it proceeds to enquire into the nature of literature and to expound it. As soon as a man becomes aware that it would suit his purpose to say something in one way and not the other, criticism begins. In this sense, criticism begins when literature begins.

However, criticism helps the creative writer as well as the reader who enjoys literature. It enables the man who has creative power to make the most intelligent and efficient use of his creative power. To the reader, it makes the enjoyment of literature the most intelligent and therefore the most discriminating and illuminating experience.

Criticism, as distinct from creation and enjoyment, consists in asking and answering rational questions about literature. They are of two kinds: the first proceeds from literature in general to particular pieces of literature and the second proceeds from the particular to the general. In first kind of inquiry, we start with the general view of literature asking the following type of questions: What is literature? What are the qualities common to all literature? What is the function of literature?

The results of such an enquiry can be set out in a system of principles which express our understanding of the nature of literature. The nature of literature is a fact, which exists, whether we investigate it or not. Whether we criticize it or not, literature exists on its own an objective fact. The principles of literature offered by literary criticism, however, are the answers, which our intellect gives to us when we ask what sort of a fact literature is. And this kind of enquiry may be called the theory of literature.

On the other hand, the second kind of enquiry, which proceeds from particular to general, deals with the merits of a particular pieces of literature, be it a poem, a play, or a novel. This is what usually goes under the name of criticism and may be called criticism proper. Criticism asks what are the qualities which give some particular work its peculiar individuality. The mood and spirit as well as the choice of matter and its technique, and also the use of language - these are the subject of criticism, and its end is to assess the literary merits of a work of art. It can be said that literary criticism deals with what may be in the broadest sense be called style of a work of art.

Indeed, no clear line can be drawn between theory of literature and criticism.
proper because both refer continually to each other. This ought to be so because criticism naturally prefers to stand on something more reliable than impressions, which may be based on personal likes and dislikes or even prejudices. Thus theory of literature and criticism proper necessarily overlap. They are mutually dependent.

2.2 Nature of Literary Criticism

All the characters of literary criticism combined together, present a complete picture of it, is called the nature of literary criticism.

The word ‘criticism’ originates from the Greek word meaning ‘Judgment’ and hence criticism is the exercise of judgement and the literary criticism is the exercise of judgement on works of literature. From this it would appear that the nature and function of literary criticism is quite simple and easy to understand. But in reality, things are not quite so simple as that. As soon as we proceed to examine the nature and function of criticism in some detail, we are confronted with a host of conflicting views, theories and definitions.

The following cross-section of statements on criticism would satisfy to give students an idea of the chaos of critical theories and definitions that have come down to us through the ages:

1. The monumental Oxford *New English Dictionary* defines criticism as “the art of estimating the qualities and character of literary or artistic work”

2. The most authoritative American Dictionary, Webster’s *New International* defines criticism as “the art of judging or evaluation with knowledge and propriety the beauties and faults of works of art or literature”. Both these definitions emphasize the importance of judgement in criticism.

3. Shipley in his dictionary of *World Literature* defines criticism as “the conscious evaluation or appreciation of a work of art, either recording to the critic’s personal taste or according to some accepted aesthetic ideas......”

4. In *Encyclopedia Britannica* Edmund Gosse defines criticism as “the art of judging the qualities and values of an aesthetic object, whether in literature or the fine arts.”

5. The *American Dictionary of philosophy and psychology* pronounces criticism to be “the appreciation of estimation of works of art, an activity that would seem to include the exercise of taste and hence an avowal of preference.”
Besides these definitions, there are some critics whose arguments run counter to the traditional view of criticism as mere judgment. They believe that critic may analyse without judging. Here are some comments.

- Criticism is the play of the mind on the aesthetic qualities of literature, having for its object an interpretation of literary values - (J.W.H. Atkins).
- The true critic will dwell on excellencies rather than imperfections - (Addison).
- Is the work good or bad that is the critics domain? - (Victor Hugo).
- Criticism is the art of estimating the quality and character of a work of art, and the function or work of a art - (New English Dictionary).
- Criticism is a published analysis of the qualities and characteristics of a work in literature or fine art - (Edmund Gosse).
- The sole task of criticism is to answer three questions: What has the artist tried to express? How has he succeeded in expressing it? What is worth expressing? (Spingran).
- Criticism is a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world - (Mathew Arnold).
- To feel the virtue of the poet or the painter, to disengage it, to set it forth, are the three stages of the critics duty - (Walter Pater).
- To set up as a critic is to set up as no judge of value - (IA Richards).
- Criticism is the “Commentation and exposition of works of art by means of written words” - (T.S. Elliot).
- The end of criticism is the “elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste” - (T.S. Elliot).

From the above comments it is evident that we cannot have a narrow definition of criticism. Such diversity of view, clearly brings to notice the complex nature of criticism and its functions. As a matter of fact the view of criticism has varied from critic and age to age. The view of criticism is directly related to the critic’s own intellectual pre-occupation and his philosophy or outlook on life. The outlook on life, and pre-occupations and predilections, differ from individual to individual, and hence the complexity of critical theories.

Secondly, the theory of criticism is closely connected with the theory of poetry. Therefore, the idea of criticism varies in accordance with the idea of literature. Thus neo-classical criticism is built upon neo-classical theory of literature and romantic
emphasis on individualism accounts for the romantic impressionistic view of criticism.

Thirdly, critical theories are closely connected with the spirit of the age - the intellectual and moral environments in which the critic lives and has his being. Thus in the modern age with unprecedented development in social and behavioural sciences - psychology, sociology, anthropology, etc. - we have six major approaches to literary criticism. These are: the biographical, sociological, psychological, formalistic, structuralist and linguistic approaches. Marxism has given rise to Marxist theory of literary criticism and a reflection of author's life and personality or the life and personality of the characters in the work accounts for Biographical criticism. The scope of criticism has widened so much, and there is lack of unanimity regarding the nature and function of criticism.

2.3 Function of Literary Criticism

There has been a lot of controversy about the functions of criticism. Leaving aside all the controversies, let us consider in detail the function of criticism. Literary criticism is the play of the mind on a work of literature and it consists in asking and answering rational questions about literature. Such an inquiry by helping us to think rightly about literature enable us to gain the fullest enjoyment from it. In this way is built up a theory of literature, and the process and of literary creation is examined and made intelligible.

Secondly, the inquiry may be directed towards particular works of literature, and its individual and distinctive qualities may be examined. In this way may also be formulated certain rules which, when duly tested and examined with reference to similar works of literature, may help the reader to form a better idea of literary merit, also facilitate the task of the writer. Thus the function of criticism is not faultfinding as it is supposed to be by the layman.

According to formal and classical view, the critic is considered to be the lawgiver whose business is to instruct the writers, and lay down certain rules which they must follow. The opposite view is that the function of criticism is to interpret and analyse the works of art and compare them with others. Instead of law-giver, the critic’s business is to follow the artist, and examine the work of art as in itself it really is.

Thus criticism may be regarded as having two different functions -

i) that of interpretation and

ii) that of judgment.

In practice, however, these two functions have been generally combined. But
The task of the critic as interpreter is both large and difficult. As interpreter he has to perform the following tasks:

i) His purpose shall be to penetrate to the heart of the book

ii) He has to analyse its essential qualities of power and beauty

iii) He must distinguish between what is temporary and what is permanent in it.

iv) He has to analyse and formulate its meaning

v) He must explain the artistic and moral principles in it.

vi) He will make explicit what is simply implicit in the book

vii) He has to explain, unfold and illuminate

viii) He has to show what the book really is - its content, its spirit and its art.

ix) His one aim must be to know and help us to know the book itself.

According to Prof. Moulton, the function of criticism is investigation. As an investigator the critic must do the following:

i) He must review the phenomena of literature as they actually stand

ii) He must inquire into and attempt to systematise the laws and principles by which they are moulded to produce their effects

iii) He must recognize no court of appeal to the literary works themselves,

iv) He must not attempt to estimate the respective values of the different books and their authors.

v) He must discover by direct examination of the books the principles on which they were written.

vi) He must examine literature in the spirit of pure investigation as a scientist.

Therefore, the modern critic believes that the function of criticism is not mere fault-finding, but making a just evaluation of an artist's work without showing any favour.

There are a few more views about the function of criticism,

i) According to Addison, the function of criticism is pure appreciation. The critic should provide aesthetic pleasure to the reader by showing the spots of beauty and loveliness of a book.
ii) According to some critics, the great function of criticism is to evaluate properly the works of great artists so that the common reader maybe able to arrive at the real worth of an artist.

iii) Another function of criticism is to make a comparative study of a work of art with reference to similar other works of art produced in other languages of the world.

iv) It is the function of criticism to reconstruct the work of the creative vision of the artist.

However, we must always remember that in actual practice the various functions of criticism pass over into one another. It, therefore, becomes difficult to draw a sharp line between them.

Matthew Arnold's Views

In his essay “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time” Arnold defines criticism, illustrates its functions, and also lays down the essentials of a competent critic. He admits that the critical faculty is lower than the creative one, but he feels that it is the critic’s activity which makes creation possible. He says that criticism is not merely judgment in literature; its function is much more noble, exalted and catholic.

Arnold defines criticism as ‘a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas’. The definition points out that the task of the critic is threefold in nature

i) He must attempt to learn and understand; he must ‘see things as they are’

ii) He must convey his ideas to others and try to make the best ideas prevail

iii) He must create an atmosphere favourable for the writer of the future by promoting ‘a current of fresh and true ideas in the highest degree’. In other words, in Arnold’s view about the criticism and the critic, there is an element of propagandist. He must propagate noble ideas in order to promote culture.

According to Arnold criticism is a disinterested endeavour and the word ‘disinterested’ is very important. He wants to say that the critic’s judgment must be free from any kind of prejudices. The critic must be disinterested in the sense that he should follow only the ends of cultural perfection, and should remain uninfluenced by the coarser appeals of the Philistines.

In fact disinterested means that the critic must be concerned with nothing else
but his subject. However, this is not what Arnold means. On one hand he says that the critic should be free from ignoble interests; on the other hand he asks for his subjection to certain other interests. Arnold connects the critic with preconceived ideas of moral perfection which are likely to colour his judgment and make him over-praise some and be unfair to others.

Arnold has a very high conception regarding the function of a critic and criticism. According to him the critic himself is not only cultured, but he helps others to become cultured. He knows the best that has been thought and known in the world. He makes literary activity possible by establishing a current of noble ideas when such a current is lacking. The critic, further, rouses men out of their self-satisfaction, and complacency because such a complacency is vulgarising and retarding. He, thus, makes their minds think about what is excellent in itself, and the absolute beauty and fitness of things. The critic must rise above practical considerations; he must always have ideal perfection as his aim, because it is only then that he can make others rise to it.

Arnold, thus, makes a very high demand on the critic. He must know the best that is known and thought in the world. He must know the best not in literature alone, but in other subjects as well. He must be a man with great knowledge and understanding so that he can rise above personal considerations. He must have missionary zeal to make the best ideas prevail. He must see things as they really are in themselves and finally he must apply to life the true and noble ideas that he has found. This is really a high conception of the function of a critic and criticism.

The Views of T. S. Eliot

T. S. Eliot has defined the function and method of criticism in his essay “The Function of Criticism.” He states, ‘Criticism must always profess an end in view, which roughly speaking, appears to be the elucidation of the works of art and the correction of taste.’ He, further, says that ‘the critic, if he is to justify his existence, should endeavour to discipline his personal prejudices and cranks and compose his differences with as many of his fellows as possible in the common pursuit of true judgment.’ He believes that the function of a critic is not to give his own impressions about a work but to supply to the reader with simple fact about a work and leave the rest to the reader himself.

According to Eliot, the chief tools of criticism are comparison and analysis. The function of criticism is to present facts about a work of art, but we must be masters of facts and not servants. A knowledge of fact about something can never mislead the reader. The critic is not expected to give his own opinion or fancy. From this point
of view he finds Goethe’s and Coleridge’s criticism defective because they read their own personal feelings and sentiments in the characters of Shakespeare. The tools of comparison and analysis should be handled with care. The critic must know what to compare and how to analyse. According to him any book or essay or note which produces a fact about a work of art is a better piece of criticism. The fact cannot corrupt taste, it can at the worst gratify one taste - a taste for history or biography - under the illusion that it is assisting another. The corruptors of criticism are those who supply opinion or fancy. Eliot puts emphasis on the need of a strict critical method of the application of the method of science to the study of literature. Hence, he has been rightly recognised as the leader of modern criticism.

2.4 Check your progress

2.4.1 The Need for Literary Criticism.

I) Choose the correct alternative from the options given below each sentence and complete the sentences.

1) The word criticism originates from the Greek word meaning ..........
   a) Clarification  b) Judgment  
   c) Interpretation  d) Exposition

2) According to Webster’s New International Dictionary, criticism is the art of ..........
   a) Judging or evaluation  
   b) Judging the qualities 
   c) Recording the critic personal taste 
   d) elucidation 

3) ........... defines criticisms as “the art of judging the qualities and values of an aesthetic object, ............ ”
   a) Atkins  
   b) Coleridge
   c) Sydney  
   d) Edmund Gosse

II) Answer the following questions in one word /phrases / sentence each.

1) Who said criticism is the play of the mind on the aesthetic qualities of literature ?

2) What would be the critic’s attention according to Addison ?
3) What is the end of criticism according to T.S. Elliot?
4) With what the theory of criticism is connected?
5) How many approaches are there to literary criticism?

2.4.2 What is Literary Criticism?

I) Choose the correct alternative from the options given below each sentence and complete the sentences.

1) Generally .......... are two different functions of criticism.
   a) exposition and elucidation
   b) evaluation and appreciation
   c) assessment and correction
   d) interpretation and judgment

2) According to Prof. Moulton, the function of criticism is ..........  
   a) appreciation  b) evaluation
   c) estimation    d) investigation

3) .......... is the function of criticism according to Addison.
   a) clarification  b) explanation
   c) elucidation    d) appreciation

II) Answer the following questions in one word /phrases / sentence each.

1) How does Arnold define function of criticism?
2) What, according to Arnold, is the function of criticism?
3) How does Elliot define function of criticism?
4) What, according to Elliot, are the Chief tools of criticism? According to Elliot.
5) What does mean ‘disinterested’?

2.5 Summary

In this unit you have learnt the basic idea of literary criticism. The unit begins with the discussion on the need for literary criticism and then it explores the basic aspects like: what literary criticism is, its nature and its function. In the beginning an attempt is made to open the topic very lucidly so as to get the definite idea of literary criticism. Literary criticism is the only source through which we can understand the
exact nature of pleasure we derive from what is the best in literature. With this insight, we move to the nature of literary criticism. Various reputed dictionaries tried to define the nature of literary criticism as well as some critics like Edmund Gosse, Atkins, Addison, Arnold and Eliot made an attempt to put light on the nature of criticism by their scholarly arguments. But this whole debate leads to conclude that one cannot define the exact nature of literary criticism as it is subject to critic and his age. The same is true with function of criticism. The poet-critics like Mathew Arnold and T.S. Eliot have formulated a theory about the function of criticism but there is lack of unanimity in their exposition. Such diversity of view, clearly brings to notice the complex nature of criticism and its functions. However, the sincere attempts made in this domain contributed to promote the idea of literary criticism.

2.6 Glossary

- **controversy (n)**: opposing opinions about a matter
- **facilitate (v)**: make easy or easier
- **interpret (v)**: explain the meaning of
- **explicit (adj.)**: clear and detailed
- **implicit (adj.)**: suggested through not directly expressed.
- **phenomenon (n)**: a fact that is observed to exist or happen
- **Philistine (n)**: a person who is hostile to or not interested in culture and the arts.
- **ignoble (adj.)**: not good or honest; dishonorable
- **complacency (c)**: uncritical satisfaction with oneself
- **profess (v)**: announce, declare one’s faith in
- **elucidate (v)**: make clear, explain
- **crank (n)**: an eccentric person
- **fumble (v)**: express oneself with something clumsily,
- **voracious (adj.)**: eagerly consuming something
- **bestseller (n)**: a book that sells in a very large numbers
- **explore (v)**: inquire into or discuss in detail
- **stimulus (n)**: something that promotes activity, interest etc.
perceptiveness (n) : understanding
amalgam (n) : a mixture or blend
enrichment (n) : make wealthier
Fine arts (n) : art intended to appeal to sense of beauty, such as painting, sculpture, music etc.
intuitive (adj.) : having to with the ability to understand
expound (v) : present and explain
rational (adj.) : based on reason or logic
judgment (n) : the ability to make sound decisions or form conclusions.
estimate (n) : a judgment
appreciation (n) : a favourable written assessment of a person or their work.
aesthetic (adj.) : concerned with beauty or appreciation of beauty.
avowal (n) : confession openly
propagate (v) : promote an idea, knowledge etc. widely
predilection (n) : preference or special liking for something
impressionistic (adj.) : based on personal impression
unanimity (n) : fully in agreement

2.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.7.1 The Need for Literary Criticism

I) 1) b. judgment
    2) a. Judging or evaluation
    3) d. Edmund Gosse

II) 1) J. W. H. Atkins
    2) According to Addison, the critic’s attention would be on excellencies rather than imperfections
    3) According to T. S. Elliot, the end of criticism is “elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste”.
    4) There are six major approaches to literary criticism.
2.7.2 What is Literary Criticism?

I) 1) d. interpretation and judgment
    2) d. investigation
    3) d. appreciation

II) 1) Arnold defines criticism as ‘a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas’.
    2) Its function is not merely judgment in literature but much more noble, exalted and catholic.
    3) T.S. Elliot defines function of criticism as ‘criticism must always profess an end in view, which roughly speaking, appears to be the elucidation of the works of art and the correction of taste’.
    4) According to Elliot, the chief tools of criticism are comparison and analysis.
    5) ‘Disinterested’ means that the critic must be concerned with nothing else but his subject.

2.8 Exercise

Q.1 A) Answer the following questions in about 250 words each.
   1) What is Literary criticism? Explain.
   2) Write a note on the nature of literary criticism.
   3) Discuss various definitions and arguments of critics about the nature of literary criticism.

B) Answer the following questions in about 250 words each.
   1) Write a note on the function of literary criticism.
   2) Discuss various functions of criticism with special reference to the views of Mathew Arnold and T.S. Elliot.
   3) Attempt a comparative assessment of Arnold and Elliot on the function of criticism.
   4) Discuss the views of Mathew Arnold regarding the function of criticism.
   5) What, according to Elliot, are the tools and functions of criticism?
2.9 References For Further Reading

2. Abraham, Jacob 1990;: *A Handbook of Literary Terms*. Kalyani Publication
3.0 Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able to

- understand different ways of studying literature.
- know the use of approaches like Biographical, Psychological and Sociological in studying literature.
- know the relationship of literature with biography of the author, psychology and society.
- to interpret / understand literature properly.
3.1 Introduction

In the previous unit we have studied the nature and function of literary criticism. In the present unit we are going to study different ways / approaches for interpreting and studying literature.

Literature emerges from society. Authors who write it live in society, observe the people and their manners, ways of living, fashions, ideas, relations, emotions minutely. In other words literature and human life are inseparable. Brain of man is a bundle of ideas, thoughts, imagination etc. Sometimes, authors write with the help of their imagination, sometimes by observing the people, nature, situations, and sometimes by their own experiences in life. According to W. H. Hudson, great impulses behind literature may be as following:

1) "Our desire for self - expression,
2) Our interest in people and their doings,
3) Our interest in the world of reality in which we live, and in the world of imagination which we conjure into existence ; and
4) Our love of form as form".

These impulses clearly point out intentions of authors behind literature. Literature gives us aesthetic satisfaction. Human life is the chief source of literature. But the ways in which it is written differ from author to author, in expression, in style of writing, in experiences, in imagination and in many other ways.

In order to understand / study literature properly critics have given us various approaches by which interpretation of literature becomes easier. One can study literature by comparing one type of literature with the other, by knowing the chronology of an author etc. Critics have approved some important ways / approaches for studying literature. Though there are many, following are some important approaches.

1) Biographical
2) Psychological
3) Sociological

Sometimes author's biography, sometimes his own or his characters' psychology and sometimes understanding the social environment and situations, one can understand and interprete literature properly.
3.2 Text

3.2.1 Literature and Biography

The most obvious cause of a work of art is its creator, the author and hence an explanation in terms of the personality and the life of the writer has been one of the oldest and best-established methods of literary study.

Biography can be judged in relation to the light it throws on the actual production of poetry; but we can, of course, defend it and justify it as a study of man of genius, of his moral, intellectual, and emotional development, which has its own intrinsic interest; and, finally, we can think of biography as affording materials for a systematic study of the psychology of the poet and of the poetic process.

These three points of view should be carefully distinguished. For our conception of 'literary scholarship' only the first thesis, that biography explains and illumines the actual product of poetry, is directly relevant. The second point of view, which advocates the intrinsic interest of biography, shifts the centre of attention to human personality. The third considers biography as material for a science or future science, the psychology of artistic creation.

Biography is an ancient literary genre. First of all - chronologically and logically - it is a part of historiography. Biography makes no methodological distinction between a statesman, a general, an architect, a lawyer, and a man who plays no public role. And Coleridge’s view that any life, however insignificant, would, if truthfully told, be of interest is sound enough. In the view of a biographer, the poet is simply another man whose moral and intellectual development, external career and emotional life, can be reconstructed and can be evaluated by reference to standards, usually drawn from some ethical system or code of manners. His writings may appear as mere facts of publications, as events like those in the life of any active man. So viewed, the problems of a biographer are simply those of historian. He has to interpret his documents, letters, accounts by eye-witnesses, reminiscences, autobiographical statements, and to decide questions of genuineness, trust-worthiness of witnesses, and the like. In the actual writing of biography he encounters problems of chronological presentation, of selection of discretion or frankness. The rather extensive work which has been done on biography as a genre deals with such questions, questions in no way specifically literary.

In our context two questions of literary biography are crucial. How far is the biographer justified in using the evidence of the works themselves for his purposes? How far are the results of literary biography relevant and important to both questions is usually given. To the first question it is assumed by practically all biographers who are
specifically attracted to poets, for poets appear to offer abundant evidence usable in the writing of a biography, evidence which will be absent, or almost absent, in the case of many far more influential historical personages. But is this optimism justified?

We must distinguish two ages of man, two possible solutions. For most early literature we have no private documents on which a biographer can draw. We have only a series of public documents, birth registers, marriage certificates, lawsuits, and the like, and then the evidence of the works. We can, for example, trace Shakespeare's movements very roughly, and we know something of his finances; but we have absolutely nothing in the form of letters, diaries, reminiscences, except a few anecdotes of doubtful authenticity. The vast effort which has been expended upon the study of Shakespeare's life has yielded only few results of literary profit. They are chiefly facts of chronology and illustrations of the social status and the associations of Shakespeare. Hence those who have tried to construct an actual biography of Shakespeare, of his ethical and emotional development, have either arrived, if they went about it in a scientific spirit, as Caroline Spurgeon attempted in her study of Shakespeare's imagery, at a mere list of trivialities, or if they used the plays and sonnets recklessly, have constructed biographical romances like those of George Brandes or Frank Harris. The whole assumption behind these attempts (which began, probably, with a few hints in Hazlitt and Schlegel, elaborated first, rather cautiously, by Dowden) is quite mistaken. One cannot, from fictional statements, especially those made in plays, draw any valid inferences as to the biography of a writer. One may gravely doubt even the usual view that Shakespeare passed through a period of depression, in which he wrote his tragedies and his bitter comedies, to achieve some serenity of resolution in The Tempest. It is not self-evident that a writer needs to be in a tragic mood to write tragedies or that he writes comedies when he feels pleased with life. There is simply no proof for the sorrows of Shakespeare. He cannot be made responsible for the views of Timon or Macbeth on life, just as he cannot be considered to hold the views of Doll Tearsheet or Iago. There is not reason to believe that Prospero speaks like Shakespeare; authors cannot be assigned the ideas, feelings, views, virtues and vices of their heroes. And this is true not only of dramatic characters or characters in a novel but also of the I of the lyrical poem. The relation between the private life and work is not a simple relation of cause and effect.

Proponents of the biographical method will, however, object to these contentions. Conditions, they will say, have changed since the time of Shakespeare. Biographical evidence has, for many poets, become abundant, because the poets have become self-conscious, have thought of themselves as living in the eyes of posterity (like Milton, Pope, Goethe, Wordsworth or Byron), and have left many autobiographical
statements as well as attracted much contemporary attention. The biographical approach now seems easy, for we can check life and work against each other. Indeed, the approach is even invited and demanded by the poet, especially the Romantic poet, who writes about himself and his innermost feelings or even, like Byron, carries the 'pageant of his bleeding heart' around Europe. These poets spoke of themselves not only in private letters, diaries, and autobiographies, but also in their most formal pronouncements. Wordsworth's Prelude is an autobiography declaredly. It seems difficult not to take these pronouncements, sometimes not different in content or even in tone from their private correspondence, at their face value without interpreting poetry in the terms of the poet, who saw it himself, in Goethe's well-known phrase, as 'fragments of a great confession'.

We should certainly distinguish two types of poets, the objective and the subjective; those who, like Keats and T. S. Eliot, stress the poet's 'negative capability', his openness to the world, the obliteration of his concrete personality, and the opposite to the world, the obliteration of his concrete personality, and the opposite type of the poet, who aims at displaying his personality, wants to draw a self-portrait, to confess, to express himself. For long stretches of history we know only the first type: the works in which the element of personal expression is very weak, even though the aesthetic value may be great. The Italian novelle, chivalric romances, the sonnets of the Renaissance, Elizabethan drama, naturalistic novels, most folk poetry, may serve as literary examples. But, even with the subjective poet, the distinction between a personal statement of an autobiographical nature and the use of the very same motif in a work of art should not and cannot be withdrawn. A work of art forms a unity on a quite different plane, with a quite different relation to reality, than a book of memoirs, a diary, or a letter. Only by a perversion the most casual documents of an author's life become the central study while the actual poems were interpreted in the light of the documents and arranged according to a scale entirely separate from or even contradictory to that provided by any critical judgement of the poems. Thus Brandes slights Macbeth as uninteresting because it is least related to what he conceives to be Shakespeare's personality; thus Kingsmill complains of Arnold's Sohrab and Rustum.

Even when a work of art contains elements which can be surely identified as biographical, these elements will be so rearranged and transformed in a work that they lose all their specifically personal meaning and become simply concrete human material, integral elements of a work. Ramon Fernandez has argued this very convincingly in connexion with Stendhal. G. W. Meyer has shown how much the professedly autobiographical Prelude differs from Wordsworth's actual life during the process the poem purports to describe.
The whole view that art is self-expression pure and simple, the transcript of personal feelings and experiences, is demonstrably false. Even when there is a close relationship between the work of art and the life of an author, this must never be construed as meaning that the work of art is mere copy of life. The biographical approach forgets that a work of art is not simply the embodiment of experience but always the latest work in a series of such works; it is drama, a novel, a poem determined, so far as it is determined at all, by literary tradition and convention. The biographical approach actually obscures a proper comprehension of the literary process, since it breaks up the order of literary tradition to substitute the life-cycle of an individual. The biographical approach ignores quite simple psychological facts. A work of art may rather embody the 'dream' of an author than his actual life, or it may be the 'mask', the 'anti-self' behind which his real person is hiding, or it may be a picture of the life from which the author wants to escape. Furthermore, we must not forget that the artist may 'experience' life differently in terms of his art: actual experiences are seen with a view to their use in literature and come to him already partially shaped by artistic traditions and preconceptions.

We must conclude that the biographical interpretation and use of every work of art needs careful scrutiny and examination. In each case, since the work of art is not a document for biography. We must seriously question Gladys I. Wade's *Life of Traberne*, which takes every statement of his poems as literal biographical truth, or the many books about the lives of the Brontes which simply lift whole passages from *Jane Eyre* or *Villette*. There is *The Life and Eager Death of Emily Bronte* by Virginia Moore, who thinks that Emily must have experienced the passions of Heathcliff; and there are others who have argued that a woman could not have written *Wuthering Heights* and that the brother, Patrick, must have been the real author. This is the type of argument which has led people to argue that Shakespeare must have visited Italy, must have been a lawyer, a soldier, a teacher, a farmer. Ellen Terry gave the crushing reply to all this when she argued that, by the same criteria, Shakespeare must have been a woman.

But, it will be said, such instances of pretentious folly do not dispose of the problem of personality in Literature. We read Dante or Goethe or Tolstoy and know that there is a person behind the work. There is an indubitable physiognomical similarity between the writings of one author. The question might be asked, however, whether it would not be better to distinguish sharply between the empirical person and the work, which can be called, 'personal' only in a metaphorical sense. There is a quality which we may call 'Miltonic' or 'Keatsian' in the work of their authors. But this quality can be determined on the basis of the works themselves while it may not be ascertainable upon purely biographical evidence. We know what is 'Virgilian' or 'Shakespearean' without having
any really definite biographical knowledge of the two great poets.

Still, there are connecting links, parallelisms, oblique resemblances, topsy-turvy mirrors. The poet's work may be a mask, a dramatized conventionalization, but it is frequently a conventionalization of his own experiences, his own life. If used with a sense of these distinctions, there is use in biographical study. First, no doubt, it has, exgetical value: it may explain a great many allusions or even words in an author's work. The biographical framework will also help us in studying the most obvious of all strictly developmental problems in the history of literature - the growth, maturing, and possible decline of an author's art. Biography also accumulates the materials for other questions of literary history such as the reading of the poet, his personal associations with literary men, his travels, the landscape and cities he saw and lived in: all of them questions which may throw light on literary history, i.e. the tradition in which the poet was placed, the influences by which he was shaped, the materials on which he drew.

Whatever the importance of biography in these respects, however, it seems dangerous to ascribe to it any specifically critical importance. No biographical evidence can change or influence critical evaluation. The frequently adduced criterion of 'sincerity' is thoroughly false if it judges literature. In terms of biographical truthfulness, correspondence to the author's experience or feelings as they are attested by outside evidence. There is no relation between 'sincerity' and value as art. The volumes of agonizingly felt love poetry perpetrated by adolescents and the dreary (however fervently felt) religious verse which fills libraries, are sufficient proof of this. Byron's 'Fare Thee Well ....' is neither a worse nor a better poem because it dramatizes the poet's actual relations with his wife, nor 'is it a pity', as Paul Elmer More thinks, that the manuscript shows no traces of the tears which, according to Thomas Moore's Memoranda, fell on it. The poem exists; the tears shed or unshed, the personal emotions, are gone and cannot be reconstructed, not need they be.

3.2.2 Literature and Psychology

By 'psychology of literature', we may mean the psychological study of the writer, as type and as individual, or the study of the creative process, or the study of the psychological types and laws present within works of literature, or, finally, the effects of literature upon its readers (audience psychology). The fourth we shall consider under 'Literature and Society'; the other shall here be discussed in turn. Probably only the third belongs, in the strictest sense, to literary study. The first two are sub-divisions of the psychology of art; through, at times, they may serve as engaging pedagogic approaches to the study of literature, we should disavow any attempt to evaluate literary works in terms of their origins (the genetic fallacy).
The nature of literary genius has always attracted speculation, and it was, as early as the Greeks, conceived of as related to 'madness' (to be glossed as the range from neuroticism to psychosis). The poet is the 'possessed'; he is unlike other men, at once less and more; and the unconscious out of which he speaks is felt to be at once sub- and superrational.

Another early and persistent conception is that of the poet's 'gift' as compensatory; the Muse took away the sight of Demodocos's eyes but 'gave him the lovely gift of song' (in the Odyssey), as the blinded Tiresias is given prophetic vision. Handicap and endowment are not always, of course, so directly correlative; and the malady or deformity may be psychological or social instead of physical. Pope was a hunchback and a dwarf; Byron has a club foot; Proust was an asthmatic neurotic of partly Jewish descent; Keats was shorter than other men; Thomas Wolfe, much taller. The difficulty with the theory is its very ease. After the event, any success can be attributed to compensatory motivation, for everyone has liabilities which may serve him as spurs. Dubious, certainly, is the widespread view the neuroticism - and 'compensation' - differentiate artists from scientists and other 'contemplative': the obvious distinction is that writers often document their own cases, turning their maladies into their thematic material.

The basic questions are these: If the writer is a neurotic, does his neurosis provide the themes of his work or only its motivation? If the latter, then the writer is not to be differentiated from other contemplatives. The other question is: If the writer is neurotic in his themes (as Kafka certainly is), how is it that his work is intelligible to his readers? The writer must be doing far more than putting down a case history. He must either be dealing with an archetypal pattern (as does Dostoyevsky, in The Brothers Karamazov) or with a 'neurotic personality' pattern widespread in our time.

Freud's view of the writer is not quite steady. Like many of his European colleagues, notably Jung and Rank, he was a man of high general culture, with the educated Austrian's respect for the classics and classical German literature. Then, too, he discovered in literature many insights anticipating and corroborating his own - in Dostoyevsky's The Brother Karamazov, in Hamlet, in Diderot's Neveu de Rameau, in Goethe. But he also thought of the author as an obdurate neurotic who, by his creative work, kept himself from a crack-up also from any real cure.

The artist (says Freud) is originally a man who turns from reality because he cannot come to terms with the demand for the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction as it is first made, and who then in phantasy - life allows full play to his erotic and ambitious wishes. But he finds a way return from this world of phantasy back to reality;
with his special gifts, he moulds his phantasies into a new kind of reality, and men concede them a justification as valuable reflections of actual life. Thus by a certain path he actually becomes the hero, kings, creator, favourite he desired to be, without the circuitous path of creating real alterations in the outer world.

The poet, that is, is a day-dreamer who is socially validated. Instead of altering his character, he perpetuates and publishes his fantasies.

Such an account presumably disposes of the philosopher and the 'pure scientist' along with the artist and is, therefore, a kind of positivist 'reduction' of contemplative activity to an observing and naming instead of acting. It scarcely does justice to the Indirect or oblique effect of contemplative work, to the 'alterations in the outer world' effected by the readers of novelists and philosophers. It also fails to recognize that creation is itself a mode of work in the outer world; that while the day-dreamer is content to dream of writing his dreams, one who is actually writing is engaged in an act of externalization and of adjustment to society.

Most writers have drawn back from subscription in orthodox Freudianism or from completing - what some have begun - their psychoanalytic treatment. Most of them have not wanted to be 'curved' or 'adjusted', either thinking they would cease to write if they were adjusted, or that the adjustment proposed was to a normality or a social environment which they rejected as philistine or bourgeois. This Auden has asserted that artists should be as neurotic as they can endure; and many have agreed with such revisionist Freudsians as Horney, Fromm, and Kardiner, that Freud's conceptions of neurosis and normality, drawn from turn-of-the-century, Vienna, need to be corrected by Marx and the anthropologists.

The theory of art as neurosis raises the question of imagination in relation to belief. Is the novelist analogous not only to the romantic child who 'tells stories' - i.e. reconstructs his experience till it conforms to his pleasure and credit - but also to the man who suffers from hallucinations, confounding the world of reality with the fantasy world of his hopes and fears? Some novelists (e.g. Dickens) have spoken of vividly seeing and hearing their characters, and again, of the characters as taking over the control of the story, shaping it to an end different from the novelist's preliminary design. None of the instances cited by psychologists seem to bear out the charge of hallucination; some novelists may, however, have the capacity, common among children, but rare thereafter, of eidetic imagery (neither after-images nor memory-images yet perceptual, sensory, in character). In the judgement of Erich Jaensch, this capacity is symptomatic of the artist's special integration of perceptual and conceptual. He retains and has developed, an archaic trait of the race: he feels and even sees his thoughts.
Another trait sometimes assigned to the literary man - more specifically, the poet - is synaesthesia or the linking together of sensory perceptions out of two or more senses, most commonly hearing and sight (*audition coloree* : e. g. the trumpet as scarlet). As a physiological trait, it is apparently, like red - green colour blindness, a survival from an earlier comparatively undifferentiated sensorium. Much more frequently, however, synaesthesia is a literary technique, a form of metaphorical translation, the stylized expression of a metaphysical - aesthetic attitude *towards* life. Historically, this attitude and style are characteristic of the Baroque and the Romantic periods and correspondingly distasteful to rationalist periods in search of the 'clear and distinct' rather than 'correspondences', analogies and unifications.

Since his earliest critical writing, T. S. Eliot has urged an inclusive view of the poet as recapitulating - or, better, preserving intact - his strata of the race - history, of keeping his communication open with his own childhood and that of the race while reaching forward into the future. 'The artist', he wrote in 1918, 'is more primitive, as well as more civilized, than his contemporaries...' In 1932, he recurs to this conception, speaking particularly of the 'auditory imagination' but also of the poet's visual imagery, and especially his recurrent images, which 'may have symbolic value, but of what we cannot tell, for they have come to represent the depths of feeling into which we cannot peer'. Eliot cites with approval the work of Cailliet and Bede on the relation of the Symbolist Movement to the primitive psyche, summarizing ; 'the pre -logical mentality persists in civilized man, but becomes available only to or through the poet'.

In these passages it is not difficult to discover the influence of Carl Jung and a restatement of the Jungian thesis that beneath the individual unconscious' - the blocked - off residue of our past, particularly our childhood and infancy - lies the 'collective unconscious' - the blocked off memory of our racial past, even of our pre - humanity.

Jung has an elaborate psychological typology, according to which 'extravert' and 'introvert' subdivide the four types based upon the dominance respectively of thinking, feeling, intuition, sensation. He does not, as one might have supposed, assign all writers to the intuitive introverted category, or, more generally, to the category of the introvert. As a further guard against simplification, he remarks that some writers reveal their type in creative work, while others reveal their anti - type their complement. *Homo scriptor*, it should be conceded, is not a single type. If we devise a romantic blend of Coleridge, Shelley, Baudelaire and Poe, we must presently remember Racine, Milton and Goethe or Jane Austen and Anthony Trollope. We may begin by differentiating lyric poets, and Romantic poets, from dramatic and epic poets and their partial equivalents, the novelists. One of the German typologists, Kretschmer separates the
poets (who are leptosomatic and incline to schizophrenia) from the novelists (who are pyknic of physical structure and manic depressive or 'cycloid' of temperament). There is certainly a typological pair of the possessed*, i.e. the automatic or obsessive or prophetic poet, and the 'maker' the writer who is primarily a trained, skilful, responsible craftsman. This distinction seems partly historical: the 'possessed' is the primitive poet, the Shaman; then the Romantic the Expressionist, the Surrealist, we say. The professional poets, trained in the bardic schools of Ireland and Iceland, the poets of the Renaissance and neoclassicism, are 'maker's. But of course these types must be understood as not mutually exclusive but polar; and in the instance of great writers - including Milton, Poe, James, and Eliot as well as Shakespeare and Dostoyevsky - we have to think of the writer as both 'maker' and 'possessed', as combining an obsessively held vision of life with a conscious, precise care for the presentation of that vision."

Perhaps the most influential of modern polarities is Nietzsche's in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), that between Apollo and Dionysus, the two art-deities of the Greeks, and the two kinds of processes of art which they represent: the arts of sculpture and of music; the psychological states of the dream and of ecstatic inebriation. These correspond approximately to the classical 'maker' and the romantic 'possessed' (or poeta vates).

Though he does not avow it, the French psychologist Ribot must owe to Nietzsche the basis for his own division of literary artists between the two chief types of imagination. The former of these, the 'plastic', characterizes the sharp visualizer who is primarily incited by observation of the outside world, by perception, while the 'dif fluent' (the auditory and symbolic) is that of the symbolist poet or the writer of Romantic tales (Tieck, Hoffmann, Poe), who starts from his own emotions and feelings, projecting them through rhythms and images unified by the compulsion of his *Stimmung*. It is doubtless from Ribot that Eliot starts in his contrast of Dante's 'visual imagination' and Milton's 'auditory'.

One more specimen may be offered, that of L. Rusu, a contemporary Rumanian scholar, who distinguishes three basic types of artist: the 'type sympathique' (conceived of as gay, spontaneous, bird-like in its creativity), the 'type demoniaque anarchique', and the 'type demoniaque equilibre'. The examples are not always fortunate; but there is a general suggestiveness to the thesis and antithesis of 'sympathetic and 'anarchic' with a synthesizing greatest type in which the struggle with the daemon has ended in triumph, an equilibrium of tensions. Rusu cites Goethe as the example of this greatness; but we shall have to assign it all out greatest names - Dante, Shakespeare, Balzac, Dickens, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevsky.
The 'creative process' should cover the entire sequence from the subconscious origins of a literary work to those last revisions which, with some writers, are the most genuinely creative part of the whole.

There is a distinction to be made between the mental structure of a poet and the composition of a poem, between impression and expression. Croce has not won the assent of writers and critics to his reduction of both to aesthetic intuition; indeed, something like the contrary reduction has plausibly been argued by C. S. Lewis. But any attempt to dualize the pair as \textit{Ephiebnis} and \textit{Dichtung}, after the fashion of Dilthey, also fails to satisfy. The painter sees as a painter; the painter is the clarification and completion of his seeing. The poet is a maker of poems; but the matter of his poems is the whole of his percipient life. With the artist, in any medium, every impression is shaped by his art; he accumulates no inchoate experience.

‘Inspiration’, the traditional name for the unconscious factor in creation, is classically associated with the Muses, the daughters of memory, and in Christian thought with the Holy Spirit. By definition, the inspired state of a \textit{shaman}, prophet, or poet, differs from his ordinary state. In primitive societies the \textit{shaman} may voluntarily be able to put himself into a trance, or he may involuntarily be ‘possessed’ by some ancestral or totemic spirit-control. In modern times, inspiration is felt to have the essential marks of suddenness (like conversion) and impersonality; the work seems written through one.

May not inspiration be induced? Creative habits there assuredly are, as well as stimulants and rituals. Alcohol, opium, and other drugs dull the conscious mind, the over-critical ‘censor’, and release the activity of the subconscious. Coleridge and De Quincey made a more grandiose claim – that through opium, a whole new world of experience was opened up for literary treatment; but in the light of modern clinical reports it appears that the unusual elements in the work of such poets derive from their neurotic psyches and not from the specific effect of the drug. Elisabeth Schneider has shown that De Quincey’s ‘Literary opium dreams’, so influential on later writing, actually differ little, save in elaborateness, from an entry made in his diary in 1803 before his use of opium began.

As the mantic poets of primitive communities are taught methods of putting themselves into states conducive to ‘possession’ and as, by spiritual disciplines of the East, the religious are advised to use set places and times for prayer, and special ‘ejaculations’ or \textit{mantras}, so writers of the modern world learn, or think they learn, rituals for inducing the creative state. Schiller kept rotten apples in his work-desk; Balzac wrote dressed in the robes of a monk. Many writers think ‘horizontally’, and even write in bed - writers as different as Proust and Mark Twain. Some require silence.
and solitude; but others prefer to write in the midst of the family or the company at a cafe. There are instances, which attract attention as sensational, of authors who work through the night and sleep during the day. Probably this devotion to the night (time of contemplation, the dream, - the subconscious) is the chief Romantic tradition; but there is, we must remember, a rival “Romantic tradition, the Wordsworthian, which exalts the early morning (the freshness of childhood). Some authors assert that they can write only at certain seasons, as did Milton, who held that his poetic vein never flowed happily but from the autumnal equinox to the vernal. Dr Johnson, who found all such theories distasteful, believed that a man might write at any time if he would set himself doggedly to it: he himself wrote confessedly under economic compulsion. But one can suppose that these seemingly capricious rituals have in common that, by association and habit, they facilitate systematic production.

Does the mode of transcription have any demonstrable effect on the literary style? Does it matter whether one writes a first draft with pen and ink or composes directly on the typewriter? Hemingway thinks that the typewriter ‘solidifies one’s sentences before they are ready to print’, hence makes revision as an integral part of writing difficult; others suppose the instrument has made for overfluent or journalistic style. No empirical investigation has been made. As for dictation, it has been used by authors of very various quality and spirit. Milton dictated to an amanuensis verses of *Paradise Lost* already composed in his head. More interesting, however, are the instances of Scott, Goethe in his old age, and Henry James in his, in which, though the structure’ has been thought out in advance, the verbal texture is extemporized. In the case of James, at least, it seems possible to make some causal connexion between dictation and the ‘later manner’, which, in its own complexly eloquent way, is oral and even conversational.

Of the creative process itself, not much has been said at the degree of generalization profitable to literary theory. We have the individual case histories of particular authors: but these of course will be authors from comparatively recent times only, and-authors given to thinking and writing analytically about their art (authors like Goethe and Schiller, Flaubert, James, Eliot, and Valery); and then we have the long-distance generalizations made by psychologists concerning such topics as originality, invention, imagination, finding the common denominator between scientific, philosophical, and aesthetic creation.

Any modern treatment of the creative process will chiefly concern the relative parts played by the unconscious and the conscious mind. It would be easy to contrast literary periods: to distinguish romantic and expressionistic periods which exalt the unconscious from classical and realistic periods which stress intelligence, revision, communication. But such a contrast may*readily be exaggerated: the critical theories
of classicism and romanticism differ more violently than the creative practice of their best writers.

The authors most given to discussing their art wish naturally to discuss their conscious and technical procedures, for which they may claim credit, rather than their ‘given’, the unelected experience which is their matter or their mirror or their prism. There are obvious reasons why self – conscious artists speak as though their art were impersonal, as though they chose their themes either by editorial compulsion or as a gratuitous aesthetic problem. The most famous document on the topic, Poe’s ‘Philosophy of Composition’, professes to explain by what methodological strategies, proceeding from what initial aesthetic axioms, his ‘Raven’ was constructed. To defend his vanity against the charge that his horror tales were literary imitations, Poe wrote that their horrors were not of Germany but of the soul; yet that they were of his own soul he could not admit: he professed to be a literary engineer, skilled at manipulating the souls of others. In Poet, the division is terrifyingly complete between the unconscious, which provides the obsessive themes of delirium, torture, and death, and the conscious, which literarily develops them.

Were we to set up tests for the discovery of literary talent, they would doubtless be of two sorts: one, that for poets in the modern sense, would concern itself with words and their combination, with image and metaphor, with linkages semantic and phonetic (i.e. rhyme, assonance, alliteration); the latter, for narrative writers (novelists and dramatists), would concern itself with characterization and plot-structure.

The literary man is a specialist in association (‘wit’), dissociation (‘judgement’), recombination (making a new whole out of elements separately experienced). He uses words as his medium. As a child, he may collect words as other children collect dolls, stamps, or pets. For the poet, the word is not primarily a ‘sign’, a transparent counter, but a ‘symbol’, valuable for itself as well as in its capacity of representative; it may even be an ‘object’ or ‘thing’, dear for its sound or look. Some novelists may use words as signs (Scott, Cooper, Dreiser), in which case they may be read to advantage translated into another language, or remembered as mythic structure; poets normally use words ‘symbolically’.

The traditional phrase, the ‘association of ideas’, is an inaccurate name. Beyond the associative linkage of word with word (marked in some poets) there is the association of the objects to which our mental ‘ideas’ refer. The chief categories of such association are contiguity in time and place, and similarity or dissimilarity. The novelist operates primarily, perhaps, in terms of the former; the poet, in terms of the latter (which we may equate with metaphor); but -especially in recent literature - the contrast must not be made too strong.
In his *Road to Xanadu*, Lowes reconstructs with the acumen of a brilliant detective the process of association by which the vastly and curiously read Coleridge moved from one quotation or allusion to another. As for theory, however, he is soon content; a few purely figurative terms serve him to describe the creative process. He speaks of the ‘hooked atoms’ or (in the phrase of Henry James) of images and ideas as dropping for a time ‘into the deep well of unconscious cerebration’, to emerge having undergone (in the favourite quotation of scholars) a ‘sea-change’. When Coleridge’s recondite reading reappears, we sometimes get ‘marquetry’ or ‘mosaic’, sometimes a ‘miracle’. Lowes formally acknowledges that at the zenith of its power the creative energy is both conscious and unconscious... controlling consciously the throng of images which in the reservoir, (the ‘well’ of the unconscious) have undergone unconscious metamorphosis; but he scarcely attends to or attempts to define the really purposive and constructive in the creative process.

In the narrative writer, we think of his creation of characters and his ‘invention’ of stories. Since the Romantic period, both have undoubtedly been conceived of too simply as either ‘original’ or copied from real people (a view read back also into the literature of the past) or plagiarism. Yet even in the most ‘original' novelists like Dickens, character types and narrative techniques are chiefly traditional, drawn from the professional, the institutional literary stock.

The creation of characters may be supposed to blend, in varying degrees, inherited literary types, persons observed, and the self. The realist, we might say, chiefly observes behaviour or ‘empathizes’, while the Romantic writer ‘projects’; yet it is to be doubted that mere observation can suffice for lifelike characterization. Faust, Mephistopheles, Werther, and Wilhelm Meister are all, says one psychologist ‘projection into fiction of various aspects of Goethe’s own nature’. The novelist’s potential selves, including those selves which are viewed as evil, are all potential *personae*. ‘One man’s mood is another man’s character.’ Dostoyevsky’s four brothers Karamazov are all aspects of Dostoyevsky. Nor should we suppose that a novelist is necessarily limited to observation in his heroines. *Madame Bovary, c’est moi*, says Flaubert. Only selves recognized from within as potential can become ‘living characters’, not ‘flat’ but ‘round’.

What kind of relation have these ‘living characters’ to the novelist’s actual self? The more numerous and separate his characters, the less definite his own ‘personality’, it would seem. Shakespeare disappears into his plays; neither in them, nor in anecdote, do we get any sense of a sharply defined and individuated character comparable to that of Ben Jonson. The character of the poet, Keats once wrote, is to have no self: it is everything and nothing.
It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. ... A Poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence, because he has no identity - he is continually informing and filling some other body.

All these theories we have discussed belong actually to the psychology of the writer. The processes of his creation are the legitimate object of the psychologists’ investigative curiosity. They can classify the poet according to physiological and psychological types; they can describe his mental ills; they may even explore his subconscious mind. The evidence of the psychologist may come from unliterary documents or it may be drawn from the works themselves. In the latter case, it needs to be checked with the documentary evidence, to be carefully interpreted.

Can psychology, in its turn, be used to interpret and evaluate the literary works themselves? Psychology obviously can illuminate the creative process. As we have seen, attention has been given to the varying methods of composition, to the habits of authors in revising and rewriting. There has been study of the genesis of works: the early stage, the drafts, the rejected readings'. Yet the critical relevance of much of this information, especially the many anecdotes about writers’ habits, is surely overrated. A study of revisions, corrections, and the like has more which is literarily profitable, since, well used, it may help us perceive critically relevant fissures, inconsistencies, turnings, distortions in a work of art. Analysing how Proust composed his cyclic novel, Feuillerat illuminates the latter volumes, enabling us to distinguish several layers in their text. A study of variants seems to permit glimpses into an author’s workshop.

Yet if we examine drafts, rejections, exclusions, and cuts more soberly, we conclude them not, finally, necessary to an understanding of the finished work or to a judgement upon it. Their interest is that of any alternative, i.e. they may set into relief the qualities of the final text. But the same end may very well be achieved by devising for ourselves alternatives, whether or “not they have actually passed through the author’s mind. Keats’s verses in the ‘Ode to a Nightingale’:

The same [voice] that oft-times hath
Charm’d magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn,

may gain something from our knowing that Keats considered ‘ruthless seas’ and even ‘keelless seas’. But the status of ‘ruthless’ or ‘keelless’, by chance preserved, does not essentially differ from ‘dangerous’, ‘empty’, ‘barren’, ‘shipless’, ‘cruel’, or any other adjective the critic might invoke. They do not belong to the work of art; nor do these genetic questions dispense with the analysis and evaluation of the actual work.
There remains the question of ‘psychology’ in the works themselves. Characters in plays and novels are judged by us to be ‘psychologically’ true. Situations are praised and plots accepted because of this same quality. Sometimes a psychological theory, held either consciously or dimly by an author, seems to fit a figure or a situation. Thus Lily Campbell has argued that Hamlet fits the type of ‘sanguine man’s suffering from melancholy adust’ known to the Elizabethans from their psychological theories. In like fashion Oscar Campbell has tried to show that Jaques, in As You Like It, is a case of ‘unnatural melancholy produced by adustion of phlegm’. Walter Shandy could be shown to suffer from the disease of linguistic associationism described in Locke. Stendhal’s hero Julien Sorel is described in terms of the psychology of Destutt de Tracy, and the different kinds of love relationship are obviously classified according to Stendhal’s own book De l’amour. Rodion Raskolnikov’s motives and feelings are analysed in a way which suggests some knowledge of clinical psychology. Proust certainly has a whole psychological theory of memory, important even for the organization of his work. Freudian psychoanalysis is used quite consciously by novelists such as Conrad Aiken or Waldo Frank.

The question may be raised, of course, whether the author has really succeeded in incorporating psychology into his figures and their relationships. Mere statements of his knowledge or theories would not count. They would be ‘matter’ or ‘content’, like any other type of information to be found in literature, e.g. facts from navigation, astronomy, or history. In some cases, the reference to contemporary psychology may be doubted or minimized. The attempts to fit Hamlet or Jaques into some scheme of Elizabethan psychology seem mistaken, because Elizabethan psychology was contradictory, confusing, and confused, and Hamlet and Jaques are more than types. Though Raskolnikov and Sorel fit certain psychological theories, they do so only incompletely and intermittently. Sorel sometimes behaves in a most melodramatic manner. Raskolnikov’s initial crime is inadequately motivated. These books are not primarily psychological studies or expositions of theories but dramas or melodramas, where striking situations are more important than realistic psychological motivation. If one examines ‘stream of consciousness’ novels, one soon discovers that there is no ‘real’ reproduction of the actual mental processes of the subject, that the stream of consciousness is rather a device of dramatizing the mind, of making us aware concretely what Benjy, the idiot in Faulkner’s The Sound and the Fury, is like, or what Mrs Bloom is like. But there is little that seems scientific or even ‘realistic’ about the device.

Even if we assume that an author succeeds in making his figures behave with ‘psychological truth’, we may well raise the question whether such ‘truth’ is an artistic value. Much great continuously violates standards of psychology, either contemporary
with it or subsequent. It works with improbable situations, with fantastic motifs. Like the demand for social realism, psychological truth is a naturalistic standard' without universal validity. In some cases, to be sure, psychological insight seems to enhance artistic value. In such cases, it corroborates important artistic values, those of complexity and coherence. But such insight can be reached by other means than a theoretical knowledge of psychology. In the sense of a conscious and systematic theory of the mind and its workings psychology is unnecessary to art and not in itself of artistic value.

For some conscious artists, psychology may have tightened their sense of reality, sharpened their powers of observation or allowed them to fall into hitherto undiscovered patterns. But, in itself, psychology is only preparatory to the act of creation; and in the work itself, psychological truth is an artistic value only if it enhances coherence and complexity, if, in short, it is art.

3.2.3 Literature and Society

_Literature_ is a social institution, using its medium language, a social creation. ‘Such traditional’ literary devices as symbolism and metre are social in their very nature. They are conventions and norms which could have arisen only in society. But, furthermore, literature ‘represents’ ‘life’; and ‘life’ is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been objects of literary ‘imitation’. The poet himself is a member of society, possessed of a specific social status: he receives some degree of social recognition and reward; he addresses an audience, however hypothetical. Indeed, literature has usually arisen in close connexion with particular social institutions; and in primitive society we may even be unable to distinguish poetry from ritual, magic, work, or play. Literature has also a social function, or ‘use’, which cannot be purely individual. Thus a large majority of the questions raised by literary study are, at least ultimately or by implication, social questions: questions of tradition and convention, norms and genres, symbols and myths. With Tomars, one can formulate:

Esthetic institutions are not based upon social institutions: they are not even part of social institutions: they are social institutions of one type and intimately interconnected with those others.

Usually, however, the inquiry concerning ‘literature and society’ is put more narrowly and externally. Questions are asked about the relations of literature to a given social situation, to an economic, social, and political system. Attempts are made to describe and define the influence of society on literature and to prescribe and judge the position of literature in society. This sociological approach to literature is particularly cultivated by those who profess a specific social philosophy. Marxist critics not only study these
relations between literature and society, but also have their clearly defined conception of what these relations should be, both in our present society and in a future ‘classless’ society. They practice evaluative, ‘judicial’ criticism, based on non-literary political and ethical criteria. They tell us not only what were and are the social relations and implications of an author’s work but what they should have been or ought to be. They are not only students of literature and society but prophets of the future, monitors, propagandists; and they have difficulty in keeping these two functions separate.

The relation between literature and society is usually discussed by starting with the phrase, derived from De Bonald, that ‘literature is an expression of society’. But what does this axiom mean? If it assumes that literature, at any given time, mirrors the current social situation ‘correctly’, it is false; it is commonplace, trite, and vague if it means only that literature depicts some aspects of social reality. To say that literature mirrors or expresses life is even more ambiguous. A writer inevitably expresses his experience and total conception of life; but it would be manifestly untrue to say that he expresses the whole of life -or even the whole life of a given time – completely and exhaustively. It is a specific evaluative criterion to say that an author should express the life of his own time fully, that he should be ‘representative’ of his age and society. Besides, of course, the terms ‘fully’ and ‘representative’ require much interpretation: in most social criticism they seem to mean that an author should be aware of specific social situations, e.g. of the plight of the proletariat, or even that he should share a specific attitude and ideology of the critic.

In Hegelian criticism and in that of Taine, historical or social greatness is simply equated with artistic greatness. The artist conveys truth and, necessarily, also historical and social truths. Works of art furnish ‘documents because they are monuments’. A harmony between’ genius and age is postulated’ Representativeness’, ‘social truth’, is, by definition, both a result and cause of artistic value. Mediocre, average works of art, though they may seem to a modern sociologist better social documents, are to Taine unexpressive and hence unrepresentative’. Literature is really not a reflection of the social process, but the essence, the abridgement and summary of all history.

But it seems best to postpone the problem of evaluative criticism till we have disengaged the actual relations between literature and society. These descriptive (as distinct from normative) relations admit of rather ready classification.

First, there is the sociology of the writer and the profession and institutions of literature, the whole question of the economic basis of literary production, the social provenance and status of the writer, his social ideology, which may find expression in extra-literary pronouncements and activities. Then there is the problem of the social
content, the implications and social purpose of the works of literature themselves. Lastly, there are the problems of the audience and the actual social influence of literature. The question how far literature is actually determined by or dependent on its social setting, on social change and development, if one which, in one way or another, will enter into all the three divisions of our problem: the sociology of the writer, the social content of the works themselves, and the influence of literature on society. We shall have to decide what is meant by dependence or causation; and ultimately we shall arrive at the problem of cultural integration and specifically at how our own culture is integrated.

Since every writer is a member of society, he can be studied as a social being. Though his biography is the main source, such a study can easily widen into one of the whole milieu from which he came and in which he lived. It will be possible to accumulate information about the social provenance, the family background, the economic position of writers. We can show what was the exact-share of aristocrats, bourgeois, and proletarians in the history of literature: for example, we can demonstrate the predominant share which the children of the professional and commercial classes take in the production of American literature. Statistics can establish that, in modern Europe, literature recruited its practitioners largely from the middle classes, since aristocracy was preoccupied with the pursuit of glory or leisure while the lower classes had little opportunity for education. In England, this generalization holds good only with large reservations. The sons of peasants and workmen appear infrequently in older English literature: exceptions such as Burns and Carlyle are partly explicable by reference to the democratic Scottish school system. The role of the aristocracy in English literature was uncommonly great partly, because it was less cut off from the professional classes than in other countries, where there was no primogeniture. But, with a few exceptions, all modern Russian writers before Goncharov and Chekhov were aristocratic in origin. Even Dostoyevsky was technically a nobleman, though his father, a doctor in a Moscow Hospital for the Poor, acquired land and serfs only late in his life.

It is easy enough to collect such data but harder to interpret them. Does social provenance prescribe social ideology and allegiance? The cases of Shelley, Carlyle, and Tolstoy are obvious examples of such 'treason' to one's class. Outside of Russia, most Communist writers are not proletarian in origin. Soviet and other Marxist critics have carried out extensive investigations to ascertain precisely both the exact social provenance and the social allegiance of Russian writers. Thus P. N. Sakulin bases his treatment of recent Russian literature on careful distinctions between the respective literatures of the peasants, the small bourgeoisie, the democratic intelligentsia, the
déclassé intelligentsia, the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy, and the revolutionary proletariat. In the study older literature, Russian scholars attempt elaborate distinctions between the many groups and sub-groups of the Russian aristocracy to whom Pushkin and Gogol, Turgenev and Tolstoy may be shown to have belonged by virtue of the inherited wealth and early associations. But it is difficult to prove that Pushkin represented the interests of the impoverished landed nobility and Gogol those of the Ukrainian small landholder; such a conclusion is indeed disproved by the general ideology of their works and by the appeal the works have made beyond the confines of a group, a class, and a time.

The social origins of a writer play only a minor part in the questions raised by his social status, allegiance, and ideology; for writers, it is clear, have often put themselves at the service of another class. Most court poetry was written by men who, though born in lower estate, adopted the ideology and taste of their patrons.

The social allegiance, attitude, and ideology of a writer can be studied not only in his writings but also, frequently, in biographical extra-literary documents. The writer has been a citizen, has pronounced on questions of social and political importance has taken part in the issues of his time.

Much work has been done upon political and social views of individual writers; and in recent times more and more attention has been devoted to the economic implications of these views. Thus L. C. Knights, arguing that Ben Jonson’s economic attitude was profoundly medieval, shows how, like several of his fellow dramatists, he satirized the rising class of usurers, monopolists, speculators, and ‘undertakers’. Many works of literature - e.g. the ‘histories’ of Shakespeare and Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels - have been reinterpreted in close relation to the political context of the time. Pronouncements, decisions, and activities should never be confused with the actual social implications of a writer’s works. Balzac is a striking example of the possible division; for, though his professed sympathies were all with the old order, the aristocracy, and the Church, his instinct and imagination were far more engaged by the acquisitive type, the speculator, the new strong man of the bourgeoisie. There may be a considerable difference between theory and practice, between profession, of faith and creative ability.

These problems of social origins, allegiance, and ideology will, if systematized, lead to a sociology of the writer as a type, or as a type at a particular time and place. We can distinguish between writers according to their degree of integration into the social process. It is very close in popular literature, but may reach the extremes of dissociation, of ‘social distance’, in Bohemianism, with the poete maudit and the free
creative genius. On the whole, in modern times, and in the West, the literary man seems to have lessened his class ties. There has arisen an ‘intelligentsia’, a comparatively independent in-between class of professionals. It will be the task of literary sociology to trace its exact social status, its degree of dependence of the ruling class, the exact economic source of its support, the prestige of the writer in each society.

The general outlines of this history are already fairly clear. In popular oral literature, we can study the role of the singer or narrator who will depend closely on the favour of his public: the bard in ancient Greece, the scop in Teutonic antiquity, the professional folk-tale teller in the Orient and Russia. In the ancient Greek city-state, the tragedians and such composers of dithyrambs’ and hymns as Pindar had their special, semi-religious position, one slowly becoming more secularized, as we can see when we compare Euripides with Aeschylus. Among the courts of the Roman Empire, we must think of Virgil, Horace, and Ovid as dependent on the bounty and goodwill of Augustus and Maecenas.

In the Middle Ages, there are the monk in his cell, the troubadour and Minnesanger at the court or baron’s castle, the vagrant scholars on the roads. The writer is either a clerk or scholar, or he is a singer, an entertainer, a minstrel. But even kings like Wenceslaus II of Bohemia or James I of Scotland are now poets - amateurs, dilettantes. In the German Meistersang, artisans are organized in poetic guilds, burghers who practise poetry as a craft. With the Renaissance there arose a comparatively unattached group of writers, the Humanists, who wandered sometimes from country to country and offered their services to different patrons. Petrarch is the first modern poeta laureates, possessed of a grandiose conception of his mission, while Aretino is the prototype of the literary journalist, living on blackmail, feared rather than honoured-and respected.

In the large, the later history is the transition from support by noble or ignoble patrons to that afforded by publishers acting as predictive agents of the reading public. The system of aristocratic patronage was not, however, universal. The Church and, soon, the theatre supported special types of literature. In England, the patronage system apparently began to fail early in the eighteenth century. For a time, literature, deprived of its earlier benefactors and not yet fully supported by the reading public, was economically worse off. The early life of Dr Johnson in Grub Street and his defiance of Lord Chesterfield symbolize these changes. Yet a generation earlier, Pope was able to amass a fortune from his translation of Homer, lavishly subscribed by nobility and university men.
The great financial rewards, however, came only in the nineteenth century, when Scott and Byron wielded an enormous influence upon taste and public opinion. Voltaire and Goethe had vastly increased the prestige and independence of the writer on the Continent. The growth of the reading public, the founding of the great reviews like the *Edinburgh* and *the Quarterly*, made literature more and more the almost independent ‘institution’ which Prosper de Barante, writing in 1822, claimed it to have been in the eighteenth century.

As Ashley Thorndike urged, the outstanding characteristic of the printed matter of the nineteenth century is not its vulgarization, or its mediocrity, but rather its specialization. This printed matter is no longer addressed to a uniform or homogeneous public: it is divided up among many publics and consequently divided by many subjects, interests, and purposes.

In *Fiction and the Reading Public*, which might well be considered a homily on Thorndike’s text, Q. D. Leavis points out that the eighteenth-century peasant who learned to read had to read what the gentry and the university men read; that the nineteenth-century readers, on the other hand, are properly spoken of not as ‘the public’ but as ‘publics’. Our own time knows still further multiplications in publishing lists and magazine racks: there exist books for 9 to 10-year-olds, books for boys of high-school age, books for those who ‘live alone’; trade journals, house organs, Sunday-school weeklies, Westerns, true-story romance. Publishers, magazines, and writers all specialize.

Thus a study of the economic basis of literature and of the social status of the writer is inextricably bound up with a study of the audience he addresses and upon which he is dependent financially. Even the aristocratic patron is an audience and frequently an exacting audience, requiring not only personal adulation but also conformity to the conventions of his class. In even earlier society, in the group where folk-poetry flourishes, the dependence of the author on the audience is even greater: his work will not be transmitted unless it pleases immediately. The role of the audience in the theatre is, at least, as tangible. There have been even attempts to trace the changes in Shakespeare’s periods and style to the change in the audience between the open-air Globe, on the South Bank, with its mixed audience, and Blackfriars, a closed hall frequented by the higher classes. It becomes harder to trace the specific relation between author and public at a later time when the reading public rapidly expands, becomes dispersed and heterogeneous, and when the relationships of author and public grow more indirect and oblique. The number of intermediaries between writers and the public increases. We can study the role of such social institutions and associations as the salon, the café, the academy, and the university. We can trace the history of reviews and magazines as well as of publishing houses. The critic becomes
an important middle-man; a group of connoisseurs, bibliophiles, and collectors may support certain kinds of literature; and the associations of literary men themselves may help to create a special public of writers or would-be writers. In America especially, women who (according to Veblen) provide vicarious leisure and consumption of the arts for the tired businessman have become active determinants of literary taste.

Still, the old patterns have not been completely replaced. All modern governments support and foster literature in various degrees; and patronage means of course, control and supervision. To overrate the conscious influence of the totalitarian state during the last decades would be difficult. It has been both negative - in suppression, book-burning, censorship, silencing, and reprimanding, and positive - in the encouragement of ‘blood and soil’ regionalism or Soviet ‘socialist realism’. The fact that the state has been unsuccessful in creating a literature which, conforming to ideological specifications, is still great art, cannot refute the view that government regulation of literature is effective in offering the possibilities of creation to those who identify themselves voluntarily or reluctantly with the official prescriptions. Thus, in Soviet Russia, literature is at least in theory again becoming a communal art and the artist has again been integrated into society.

The graph of a book’s success, survival, and recrudescence, or a writer’s reputation and fame is mainly a social phenomenon. In part it belongs, of course, to literary ‘history’, since fame and reputation are measured by the actual influence of a writer on other writers, his general power of transforming and changing the literary tradition. In part, reputation is a matter of critical response: till now, it has been traced chiefly on the basis of more or less formal pronouncements assumed to be representative of a period’s ‘general reader’. Hence, while the whole question of the ‘whirligig of taste’ is ‘social’, it can be put on a more definitely sociological basis: detailed work can investigate the actual concordance between a work and the specific public which has made its success; evidence can be accumulated on editions, copies sold.

The stratification of every society is reflected in the stratification of its taste. While the norms of the upper classes usually descend to the lower, the movement is sometimes reversed: interest in folklore and primitive art is a case in point. There is no necessary concurrence between political and social advancement and aesthetic: leadership in literature had passed to the bourgeoisie long before political supremacy. Social stratification may be interfered with and even abrogated in questions of taste by differences of age and sex, by specific groups and associations. Fashion is also an important phenomenon in modern literature, for in a competitive fluid society, the norms of the upper classes, quickly imitated, are in constant need of replacement. Certainly the present rapid change of taste seem to reflect the rapid social changes of the last
decades and the general loose relation between artist and audience.

The modern writer's isolation from society illustrated by Grub Street, Bohemia, Greenwich Village, the American expatriate, invites sociological study. A Russian socialist, Georgi Plekhanov, believes that the doctrine of 'art for art's sake' develops when artists feel a hopeless contradiction between their aims and the aims of the society to which they belong. Artists must be very hostile to their society and they must see no hope of changing it.

In his *Sociology of Literary Taste*, Levin L. Schucking has sketched out some of these problems; elsewhere, he has studied in detail the role of the family and women as an audience in the eighteenth century.

Though much evidence has been accumulated, well-substantiated conclusions have rarely been drawn concerning the exact relations between the production of literature and its economic foundations, or even concerning the exact influence of the public on a writer. The relationship is obviously not one of mere dependence or of passive compliance with the prescriptions of patron or public. Writers may succeed in creating their own special public; indeed, as Coleridge knew, every new writer has to create the taste which will enjoy him.

The writer is not only influenced by society: he influences it. Art not merely reproduces life but also shapes it. People may model their lives upon the patterns of fictional heroes and heroines. They have made love, committed crimes and suicide according to the book, be it Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther* or Dumas's *Musketeers*. But can we precisely define the influence of a book on its readers? Will it ever be possible to describe the influence of satire? Did Addison really change the manners of his society or Dickens incite reforms of debtors' prisons, boys' schools, and poorhouses? Was Harriet Beecher Stowe really the 'little woman who made the great war'? Has *Gone with the Wind* changed Northern readers' attitudes towards Mrs Stowe's war? How have Hemingway and Faulkner affected their readers? How great was the influence of literature on the rise of modern nationalism? Certainly the historical novels of Walter Scott in Scotland, of Henryk Sienkiewicz in Poland, of Alois Jirasek in Czechoslovakia, have done something very definite to increase national pride and a common memory of historical events.

We can hypothesize - plausibly, no doubt - that the young are more directly and powerfully influenced by their reading than the old, that inexperienced readers take literature more naively as transcript rather than interpretation of life, that those whose books are few take them in more utter seriousness than do wide and professional readers. Can we advance beyond such conjecture? Can we make use of questionnaires and any other mode of sociological inquiry? No exact objectivity is obtainable, for the
attempt at case histories will depend upon the memories and the analytic powers of the interrogated, and their testimonies will need codification and evaluation by a fallible mind. But the question, ‘How does literature affect its audience?’ is an empirical one, to be answered,”? at all, by the appeal to experience; and, since we are thinking of literature in the broadest sense, and society in the broadest, the appeal must be made to the experience not of the connoisseur alone but to that of the human race. We have scarcely begun to study such questions.

Much the most common approach to the relation of literature and society is the study of works of literature as social documents, as assumed pictures of social reality. Nor can it be doubted that some kind of social picture can be abstracted from literature. Indeed, this has been one of the earliest uses to which literature has been put by systematic students. Thomas Warton, the first real historian of English poetry, argued that literature has the ‘peculiar merit of faithfully recording the features of the times,’ and of preserving the most picturesque and expressive representation of manners; and to him and many of his antiquarian successors, literature was primarily a treasury of costumes and customs, a source book for the history of civilization, especially of chivalry and its decline. As for modern readers, many of them derive their chief impressions of foreign societies from the reading of novels, from Sinclair Lewis and Galsworthy, from Balzac and Turgenev.

Used as a social document, literature can be made to yield the outlines of social history. Chaucer and Langland preserve two views of fourteenth-century society. The Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* was early seen to offer an almost complete survey of social types. Shakespeare, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Ben Jonson in several plays, and Thomas Deloney seem to tell us something about the Elizabethan middle class. Addison, Fielding, and Smollett depict the new *bourgeoisie* of the eighteenth century; Jane Austen, the country gentry and country parsons early in the nineteenth century; and Trollope, Thackeray, and Dickens, the Victorian world. At the turn of the century, Galsworthy shows us the English upper middle classes; Wells, the lower middle classes; Bennett, the provincial towns.

A similar series of social pictures could be assembled for American life from the novels of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Howells to those of Farrell and Steinbeck. The life of post-Restoration Paris and France seems preserved in the hundreds of characters moving through the pages of Balzac’s *Human Comedy*; and Proust traced in endless detail the social stratifications of the decaying French aristocracy. The Russia of the nineteenth century landowners appears in the novels of Turgenev and Tolstoy; we have glimpses of the merchant and the intellectual in Chekhov’s stories and plays and of collectivized farmers in Sholokhov.
Examples could be multiplied indefinitely. One can assemble and exposit the ‘world’ of each, the part each gives to love and marriage, to business, to the professions, its delineation of clergymen, whether stupid or clever, saintly or hypocritical; or one can specialize upon Jane Austen's naval men, Proust’s *arrivistes*, Howells’s married women. This kind of specialization will offer us monographs on the ‘Relation between Landlord and Tenant in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction’, ‘The Sailor in English Fiction and Drama’, or ‘Irish-Americans in Twentieth-Century Fiction’.

But such studies seem of little value so long as they take it for granted that literature is simply a mirror of life, a reproduction, and thus, obviously, a social document. Such studies make sense only if we know the artistic method of the novelist studied, and can say - not merely in general terms, but concretely - in what relation the picture stands to the social reality. Is it realistic by intention? Or is it, at certain points, satire, caricature, or romantic idealization? In an admirably clear-headed study of *Aristocracy and the Middle Classes in German*, Kohn-Bramstedt rightly cautions us:

Only a person who has a knowledge of the structure of a society from other sources than purely literary ones is able to find out if, and how far certain social types and their behavior are reproduced in the novel.... What is pure fancy, what realistic observation, and what only an expression of the desires of the author must be separated in each case in a subtle manner.

Using Max Weber’s conception of ideal ‘social types’, the same scholar studies such social phenomena as class hatred, the behavior of the parvenu, snobbery, and the attitude towards the Jews; and he argues that such phenomena are not so much objective facts and behavior patterns as they are complex attitudes, thus far better illustrated in fiction than elsewhere. Students of social attitudes and aspirations can use literary material, if they know how to interpret it properly. Indeed, for older periods, they will be forced to use literary or at least semi-literary material for want of evidence from the sociologists of the time: writers on politics, economics, and general public questions.

Heroes and heroines of fiction, villains and adventuresses, afford interesting indications of such social attitudes. Such studies constantly lead into the history of ethical and religious ideas. We know the medieval status of the traitor and the medieval attitude towards usury, which, lingering on into the Renaissance, gives us Shylock and, later, Moliere’s *U’Avars*. To which ‘deadly sin’ have later centuries chiefly assigned the villain; and is his villainy conceived of in terms of personal or social morality? Is he, for example, artist at rape or embezzler of widows’ bonds?

The classic case is that of Restoration English comedy. Was it simply a realm of cuckoldom, a fairyland of adulteries and mock marriages as Lamb believed? Or was it,
as Macaulay would have us believe, a faithful picture of decadent, frivolous, and brutal aristocracy? Or should we not rather, rejecting both alternatives, see what particular social group created this art for what audience? And should we not see whether it was a naturalistic or a stylized art? Should we not be mindful of satire and irony, self-ridicule and fantasy? Like all literature, these plays are not simply documents; they are plays with stock figures, stock situations, with stage marriages and stage conditions of marriage settlements. E. E. Stoll concludes his many arguments on these matters:

Evidently this is not a ‘real society’, not a faithful picture even of the ‘fashionable life’: evidently it is not England, even ‘under the Stuarts’, whether since or before the Revolution or the Great Rebellion.

Still, the salutary emphasis upon convention and tradition to be found in writing like Stall’s cannot completely discharge the relations between literature and society. Even the most abstruse allegory, the most unreal pastoral, the most outrageous farce can, properly interrogated, tell us something of the society of a time.

Literature occurs only in a social context, as part of a culture, in a milieu. Taine’s famous-triad of race, milieu, and moment has, in practice, led to an exclusive study of the milieu. Race is an unknown fixed integral with which Taine operates very loosely. It is often simply the assumed ‘national character’ or the English or French ‘spirit’. Moment can be dissolved into the concept of milieu. A difference of time means simply a different setting, but the actual question of analysis arises only if we try to break up the term ‘milieu’. The most immediate setting of a work of literature, we shall then recognize, is its linguistic and literary tradition, and this tradition in turn is encompassed by a general cultural ‘climate’. Only far less directly can literature be connected with concrete economic, political, and social situations. Of course there are interrelationships between all spheres of human activities. Eventually we can establish some connexion between the modes of production and literature, since an economic system usually implies some system of power and must control the forms of family life. And the family plays an important role in education, in the concepts of sexuality and love, in the whole convention and tradition of human sentiment. Thus it is possible to link even lyric poetry with love conventions, religious preconceptions, and conceptions of nature. But these relationships may be devious and oblique.

It seems impossible, however, to accept a view constituting any particular human activity the ‘starter’ of all the others, whether be the theory of Taine, who explains human creation by a combination of climatic, biological, and social factors, or that of Hegel and the Hegelians, who consider ‘spirit’ the only moving force in history, or that of the Marxists, who derive everything from the modes of production. No radical technological changes took place in the many centuries between the early Middle
Ages and the rise of capitalism, while cultural life, and literature in particular, underwent most profound transformations. Nor does literature always show; at least immediately, much awareness of an epoch’s technological changes: the Industrial Revolution penetrated English novels only in the forties of the nineteenth century (with Elizabeth Gaskell, Kingsley, and Charlotte Bronte), long after its symptoms were plainly visible to economists and social thinkers.

The social situation, one should admit, seems to determine the possibility of the realization of certain aesthetic values, but not the values themselves. We can determine in general outlines what art forms are possible in a given society and which are impossible, but it is not possible to predict that these art forms will actually come into existence. Many Marxists - and not Marxists only - attempt far too crude short cuts from economics to literature. For example, John Maynard Keynes, not an unliterary person, has ascribed the existence of Shakespeare to the fact that we were just in a financial position to afford Shakespeare at the moment when he presented himself. Great writers flourished in the atmosphere of buoyancy, exhilaration, and the freedom of economic cares felt by the governing class, which is engendered by profit inflations.

But profit inflations did not elicit great poets elsewhere - for instance, during the boom of the twenties in the United States - nor is this view of the optimistic Shakespeare quite beyond dispute. No more helpful is the opposite formula, devised by a Russian Marxist:

Shakespeare’s tragic outlook on the world was consequential upon his being the dramatic expression of the feudal aristocracy, which in Elizabeth’s day had lost their former dominant position.

Such contradictory judgements, attached to ‘vague categories like optimism and pessimism, fail to deal concretely with either the ascertainable social content of Shakespeare’s plays, his professed opinions on political questions (obvious from the chronicle plays), or his social status as a writer.

One must be careful, however, not to dismiss the economic approach to literature means of such quotations. Marx himself, though on occasion he made some fanciful judgements, in general acutely perceived the obliqueness of the relationship between literature and society. In the Introduction to The Critique of Political Economy, he admits that

Certain periods of highest development of art stand in no direct relation with the general development of society, nor with the material basis and the skeleton structure of its organization. Witness the example of the Greeks as compared with the modern nations or even Shakespeare.
He also understood that the modern division of labour leads to a definite contradiction between the three factors (‘moments’ in his Hegelian terminology) of the social process - ‘productive forces’, ‘social relations’, and ‘consciousness’. He expected, in a manner which scarcely seems to avoid the Utopian, that in the future classless society these divisions of labour would again disappear, that the artist would again be integrated into society. He thought it possible that everybody could be an excellent, even an original, painter. ‘In a communist society there will not be any painters, but at most men who, among other things, also paint.’

The ‘vulgar Marxist’ tells us that this or that writer was a bourgeois who voiced reactionary or progressive opinions about Church and State. There is a curious contradiction between this avowed determinism which assumes that ‘consciousness’ must follow ‘existence’, that a bourgeois cannot help being one, and the usual ethical judgement which condemns him for these very opinions. In Russia, one notes, writers of bourgeois origin who have joined the proletariat have constantly been subjected to suspicions of their sincerity, and every artistic or civic failing has been ascribed to their class origin. Yet if progress, in the Marxist sense, leads directly from feudalism via bourgeois capitalism to the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’, it would be logical and consistent for a Marxist to praise the ‘progressives’ at any time. He should praise the bourgeois when, in the early stages of capitalism, he fought the surviving feudalism. But frequently Marxists criticize writers from a twentieth-century point of view, or, like Smirnov and Grib, Marxists very critical of ‘vulgar sociology’, rescue the bourgeois writer by a recognition of his universal humanity. Thus Smirnov comes to the conclusion that Shakespeare was the ‘humanist ideologist of the bourgeoisie, the exponent of the programme advanced by them when, in the name of humanity, they first challenged the feudal order’. But the concept of humanism, of the universality of art, surrenders the central doctrine of Marxism, which is, essentially relativistic.

Marxist criticism is at its best when it exposes the implied, or latent, social implications of a writer’s work. In this respect it is a technique of interpretation parallel to those founded upon the insights of Freud, or Nietzsche, or of Pareto, or to the Scheler-Mannheim ‘sociology of knowledge’. All these intellectuals are suspicious of the intellect, the professed doctrine, the mere statement. The central distinction is that Nietzsche’s and Freud’s methods are psychological, while Pareto’s analysis of ‘residues’ and ‘derivatives’ and the Scheler-Mannheim technique of the analysis of ‘ideology’ are sociological.

The ‘sociology of knowledge’, as illustrated in the writings of Max Scheler, Max Weber, and Karl Mannheim, has been worked out in detail and has some definite advantages over its rivals. It not only draws attention to the presuppositions and
implications of a given ideological position, but it also stresses the hidden assumptions and biases of the investigator himself. It is thus self-critical and self-conscious, even to the extreme of morbidity. It is also less prone than either Marxism or psychoanalysis to isolate one single factor as the sole determinant of change. Whatever their failure at isolating the religious factor, the studies of Max Weber in the sociology of religion are valuable for their attempt to describe the influence of ideological factors on economic behaviour and institutions - for earlier emphasis had been entirely upon the economic influence on ideology. A similar investigation of the influences of literature on social change would be very welcome, though it would run into analogous difficulties. It seems as hard to isolate the strictly literary factor as the religious factor and to answer the question whether the influence is due to the particular factor itself, or to other forces for which the factor is a mere ‘shrine’ or ‘channel’.

The ‘sociology of knowledge’ suffers, however, from its excessive historicism; it has come to ultimately sceptical conclusions despite its thesis that ‘objectivity’ can be achieved by synthesizing, and thus neutralizing, the conflicting perspectives. It suffers also, in application to literature, from its inability to connect ‘content’ with ‘form’. Like Marxism, preoccupied with an irrationalistic explanation, it is unable to provide a rational foundation for aesthetics and hence criticism and evaluation. This is, of course, true of all extrinsic approaches to literature. No causal study can do justice to the analysis, description, and evaluation of a literary work.

But the problem of ‘literature and society’ can obviously be put in different terms, those of symbolic or meaningful relations: of consistency, harmony, coherence, congruence, structural identity, stylistic analogy, or with whatever term we want to designate the integration of a culture and the interrelationship among the different activities of men. Sorokin, who has analysed the various possibilities clearly, has concluded that the degree of integration varies from society to society.

Marxism never answers the question of the degree of dependence of literature on society. Hence many of the basic problems have scarcely begun to be studied. Occasionally, for example, one sees arguments for the social determination of genres, as in the case of the bourgeois origin of the novel, or even the details of their attitudes and forms, as in E. B. Burgum’s not very convincing view that tragi-comedy results from the imprint of middle-class seriousness upon aristocratic frivolity. Are there definite social determinants of such a broad literary style as Romanticism, which, though associated with the bourgeoisie, was anti-bourgeois in its ideology, at least in Germany, from its very beginning? Though some kind of dependence of literary ideologies and themes on social circumstances seems obvious, the social origins of forms and styles, genres and actual literary norms have rarely been established.
It has been attempted most concretely in studies of the social origins of literature: in Bucher’s one-sided theory of the rise of poetry from labour rhythms; in the many studies by anthropologists of the magic role of early art; in George Thomson’s very learned attempt to bring Greek tragedy into concrete relations with cult and rituals and with a definite democratic social revolution at the time of Aeschylus; in Christopher Cauldwell's somewhat naive attempt to study the sources of poetry in tribal emotions and in the bourgeois ‘illusion’ of individual freedom.

Only if the social determination of forms could be shown conclusively could the question be raised whether social attitudes cannot become ‘constitutive’ and enter a work of art as effective parts of its artistic value. One can argue that ‘social truth’, while not, as such, an artistic value, corroborates such artistic values as complexity and coherence. But it need not be so. There is great literature which has little or no social relevance; social literature is only one kind of literature and is not central in the theory of literature unless one holds the view that literature is primarily an ‘imitation’ of life as it is and of social life in particular. But literature is no-substitute for sociology or politics. It has its own justification and aim.’

3.3 Explanation

I) Biographical Approach

The author or the creator of a work of art is the most obvious cause of a work of art. Therefore we need to know about the personality and the life of the author. Biography throws light on the actual creation of a work of art. Biographical approach has been one of the oldest and best established methods of literary study. Biography is an old form of literature. It doesn't make any systematic distinction between a statesman, a general, a lawyer and a man who plays no public role. Like a historian, a biographer interprets his documents, letters, autobiographical statements reminiscences and decides questions of genuineness and trustworthiness of witnesses.

While using this approach for the study of literature the following are some of the difficulties.

i) When we have very little information about life of a writer, for example, Shakespeare, it becomes difficult to construct actual biography of Shakespeare on this little information.

ii) It is difficult to say that Shakespeare wrote tragedies because at that time he was suffering from sorrow and nervousness. There is no proof for this.

iii) We can not say that the emotions, ideas, vices and virtues of the heroes, were actually of the writer himself.
iv) The pronoun 'I' in a poem need not always be the poet himself.

The biographical approach has two views about poets. There are two types of poets. i) Objective ii) Subjective. The poets like John Keats and T. S. Eliot are objective. They do not bring their personality in their works, whereas the poets like Shelley and Byron are subjective. They like to exhibit their personality in their works.

**Drawbacks of this approach**

The Biographical Approach has some important drawbacks. They are as following:

i) The Biographical Approach doesn't care / think about some psychological facts, for example, a work of art created by an author may be his dream and not his real life; or perhaps, it may be a picture of the life from which he wants to escape.

ii) A work of art can not be called as an authentic evidence / document of biography. Therefore, it is difficult to depend too much on biography for the study of a work of art.

iii) Though, sometimes, there is resemblance in many aspects between the real life of an author and a work of art. We can not claim that a work of art is a mere copy of his life.

iv) Every statement of a literary work can not be taken taken as literal biographical truth, for example, in some plays of Shakespeare, there are references to Italy. On this basis it is wrong to say that Shakespeare must have visited Italy. In the same way, when we study some other characters in his plays, we will have to say that Shakespeare must be a soldier, a lawyer, a farmer etc.

v) Though there is a quality which we may call shakespearean, Keatsian, Miltonic, etc, it is fixed on the basis of works themselves, we need not depend for this upon biographical proof.

**Merits of Biographical Approach**

Though the Biographical Approach has some drawbacks it does not mean that it is of no use at all. It has some merits also. Some important merits are as following.

i) This approach helps us to understand the literary tradition of the author, influences upon him and his personal relations with other poets, writers etc.

ii) It helps us in studying the development in the history of literature. It throws light on the beginning, growth, maturity, decline of an author's art.

iii) It helps to explain an author's genius and striking qualities.
iv) It also helps to explain many allusions / words / terms in an author's work.

II) The Psychological Approach

The study of literature on the basis of psychology can be called Psychological Approach to literature. Author's mind, imagination, experiences, observations play an important role in this approach. The term conveys the following meanings: i) Psychological study of an author, as a type and as an individual ii) Study of creative process of literature, and iii) Psychological types and laws present in the literary works. Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung are great psychologists. Their theories help us to reveal the human mind and behaviour. Freud's theory of mind is known to all. He gives three stages of mind - Id, Ego and Super Ego (Unconscious, Subconscious and Conscious). Carl Jung's theory is about two types of writers. Extravert and Introvert which are based on dominance of thinking, feeling, intuition and sensation.

I) The Psychological study of a writer, as type and individual: Poets and writers, in the old days were regarded as 'possessed' or having 'madness'. They were supposed less and more than other men. According to another view poet's gift was supposed as compensatory. But this theory of compensation is again not acceptable to all, because we cannot say that Pope was a hunch back and Keats was short and so they were gifted poets.

According to Freud, an artist is neurotic and sick. So, his art is a by-product of sickness. Society refuses the artist but needs him for the healing / curing power of his art. But this view creates a basic question - if an author is neurotic in his themes, how is his work intelligible to his readers?

Another view is that literature has another trait called synaesthesia. It is a literary technique, a form of metaphorical translation, the stylized expression of a metaphysical-aesthetic attitude towards life.

According to T. S. Eliot, 'The artist is more primitive, as well as more civilized, than his contemporaries ....' He believes that the poet recapitulates his strata of the race history, of keeping his communication open with his own childhood and that of the race while reaching forward into the future.

Some critics give two types of poets - i) the maker - the writer primarily trained ii) the romantic possesed - the automatic, prophetic poet. Sometimes, both types are combined, for example, Milton, Eliot, Shakespeare, Poe, Dostoyevsky. The French Psychologist Ribot gives two types of literary artists i) the plastic ii) the diffluent or symbolic.
II) **The study of the creative process**: Another meaning of the psychological approach is to study the creative process of literature. Again, there are different views about this. They are as following:

1. For Welleck and Warren, it is of secondary importance, because there is difference between composition of a poem and the mental structure of a poet. He is a composer of, but collects the matter for it from all of his life.
2. According to David Daiches, Wordsworth deals with unconscious or inspiration factor in which poet differs from his normal state. But when in tranquility he tries to recollect emotions, the creative process begins.
3. A few poets and writers like Coleridge and De Quincey believed that intoxicating drugs like opium could bring complete new experience for literary treatment. But it is proved wrong by modern medical reports. Some writers like Balzac, Schiller believe in some rituals. Dr. Johnson is against all such theories / views.
4. A literary man is an expert in association, dissociation and recombination. Words are his medium. Poets generally, use these words symbolically.
5. In the creation of characters in works of art psychological study proves to be very important. According to David Daiches and Wilbur Scott, Psychological approach gives precise language for the discussion of the creative process.

III) **The study of the Psychological types and laws present within works of literature**: Psychology helps us to understand various methods of composition, to reveal writer's habits of authors and to understand inconsistencies, changes, turnings in their work. But, it can't help us directly to interpret or evaluate literary works.

When we judge characters in plays and novels as psychologically true, it is doubtful. On the same basis we praise situations and accept plots. Sometimes we feel that psychological theory is fit for a situation or a character, for example, Lily Campbell believes that the character of Hamlet fits the type of 'Sanguine man's suffering from melancholy' known to the Elizabethans from there psychological theories. In literary works, striking situations are more important than realistic psychological motivation. Hence we can say that psychology is only preparatory for literary creation.

III) **Sociological Approach**:

Some critics believe that literature is a creation of an individual, whereas some believe that it is a social institution. A writer lives in a society, observes and experiences it, represents life and hence, literature is social institution. The sociological approach to literature is particularly cultivated by those who profess a specific social philosophy.
which includes economic, political and social system. Pope and Dr. Johnson tried to explain Shakespeare in terms of culture and sociology of his age.

**Taine's Formula**

It is H. A. Taine who provided the theoretical base to the sociological criticism. He was a French historian and critic. According to him the following three factors determine the character of literature.

i) Race - it means racial and national characteristics.

ii) Milieu - it means flow of social events.

iii) Moment - it means demands and compulsions of the moment.

According to this formula traditional devices like symbolism and metre are social in their nature. Literature represents life which is a social reality. Society gives a poet social recognition and specific status. The sociological critic tries to understand the social milieu. He investigates relations of art to society.

David Daiches thinks that sociological criticism has a descriptive function. By using it we can avoid making mistakes about the nature of literature. Again, it helps the reader to see why some mistakes are characteristic of literary works of a certain period. It can also help to explain the nature of such faults. According to Daiches this approach is useful for prose works like novel, and less useful for lyric poetry.

Marxist critics study the relations between literature and society. They have their clearly defined conception of what these relations should be, both in present and future society. Welleck and Warren call them ‘Prophets of the future’. They believe that a writer has to obey the sociological forces of his time. Life and time ask him to produce a certain kind of literature. He has no choice.

According to Welleck and Warren, just as a writer is influenced by society, he also influences society. Art not only reproduces life but also shapes it. People model their lives upon the patterns of fictional heroes and heroines. They have made love, and committed crimes, for example, Goethe’s ‘Sorrows of Werther’.

The sociological approach has some drawbacks. Firstly, the sociological criticism asserts that the writer is a product of sociological forces and he himself is a sociological force. Secondly, just as political and economic forces mould the material outlook of man, literature as a sociological factor moulds man’s thinking. Thirdly, literature becomes merely one of the factors in the sociological forces.
3.4 Check Your Progress:

I) Rewrite the following sentences by choosing the correct option given below them:

1) The Marxist criticism is the outcome of the ........ approach.
   a) psychological       b) biographical
   c) sociological        d) none of these
2) Art not only reproduces life but also .......... it.
   a) helps               b) shapes
   c) opposes             d) refuses
3) We learn about 'creative process' in the ........ approach.
   a) psychological       b) social
   c) comparative         d) biographical
4) Freud gives .......... important stages of mind.
   a) two                 b) three
   c) four                d) five
5) John Keats and T. S. Eliot are ........ poets.
   a) reflective          b) subjective
   c) objective           d) none of these

II) Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each.

1) On which basis are qualities like Virgilian, Shakespearean, Miltonic, etc. fixed?
2) What is 'synaesthesia'?
3) Which two major types of poets are given by Carl Jung?
4) What is the definition of literature given by De Bonald?
5) Which question does Marxism never answer?

3.5 Summary

Literature is created by an individual author / poet. But wherefrom he collects material for his work of art? The answer is he collects it from nature, people in society, various situations, incidents, his own experiences, i.e. from the life. He adds something of his own with the help of his imagination. Therefore, while studying literature and
interpreting it, critics make use of three important approaches: i) Biographical ii) Psychological iii) Sociological

Biographical approach is one of the oldest approaches. It tries to probe into the poet's / author's life for searching explanation of his genius and correct meaning of his work. The reason for this is that author's personality is generally expressed through his writing. For the study of subjective poets it is useful, but for the objective poets it is likely to prove useless. Sometimes there may be close relationship between a work of art and an author's life. But it doesn't mean that it is a mere copy of his life. This approach ignores facts like his work may rather embody the dream of him than his actual life. A work of art is not an evidence / document. Even then it helps to understand the poet's tradition and influences by which he is shaped.

Psychological approach conveys three meanings: i) Psychological study of a writer as type and as individual. ii) study of the creative process of literature and iii) study of psychological types and laws within literature. Various psychologists like Freud, Jung have given different theories. Literary artist used to be called 'mad', 'possessed'. Freud believes in theory of neurotic. Jung gives two major types of poets - extravert and introvert. Some believed in the compensatory theory. A literary artist, some believed, is supposed to have synaesthesia. This approach helps to investigate the act of creative process. Wordsworth believes in the mood of tranquility, creation begins. Unconscious factor / inspiration plays an important role in this process. Psychological study is useful in creation of characters. According to Welleck and Warren it is possible to judge characters, situations, plots psychologically. But we should know that psychology is only preparatory to the act of creation.

Sociological approach assumes close relationship between literature and society, and between an author and society. It believes that an author is a product of his contemporary society. Taine's formula points out that literature is the consequence of the moment, the race and the milieu. Daiches believes that sociological criticism has descriptive function. A writer is influenced by society, at the same time, he also influences society. Sociological factor moulds man's thinking, Marxist criticism is one step ahead. According to it, an author has no freedom. He has to obey sociological forces of his time. Life, time ask him to produce certain kind of literature. He has no choice of his own. An author becomes a means of the Marxist Philosophy.

3.6 Glossary

- **indubitable**: that can not be doubted.
- **empirical**: based on observation or experiment.
- **exegetical**: critical explanation of a text, scripture
● adduce: cite as an instance or as proof.
● pedagogic: about science of teaching.
● neurosis: a relatively mild mental illness involving symptoms of stress without loss of contact with reality.
● archetypal: an original model, a typical specimen.
● psychoanalysis: a therapeutic method of treating mental disorders by investigating and bringing repressed fears and conflicts into the conscious mind.
● hallucination: the clear perception of an object not actual present.
● intuition: immediate apprehension by the mind or by a sense.
● inabriation: drunkard, drunken
● equilibrium: a state of physical balance, a state of mental or emotional equanimity.
● percipient: observant
● delirium: an actually disordered state of mind involving incoherent speech, hallucinations, and frenzied excitement.
● Marxist: person believing in the political and economic theories of Carl Marx predicting the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.
● Proletariat: wage earners collectively, the lowest class of the community, especially considered uncultured.
● ideology: the system of ideas at the basis of an economic or political theories, the manner of thinking characteristic of a class or individual.

3.7 Answers to Check Your Progress.

I) 1) c
    2) b
    3) a
    4) b
    5) c
II) 1) On the basis of the works themselves.
   2) Synaesthesia is the linking together of sensory perceptions out of two or more senses, most commonly hearing and sight.
   3) extravert and introvert.
   4) 'literature is an expression of society'.
   5) the question of the degree of dependence of literature on society.

3.8 Exercises

Answer the following questions.

1) What is biographical approach? What are its drawbacks and merits?
2) Explain the three meanings of the psychological approach.
3) Comment on the creative process of literature.
4) What is a sociological approach? Discuss various views about the sociological approach.
5) Try to find out some more ways of studying literature.

3.9 Reference for Further Study

3) Prasad, B : (1996 reprinted) : A Background to the Study of English Literature, Macmillan India Ltd. Madras.
4) Daiches, David : Critical Approaches to Literature, Orient Longman.
4.0 Objectives

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define various figures of speech.
- identify the device used in the line
- analyze the devices occurred in the expression
- use the poetic devices in literary language
- understand and illustrate some literary and critical terms.

4.1 Introduction

The language used in literature is called literary language. The literary language has its own distinguishing features. It is found in poetry, short stories, novels, plays, sermons, ads, lectures etc. It is exploited to express emotions artistically and to have
aesthetic effect. The language of literature may violate or deviate from the generally observed rules of language. The creative writer, especially the poet, enjoys a unique freedom in making use of language as per his / her discretion. A piece of literature possesses some aesthetic qualities of its own. We know that in literature the author makes an artistic use of language. This is achieved by making use of various devices. There may be variation at phonological, lexical, syntactic and semantic level.

4.2.1 Figures of Speech

Of the traditional figures of speech such as metaphor, irony and paradox involve communication at non-literal level. They usually arise from some 'irregularity' of language. But there are also figures of speech which involve exploiting extra regularities in language. These include various types of parallelism.

A figure of speech is a deviation from the ordinary use of language in order to produce a greater effect. They may be broadly classified as based on comparison (simile, metaphor, personification) based on contrast (antithesis, irony, pun) ; based on association (metonymy, synecdoche etc), and based on construction (climax, anticlimax etc). Although figures of speech have often had a more limited meaning, we may interpret some special devices used in literature.

A) Alliteration

Alliteration is a sound device. It is usually best when it is read or spoken. Alliteration is the repetition of the same sound or syllable at the beginning of two or more words in a line. The term is usually applied to consonants. It is used only for special stylistic effects like to reinforce the meaning or to link related words etc. Let us see some examples :

1) Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than soil (Lotus - Eaters).
   Here the sound / s / is repeated.

2) Good things of day begin to droop and drowse (Macbeth)
   Here the sound / d / is repeated.

3) Generous day and gallant nation Bold in arms and bright in arts.
   Here the sound / g / in the first line and / b / in the second line are repeated.

4) The world - wide whisper of the south wind rushing warm.
   Here the sound / w / is repeated.
B) Simile

Simile is a device of comparison. The word 'simile' only means 'like'. When a simile is used it is clear that he/she is using a conscious comparison. In a simile, a *comparison is made between two distinctly different things* which have however at least one point in common. The comparison is done by using certain words: like, as, as though, as if, as ........as, as ........so. Let us look at a few examples.

1) O my love’s like a red, red rose.
   That's newly sprung in June.
   *Things compared*: love and real rose

2) Fair as a star, when only one is shining in the sky.
   Here the comparison is made between the beauty of a single bright star shining in the sky and the beauty of woman.

3) The housewife is as busy as honeybee.
   *Things compared*: housewife and honeybee.

4) Words are like leaves, and where they most abound.
   Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.
   *Things compared*: Words and leaves

5) And ice, mast - high, came floating by, as green as emerald.
   *Things compared*: iceberg and emerald.

C) Metaphor

Metaphor is again a device of comparison. This type of comparison is not quite as simple as the simile. A metaphor is an informal or implied simile. There is *direct comparison in metaphor*. Here the reader's attention, like in simile, is *not* drawn to it by any signposts such as 'like', 'as ........ as' and so on. In metaphor the comparison is drawn between two dissimilar things but it is a comparison that is often more subtle, more compressed and less obvious. Metaphor is a powerful tool in the hands of a poet. Let us consider some examples:

1) All the world's a stage
   And all the men and women merely players.
   *Things compared*: World and a stage
2) Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more.

*Things compared*: life and shadow

3) There is a garden in her face
Where roses and white lilies grow.

*Things compared*: beauty of women's face and flowers in a garden.

4) The sky rejoices in the morning's birth

*Things compared*: dawn, the beginning of day and birth, the beginning of life.

5) Dear God! The very houses seem asleep and all that mighty heart is lying still.

*Things compared*: great city (London) & a heart

6) His speech is a burning fire.

*Things compared*: speech and fire.

**D) Personification**

Personification is another common device of comparison. It is really a special term of metaphor. In personification a *non-human thing is referred to as having the characteristics of a human*. In other words, either an inanimate object or an abstract concept is spoken of as though it were endowed with life or with human attributes or feeling. Let us look at some examples:

1) The sun smiled on the earth....

2) O sleep! Nature's sweet nurse.....

3) The earth is dancing around the sun.

4) The night has a thousand eyes and the day but one.

5) This sea that bares her bosom to the moon.

In all above examples, non-human things are referred to as having some of the human features or as being human beings.

Abstract ideas such as justice, laughter, mercy, beauty, love, honour and duty are often personified. Love is often referred to as being blind. See some more examples.

1) Duty the stern daughter of the voice of God.

2) Laughter holding both his sides.
3) O sorrow wilt thou live with me,
    No casual mistress but a wife.
4) .......... philosophy.
    Poverty and poetry three
    Companions shared my basement room.
5) The weary day turned to his rest ........

E) Hyperbole

The figure of speech hyperbole is also called *exaggeration*. It is bold overstatement. By using this figure of speech, things are represented as greater or less, better or worse than they really are. In other words, hyperbole is the extravagant exaggeration of fact or of possibility. It may be used either for serious or ironic or comic effect. A statement can be made emphatic by overstatement. Let us see a few examples.

1) O Hamlet ! thou hast cleft my heart in twain.
2) Why, man, if the river were dry . I am able to fill it with tears.
3) Drink to me only with thine eyes.
4) Vegetable love should grow but world enough and time.
5) Here's the smell of blood still ;
   All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.

F) Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is sometimes called as *echoism*. In all languages there are words that imitate or echo sounds. When a poet uses this device he / she uses it much more delicately and consciously than we do in ordinary speech. It is a mixture of many things, some of them indefinable but obvious to the ear. It can be a combination of elements from alliteration, assonance, the echoing of vowels, the clask of consonants, repetition of words, and the rhythm of the verse itself. All these elements come together to give the ear an impression of sound that echoes the event.

There are many words that imitate or echo sounds. They can be used to describe the sounds of various things. For example,

- **Crack** : The crack of a whip, the crack of a rifle
- **Boom** : The boom of a distant gun, of thunder or of surf on a beach.
Tinkle: The tinkle of breaking glass, of a tiny bell.

The list of such words is unending - slap, clang, buzz, hum, thump, plop, zoom, splash, hiss, clatter, clink, crash, squawk, cackle, chatter etc.

Let us look at a few examples occurred in literature.

1) The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
   and mumuring of innumerable bees.

2) The curfew tolls the knell of parting day.
   The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea......

3) Only a cock stood on the roof tree co co rico co co rico.

4) Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far.

5) And straightway like a bell
   Came loud and clear
   The slow, sad murmur of far distance seas.

4.2.2 Critical terms

Critical terms are specifically used for (studies concerned with) defining, classifying, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating works and literature. These terms have distinguishing importance in literary criticism. These are a number of literary critical terms such as realism, symbolism, satire, paradox, irony, allegory, climax and so on. Let us consider some of them in details.

1) Realism

Realism is a literary doctrine originating with Balzac and Flaubert in France. It sought to record life objectively as it is. Realism is a critical term only by adoption from philosophy. Realism is the expression of what one might call the conscience of literature.

William Sharp defined realism (in literary art) as 'the science of exact presentation of many complexities, abstract and concrete factors in the work of art'. Chernishevsky maintains 'the first purpose of art is to produce reality'. Reality in artist's sense is always something created.

Realism (in literature and art) means showing of real life, facts etc in a true way, omitting nothing that is ugly or painful, and idealizing nothing. It is behaviour based on the facing of facts and disregard of sentiment and convention. It is a theory that matter has real existence apart from over mental perception of it. In realism, everything
it without illusions. Thus, realism is neither ideal sentimental nor illusion but a real existence.

Realism is applied by literary critics in two diverse ways:

a) to identify a movement in the writing of novels during the 19th century and
b) to designate a recurrent mode, in various eras and literary forms, of representing human life and experience in literature.

Realistic fiction is often opposed to romantic fiction. Realism could be identified in terms of the effect on the reader. Realistic fiction represents life and the social world as it seems to the common reader.

The novels like *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders* by Daniel Defoe seem to readers a mirror held to reality. The novels of Franz Kafka are also written in a realistic manner. The following quotation tells us what is 'reality' and 'realism'

Reality is like a float that rides
all efforts of the irritated mind

to frame its definition: or a fish
that swallows up all other forms of life
and then drinks off the sea in which it swims.

2) Symbolism

"Symbolism transforms the phenomenon into idea, the idea into an image, and in such a way that the idea remains always infinitely active and unapproachable in the image, and even if expressed in all languages, still remain inexpressible". - Goethe

Symbolism may be defined as an attempt by careful studied means - a complicated association of ideas represented by a medley of metaphors - to communicate unique personal feelings. Symbolism is mainly a French Movement in art and literature. It assumed the status of a literary movement in the last quarter of the 19th century in France and in the first decade of the 20th century in England.

Symbolism means 'representation of ideas by the use of symbols'. It is literary and artistic movement that used artistic invention to express sensually ideas, emotions, abstractions in place of realism. It is a system of symbols used to represent a particular group of ideas. Symbolism is quite common in speech. For example, in Britain the word 'Crown' is used as a symbol for the state, the government. The crown was the symbol of the king or queen's authority. In religion the 'crescent moon'
is a symbol of Islam while the 'cross' is a symbol of Christianity. From proverbs such as 'wise as serpents' or 'harmless as the dove' are derived symbols of wisdom, peace etc.

Symbolism, then is very important in poetry and the students must be on the lookout for it. For example, John Milton’s poem on the death of a fair infant dying of a cough begins:

O Fairest flower; no sooner blown but blasted.

Soft silken primrose fading timelessly,

Summer's chief honour......

Here the flower is the symbol of life which is lovely but brief. Naturally a poet takes his/her symbols from the world around him/her. Such symbols may not be familiar with other people. After all, some of the main themes of poetry are universal like the cycle of birth, maturation and death which is often symbolized by planting, ripening and harvesting.

Take another example of 'rose'. It literally signifies a kind of flower. When we consider different colours of roses, they symbolize different meanings:

red rose - love, anger.
white rose - calmness, student - teacher relationship
yellow rose - friendship, peers similarly in Robert Burns' line
"O my love's like a red, red rose", the word 'rose' is used as a simile and in Mackworth's line
"She was our queen, our rose, our star".
the word 'rose' is used as a metaphor.

There are two particular types of symbolism:
a) Use of associated objects
Something which is associated with a person, an institution and activity is sometimes used to symbolize the whole. For instance,

'the crown' is associated with royalty,
'the peacock' for immortality
'the phoenix' for the resurrection and the dragon or the serpent for satan.
b) Use of a part of the whole

Sometimes a part of the whole is used to symbolize the whole thing. For example,

When we say 'factory hands', here 'hand' means a person who works with his / her hands in a factory.

When we say 'five hundred souls were lost in the shipwreck', here 'souls' means people, lives.

3) Satire

Satire is a verbal attack on a person or a part of society. It has mostly a reformative purpose. It is of classical origin. It lashes out the follies and foibles of people. However, the satire has not set literary form. Certain features can be attributed to the satire.

a) The satire implies comedy.

b) It has vindicative nature.

c) It can be mild. e.g. works of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens.

d) It can be biting. e.g. works of Pope and Swift.

Satire may be defined as the expression in adequate terms of the sense of amusement or disgust by the ridiculous or unseemly, provided that humour is a distinctly recognizable element, and that the utterance is invested with literary form, it is more clownish, jeering. Satire can be described as the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous amusement, cotempt, scorn or indignation. Satire differs from the comic. It uses laughter as a weapon and against a butt that exists outside the work itself. That butt may be an individual, a class, an institution, a nation or even the entire human race.

There is direct imitation of the Roman satirists in English literature in the writings of Donne, Hall and Marston. Most of the great dramtists of the 17th century were more or less satirists. For example, Butler's Hudibras, Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel. The 18th century was indeed, the age of satire. Pope & Dryden made poetry more satiric. Fielding and Smollett made the novel to be the vehicle of satire. Satires of Thackeray is a thoroughly British article, a little solid, a little wanting in finish, but honest, weighty and durable. The 19th century satire also witnessed eminent writers like Dickens as the keen observer of the oddities of human life, George Eliot as the critic of its emptiness, Balzac as the painter of French society or Trollope as the mirror of the middle classes of England.
Nearly everybody is a satirist in a small way. But the real satirist differs from us both in
a) the strength of his feeling and
b) having the wit and genius to express it in novel or poem or play.

The satirists must have some of the qualities of the moralist or the preacher, and some of the qualities of the clown. It is because the best way of attacking wickedness and foolishness is by laughing at them. Then the question arises:

What sort of weapons does the satirist use in his attack on the wickedness and foolishness of mankind?

The simplest weapon is invective i. e. 'a violent attack in words, for example,
  i) an angry motorist after a small accident, or
  ii) excited supporters at a football match.

Another weapon is irony. Irony is less direct, but no less effective. Irony means 'the expression of one's meaning by language of opposite or different tendency, especially the adoption of another's views or tone'. In ordinary conversation irony is often expressed by a tone of voice. For example, 'she's a fine example of a faithful wife' can be spoken by stressing 'she's' and 'fine' to mean exactly the opposite of what they seem to mean.

The most important weapon is the ability of the satirist to amuse and entertain the reader. Without this satire becomes merely tedious and bad tempered.

Satire is found in both prose and poetry. It has no set literary form. A verse satire might be written as an ode, an elegy, a ballad, or anything else. The satire is of classical origin. The plays of the Greek Aristophanes and Latin satirists were the models for satire in English. The two essential elements of literary satire are criticism of ridiculous and humour. The satirist's trade is not censure. He / she condemns whatever he / she does not approve. Each has had its own set of vices to ridicule. The satire holds mirror upto nature and lashes out at contemporary follies.

Critics have divided satires into two broad types.

a) **Formal or direct satire**

In formal satire the satiric persona speaks out in the first person. This "I may address either the reader or else a character within the work itself.' For example,

Pope's *Moral Essays,* and

*Epistle to Dr. Ashuthnot* ;

Samuel Johnson's "London".
b) **Indirect satire**

In indirect satire the objects of satire are characters who make themselves and their opinions ridiculous by what they think, say and do. Sometimes they are made even more ridiculous by the author's comments and narrative style. For example,

- Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*,
- Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*,
- Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*,
- Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*
- Gay's *Beggar's Opera*.

In short, a great satire can often do more practical good than a hundred speeches by good democratic politicians, or a thousand sermons by well meaning preachers. Poetic satire might be considered as didactic poetry. Because it aims at the reformation of men and manners. It is same with prose satire.

4) **Paradox**

A paradox is a statement which seems on its face to be logically contradictory or absurd, yet turns to be interpretable, in a way that makes good sense. For example, John Donne's sonnet 'Death, Be Not Proud' ends:

One short sleep past, we wake eternally  
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

The paradox is used occasionally by almost all poets. It is also a frequent component in verbal wit. For instance, in Donne's. 'The Cannonization' sexual lovers are saints.

If the paradoxical utterance conjoins two terms that are contrary in ordinary usage is called an oxymoron. see the following examples

i) O *Death in life*, the days that are no more.
ii) His *honour* rooted in *dishonour* stood.

And *faith unfaithfull* kept him *falsely true*. It is also found in Elizabethan love poetry in phrases like 'pleasing pains', I burn and freeze, 'loving hate'.

Paradox was a prominent concern of many new critics. They extended the term (paradox) from its limited application to a type of figurative language. It was done to make it encompass all surprising deviations from common perceptions or common place opinions. Cleanth Brooks claims 'the language of poetry is the language of paradox'.

The best known examples of paradox in English literature are as follows:

1) War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength.
2) Thou art to me a delicious torment.
3) Parting is such sweet sorrow.
4) To live a life half-dead, a living death.
5) And love's the noblest frailty of the mind.
6) Man proposes, god disposes.
7) So innocent arch, so cunningly simple.

4.3 Check Your Progress

I) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct alternatives.

1. Alliteration is a .......... device.
   a) sense b) semantic c) sound d) satiric
2. So innocent arch, so 'cunningly simple' is an example of .......
   a) paradox b) simile c) metaphor d) realism
3. The cross is the symbol of ........
   a) affinity b) honesty c) christianity d) royalty
4. The following line is an example of ...........
   'They were swifter than eagles, and stronger than lions'
   a) simile b) paradox c) satire d) hyperbole
5. Orwell's 'Animal Farm' is an example of ........
   a) satire b) realism c) naturalism d) paradox
6. ........ is called as echoism.
   a) onomatopoeia b) simile c) personification d) metaphor
7. ........ is not a device of comparison.
   a) simile b) metaphor c) onomatopoeia d) personification
8. 'Death lays his icy hand on kings' is an example of ...........
   a) metaphor b) simile c) hyperbole d) personification
9. ........ is the science of exact presentation of many things in the work of art.
   a) satire b) realism c) paradox d) hyperbole
10. The line 'my girl friend walks as if an earthquake comes' is an instance of
   a) simile  b) metaphor  c) hyperbole  d) realism.

II) Answer the following questions in one word / phrase or sentence each:
1) What is a figure of speech?
2) What is hyperbole?
3) Define the term 'realism'?
4) What is symbolism?
5) Which device is used in the following line? 'The camel is the ship of
desert'?
6) Identify the device used in the following lines:
   And the owls have awakened the crowing cock.
   Tce - Whit ! ........ Tu - whoo !
7) Give one example of satire.
8) Give one example of personification.
9) Give one example of paradox.
10) What are the two types of satire?

4.4 Summary
A literary work cannot be properly understood without thorough knowledge of
the language. While studying only work it is necessary to have thorough knowledge
of literary and critical terms. The common figures of speech used in literature are
alliteration (repetition of same sound at the beginning of word), simile (as, like)
metaphor (direct comparison), personification (non - human as human), hyperbole
(exaggeration) and onomatopoeia (echoism). The critical terms like realism, symbolism,
satire and paradox are very important to understand and enjoy any literary work.

4.5 Glossary:
- **aesthetic (adj)** : Appreciation of the beautiful (in art)
- **explication (h)** : explanation and analysis in detail
- **slumber (h)** : deep sleep
- **gallant (adj)** : brave, grand
• droop (v): bend
• emerald (h): a bright green precious stone
• strut (v): walk
• fret (v): worry
• endow (v): possess naturally
• medley (h): mixture
• crescent (h): the curve of the moon in the first quarter
• blown (v): blooming
• blasted (adj): broken, withered
• primrose (n): a small flower
• indignation (n): anger caused by injustice or misconduct
• butt (n): a joke or ridicule
• oxymoron (n): a figure of speech allied to paradox (e.g. idly busy, cruel kindness, falsely true)

4.6 Answers to Check Your Progress.
I 1) c 2) a 3) c 4) d 5) a 6) a 7) c 8) d 9) b 10) a
II 1) a rhetoric use of language in literature
2) device of exaggeration.
3) means showing of real life, facts, etc. in a true way and idealizing nothing
4) representation of ideas by the use of symbols.
5) metaphor.
6) onomatopoeia.
7) Pope's Rape of the Lock
8) The sun smiled on the earth
9) sweet - sorrow.
10) direct satire & indirect satire.
4.7 Exercise:
A) Write short notes on the following.
1) Simile as a sense device.
2) Alliteration as a sound device
3) Metaphor as a device of comparison
4) Personification
5) Onomatopoeia
6) Realism
7) Symbolism
8) Satire
9) Paradox
10) Hyperbole

4.8 Tasks
Select any short poem / story / essay etc. and try to find out devices used by the writer / poet.

4.9 References for further study
5. Grant Damian, (reprinted 1982), Realism, Methuon & Co., USA.
5.0 Objectives
After studying this unit you will be able to understand -
- Aristotle: the man and the critic
- Aristotle's theory of imitation
- Aristotle's theory of catharsis

5.1 Introduction
Aristotle (384 B.C. - 322 B.C.) was an ancient Greek Philosopher, logician, moralist, political thinker and the founder of literary criticism. He was born at stagira in Macedonia. The life span of Aristotle can be divided into three stages. Firstly, he
Aristotle worked for about 20 years at Plato's Academy. He was a close disciple to Plato (427 B. C. - 348 B. C.) another ancient Greek Philosopher and a man of literary genius. The influence of Plato is clearly seen on Aristotle's thoughts and works.

**Aristotle's works**

They are mainly of three kinds. They include 'Literary Essays', originally meant for publication but lost in the course of time. Secondly, works like 'The Constitution of Athens' were based on original studies. Lastly, there are treatises; intended for use in lectures in class. They include a large variety of topics. Unfortunately many of Aristotle's works have been lost or are in fragmentary nature, today.

**Literary criticism before Aristotle**

To understand Aristotle's views on poetry and poetic creation, it is necessary to know the literary background in brief. When Aristotle was a student at Plato's Academy, the literary scene in Athens was in sorry state. The golden age of Greek literature was over. The contemporary poets were of lower type. Literature had been corrupt, immoral and of secondary quality. The decline of great writers had given way to advancement of philosophers and orators. Thus, literature was in the state of confusion.

**Plato's views of poetry and poets**

As mentioned earlier, Plato was an ancient Greek Philosopher and the teacher to Aristotle. Plato had written 'Republic'. In it, he had expressed his views on poets and poetry in general. Infact, Plato had criticised poetry to be immoral and unsuitable for, what he called the ideal citizens and statesmen of republic. He had attacked poetry on several grounds. He had also declared the banishment of poets from his state. However, it is also true, that Plato was not against poetry in general. He himself was a man of poetic genius and was well aware of the great service rendered by poetry to mankind. Yet, he considered philosophy superior to poetry for certain reasons.

**Aristotle's 'Poetics'**

Aristotle wrote many books of treatisers. His 'Poetics' or 'On the Art of Poetry' is a major among them. He must have written it in 355 B. C., after he settled at Athens as a teacher. The poetics is not a comprehensive well balanced book as such. It is in the form of lecture notes that are incomplete and disjointed. Yet, it is work of great
literary importance. It consists of some philosophical discussion of literature.

The poetics is divided into 26 chapters and has 45 pages. It deals with the art of poetry, in general. It focuses on tragedy and epic poetry to be the ideal forms. There are also some views on comedy and satire. It is thus a landmark in the history of literary criticism. Aristotle's views on the theory of limitation are found in chapters I - IV of the poetics. Aristotle agrees with Plato's theory that poetry is an imitative art but he differs from his master and states that poetry is a creative faculty and not a blind limitation only.

5.1.1 The theory of Imitation

Imitation is one of the most discussed terms in 'Poetics'. It was first used by Plato in 'Republic'. Plato has used it in connection with poetry. Imitation means copying something as it is. Plato was of the opinion that 'poetry (literature) imitates'. It is mere copying of the appearances of things, actions and behaviours of people around. Later on, Aristotle interpreted it in the poetics and gave it a comprehensive meaning.

Plato's theory of Imitation

Plato in his book 'Republic', Ch. X has used the term 'imitation' or 'mimesis' for the first time. In it, he makes a difference between useful arts and 'imitative arts'. The useful arts like medicine, agriculture etc. serve our immediate needs; whereas, imitative arts like painting, dancing or poetry do not have such utility. They are called the fine arts.

Plato was of the view that all the fine arts are imitative. They are a copy, a representation of something. They copy some ideas, appearances of things in the world outside. Poetry, being a fine art also imitates such ideas. Plato considered poetry to be 'imitative', a copy of copy, a shadow of shadow. He claimed that poetry is unreal and is away from reality. It is only a replica, a blind imitation of the ideas.

While expressing such views on poetry, Plato gave the example of 'bed'. When a carpenter makes a bed out of wood, he works on the basis of the idea of bed. It is the idea that is real and the bed is an imitation of it. It is a copy of the original idea. Plato believed that ideas are made by God, the Creator. When a painter paints the picture of a bed, he takes the idea from the bed made by carpenter. Thus the painted bed is the copy of a copy. It is an imitation of an imitation. Twice removed from reality.

Plato applied the same theory to poetry (i.e. literature) also. When a poet presents the world in poetry, he takes inspiration from the outward appearance of the world. The poets' world is a copy of the world in which he lives. It is thus a replica,
blind imitation, a copy of copy. Thus, Plato declared poetry to be unreal, twice or thrice removed from reality. There is nothing creative but is imitative.

In this way, the theory of imitation first appeared in 'Plato's 'Republic'. He considered imitation to be a photographic replica and a blind imitation. He thought that there is nothing original and creative in it. In this way, in the course of argument, Plato turned to be a critic of poetry. He declared poetry to be 'the mother of lies' he even denied any place to poets in his ideal state.

Such was Plato's theory of imitation. He criticised arts and even poetry on several grounds. At the same time, it must be taken into account that Plato's remarks were made in a particular context. Plato, himself was a man of poetic merits. He was aware of the role of arts in human life. But he was an idealist and had a dream of moulding ideal citizens for republic. Hence, he considered poetry to be unsuitable for his purpose.

**Aristotle's theory of imitation**

There is no doubt that Aristotle inherited the word 'imitation' from Plato. In 'Poetics' Aristotle has expressed his theory of imitation. It is in chapters I to IV. Aristotle added a new meaning, a new dimension to it. He expanded and made it comprehensive. Thus Aristotle's contribution to the theory of imitation is vital. His poetics is an indirect answer to Plato. Aristotle breathed a new life, a new spirit in the theory of imitation. He proved that poetry is not a servile copy, a blind imitation but a process of creation. His views on imitation are found in the following chapters.

**5.2 The Text**

**Chapter - 1**

Our subject being Poetry, I propose to speak not only of the art in general but also of its species and their respective capacities; of the structure of plot required for a good poem; of the number and nature of the constituent parts of a poem; and likewise of any other matters in the same line of inquiry. Let us follow the natural order and begin with the primary facts.

Epic poetry and Tragedy, as also Comedy, Dithyrambic poetry, and most flute-playing and lyre-playing, are all, viewed as a whole, modes of imitation. But at the same time they differ from one another in three ways, either by a difference of kind in their means, or by differences in the objects, or in the manner of their imitations.

Just as form and colour are used as means by some, who (whether by art or constant practice) imitate and portray many things by their aid, and the voice is
used by others; so also in the above-mentioned group of arts, the means with them as a whole are rhythm, language, and harmony—used, however, either singly or in certain combinations. A combination of rhythm and harmony alone is the means in flute-playing and lyre-playing, and any other arts there may be of the same description, e.g. imitative piping. Rhythm alone, without harmony, is the means in the dancer’s imitations; for even he, by the rhythms of his attitudes, may represent men’s characters, as well as what they do and suffer. There is further an art which imitates by language alone, without harmony, in prose or in verse, and if in verse, either in some one or in a plurality of metres. This form of imitation is to this day without a name. We have no common name for a mime of Sophron or Xenarchus and a Socratic Conversation; and we should still be without one even if the imitation in the two instances were in trimeters or elegiacs or some other kind of verse—though it is the way with people to tack on ‘poet’ to the name of a metre, and talk of elegiac-poets and epic-poets, thinking that they call them poets not by reason of the imitative nature of their work, but indiscriminately by reason of the metre they write in. Even if a theory of medicine or physical philosophy be put forth in a metrical form, it is usual to describe the writer in this way; Homer and Empedocles, however, have really nothing in common apart from their metre; so that, if the one is to be called a poet, the other should be termed a physicist rather than a poet. We should be in the same position also, if the imitation in these instances were in all the metres, like the Centaur (a rhapsody in a medley of all metres) of Chaeremon; and Chaeremon one has to recognize as a poet. So much, then, as to these arts. There are, lastly, certain other arts, which combine all the means enumerated, rhythm, melody, and verse, e.g. Dithyrambic and Nomic poetry, Tragedy and Comedy; with this difference, however, that the three kinds of means are in some of them all employed together, and in others brought in separately, one after the other. These elements of difference in the above arts I term the means of their imitation.

Chapter - 2

II. The objects the imitator represents are actions, with agents who are necessarily either good men or bad— the diversities of human character being nearly always derivative from this primary distinction, since the line between virtue and vice is one dividing the whole of mankind. It follows, therefore, that the agents represented must be either above our own level of goodness, or beneath it, or just such as we are; in the same way as, with the painters, the personages of Polygnotus are better than we are, those of Pauson worse, and those of Diodorus just like ourselves. It is clear that each of the above-mentioned arts will admit of these differences, and that it will become a separate art by representing objects with this point of difference.
Even in dancing, flute-playing, and lyre-playing such diversities are possible; and they are also possible in the nameless art that uses language, prose or verse without harmony, as its means; Homer’s personages, for instance, are better than we are; Cleophon’s are on our own level; and those of Hegemon of Thasos, the first writer of parodies, and Nicocharis, the author of the *Diliad*, are beneath it. The same is true of the Dithyramb and the Nome: the personages may be presented in them with the difference exemplified in the... of... and Argas, and in the Cyclopes of Timotheus and Philoxenus. This difference it is that distinguishes Tragedy and Comedy also; the one would make its personages worse, and the other better, than the men of the present day.

**Chapter - 3**

III. A third difference in these arts is in the manner in which each kind of object is represented. Given both the same means and the same kind of object for imitation, one may either

1) Speak at one moment in narrative and at another in an assumed character, as Homer does; or

2) One may remain the same throughout, without any such change; or

3) The imitators may represent the whole story dramatically, as though they were actually doing the things described.

As we said at the beginning, therefore, the differences in the imitation of these arts come under three heads, their means, their objects, and their manner.

So that as an imitator Sophocles will be on one side akin to Homer, both portraying good men; and on another to Aristophanes, since both present their personages as acting and doing. This in fact, according to some, is the reason for plays being termed dramas, because in a play the personages act the story. Hence too both Tragedy and Comedy are claimed by the Dorians as their discoveries; Comedy by the Megarians - by those in Greece as having arisen when Megara became a democracy, and by the Sicilian Megarians on the ground that the poet Epicharmus was of their country, and a good deal earlier than Chionides and Magnes; even Tragedy also is claimed by certain of the Peloponnesian Dorians. In support of this claim they point to the words ‘comedy’ and ‘drama’. Their word for the outlying hamlets, they say, is *comae*, whereas Athenians call them *demes* - thus assuming that comedians got the name not from their *comoe* or revels, but from their strolling from hamlet to hamlet, lack of appreciation keeping them out of the city. Their word also for ‘to act’, they say, is *dran*, whereas Athenians use *prattein*. 

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So much, then, as to the number and nature of the points of difference in the imitation of these arts.

Chapter - 4

It is clear that the general origin of poetry was due to two causes, each of them part of human nature. Imitation is natural to man from childhood, one of his advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitative creature in the world, and learns at first by imitation. And it is also natural for all to delight in works of imitation. The truth of this second point is shown by experience: though the objects themselves may be painful to see, we delight to view the most realistic representations of them in art, the forms for example of the lowest animals and of dead bodies. The explanation is to be found in a further fact: to be learning something is the greatest of pleasures not only to the philosopher but also to the rest of mankind, however small their capacity for it; the reason of the delight in seeing the picture is that one is at the same time learning - gathering the meaning of things, e.g. that the man there is so-and-so; for if one has not seen the thing before, one’s pleasure will not be in the picture as an imitation of it, but will be due to the execution or colouring or some similar cause. Imitation, then, being natural to us - as also the sense of harmony and rhythm, the metres being obviously species of rhythms - it was through then - original aptitude, and by a series of improvements for the most part gradual on their first efforts, that they created poetry out of their improvisations.

Poetry, however, soon broke up into two kinds according to the differences of character in the individual poets; for the graver among them would represent noble actions, and those of noble personages; and the meaner sort the actions of the ignoble. The latter class produced invectives at first, just as others did hymns and panegyrics. We know of no such poem by any of the pre-Homeric poets, though there were probably many such writers among them; instances, however, may be found from Homer downwards, e.g. his Afargitei, and the similar poems of others. In this poetry of invective its natural fitness brought an iambic metre into use; hence our present term ‘iambic’, because it was the metre of their ‘iambs’ or invectives against one another. The result was that the old poets became some of them writers of heroic and others of iambic verse. Homer’s position, however, is peculiar: just as he was in the serious style the poet of poets, standing alone not only through the literary excellence, but also through the dramatic character of his imitations, so too he was the first to outline for us the general forms of Comedy by producing not a dramatic invective, but a dramatic picture of the Ridiculous; his Afargites in fact stands in the same relation to our comedies as the Iliad and Odyssey to our tragedies. As soon, however, as Tragedy and Comedy appeared in the field, those naturally drawn to the
one line of poetry became writers of comedies instead of iambics, and those naturally
drawn to the other, writers of tragedies instead of epics, because these new modes
of art were grander and of more esteem than the old.

If it be asked whether Tragedy is now all that it need be in its formative
elements, to consider that, and decide it theoretically and in relation to the theatres,
is a matter for another inquiry.

It certainly began in improvisations - as did also Comedy; the one originating
with the authors of the Dithyramb, the other with those of the phallic songs, which still
survive as institutions in many of our cities. And its advance after that was little by
little, through their improving on whatever they had before them at each stage. It was
in fact only after a long series of changes that the movement of Tragedy stopped on
its attaining to its natural form.

1) The number of actors was first increased to two by Aeschylus, who curtailed
the business of the Chorus, and made the dialogue, or spoken portion, take the
leading part in the play.

2) A third actor and scenery were due to Sophocles.

3) Tragedy acquired also its magnitude. Discarding short stories and a ludicrous
diction, through its passing out of its satyric stage, it assumed, though only at a late
point in its progress, a tone of dignity; and its metre changed then from trochaic to
iambic. The reason for their original use of the trochaic tetrameter was that their
poetry was satyric and more connected with dancing than it now is. As soon,
however, as a spoken part came in, nature herself found the appropriate metre. The
iambic, we know, is the most speakable of metres, as is shown by the fact that we
very often fall into it in conversation, whereas we rarely talk hexameters, and only
when we depart from the speaking tone of voice.

4) Another change was a plurality of episodes or acts. As for the remaining
matters, the superadded embellishments and the account of their introduction, these
must be taken as said, as it would prob-ably be a long piece of work to go through
the details.

5.3 Explanation

1) Imitation - the common principle of all art

Aristotle considers limitation to be the common principle of all fine arts. The term
‘fine arts’ includes poetry, comedy, tragedy, dancing, music, flute playing, painting
and sculpture. All of them imitate something. Thus Aristotle agrees with plato's theory
in principle. He agrees that imitation is the common principle of all arts. At the same
time, he differs from Plato by including music in the imitative arts. It clearly shows
that Aristotle's theory of imitation is wider than that of Plato. The musician imitates not
the outward form of appearances, but he presents the inward world of human
feelings, passions and emotions. It is the inner life of man.

Other arts like painting, dancing etc. also imitate something. It is the common
basis of all arts, but there are differences too. All the arts differ from one another in
three ways. They have different 'mediums or means' of imitation. They differ in their
objects of imitation. Finally their manners or modes of imitation are also different. In
this way, the mediums, the objects and the manners of imitation make differences
among arts.

Some mediums of imitation are form, colour and sounds. Arts like music and lyre
use rhythm, language and harmony. Poetry uses the medium of language. In this
way, Aristotle considers imitation to be a creative process representing the inner life.

II) The objects of imitation

The 'objects of imitation or representation are 'human beings'. These are the
men performing or experiencing something. They may be either good or bad. It
means that the arts represent human beings, either better or worse than they really
are. Thus, the objects of imitation are different in each art. In poetry, some poets
present men better than reality or as they are. They may be presented lower than the
reality. It is the basic difference between tragedy and comedy. Tragedy presents men
'better' than reality, whereas comedy presents them in the lower mode.

Thus, the objects of imitation differ in various arts. For Aristotle, imitation was not
limited to outward apparence only. It was the reproduction of human nature and
actions. It is a creative process.

III) The manner of imitation

The third difference between the arts lies in the manner or mode of imitation
they use. Different arts imitate objects in different manners. There may be three
modes of it. First, the poet may use the mode of narration, through out. Secondly, he
may use narration as well as dialogues by characters, to some extent. We find such
mode in Homer's poetry. Lastly, a poet may represent the whole story in dramatic
manner. It is in the form of action.

For Aristotle, the manner of imitation helps the poet to classify poetry into epic,
narrative and descriptive types. The dramatic poetry is further divided in tragedy and
comedy on the basis of their objects of representation. This classification prepares
the ground for further discussion of tragedy in latter chapters. In this way, poetry differs from all other arts on the basis of medium, objects and manner of imitation.

IV) The origin & development of poetry

In this chapter, Aristotle traces the origin and development of poetry in human life. The discussion is concentrated on dramatic poetry. Aristotle considers that the origin of poetry lies in two natural instincts. First, it is the natural human impulse to imitate things. Such impulse is found even in children. Secondly, it is in the delight in recognising and appreciating a good imitation. It helps to appreciate even ugly objects, if imitated well. Then there is the instinct of getting pleasure in harmony and rhythm. Poetry grew out of these natural objects.

Poetry, later on developed into two directions, according to the personal characters of the poets. Some poets with serious spirits represented noble personages and their actions. They composed panegyrics and hymns to the gods. On the other hand, poets with lighter spirits presented frivolous characters with trivial actions. These were the comedies and satires. Aristotle considers Homer to be the unique poet who shared in both the tendencies.

Limitation - a Creative process

Aristotle, thus took the term 'imitation' from Plato. He gave it a wider significance and a new implication. Plato considered the process of poetic creation merely a replica, blind copying. For Aristotle, it was an act of creative vision. No doubt, a poet takes his material from the phenomenal world, but he makes something new out of it. A poet may deal with facts from past of present, from established beliefs or with unrealised ideals. He transforms them into some universal and permanent characteristics of human life. Poetic imitation, thus involves a creative faculty. It is the transformation of material into an art. Aristotle asserts, "it is not the function of the poet to relate what has happened but what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity". Poetry is thus more philosophical than history. Aristotle refuted the charge against poetry being a 'mother of lies'. He brought out the higher truth involved in it. Poetry is an act of creative vision. Imitation, to Aristotle was none other than 're - creation'.

5.4 The theory of Catharsis

Introduction

Aristotle's 'poetics' or 'on the art of poetry' is a celebrated work of literary criticism. It is basically an answer to plato's 'Republic'. The poetics is about the art of
poetry in general, but it mainly focuses epic and tragedy. There are 26 chapters in all, out of which 14 are devoted to tragedy only. So it is clear that Aristotle gave much importance to tragedy in it. It is because epic and tragedy were considered to be the ideal forms of literature in the ancient age. Hence the poetics concentrates on tragedy, in particular. Aristotle’s views on catharsis are found in chapters VI and XIV of the poetics. While defining tragedy, Aristotle uses the word catharsis, for the first time.

The theory of catharsis

‘Catharsis’ or ‘katharsis’ is perhaps the most debated term in literary criticism, all over the world. It is a word of Greek origin. Aristotle used it only once, in chapter VI of the poetics. Unfortunately he himself has not explained it anywhere. Hence it gave birth to divergent interpretations and explanations. Aristotle, used the term ‘catharsis’, while defining tragedy. He used it in connection of the emotional effect to tragedy on spectators. Thus for Aristotle, catharsis meant the effect or the function of tragedy.

Before studying it in detail, it is necessary to understand that Aristotelian theory of tragedy was framed to be an answer to Plato’s charge that ‘poetic drama feeds and waters the passions, instead of starving them, and as such encourages anarchy (disturbance) in the soul’.

Aristotle on the other hand, believed that poetry does not create disturbance in human mind but provides proper expression to emotions in a regulated manner. Thus poetic drama provides proper channelization of emotions. Aristotle’s views on ‘Catharsis’ are found in chapters VI and XIV of the poetics.

5.5 The Text

(Chapter VI and XIV from ‘Aristotle’s Poetics’)

Chapter - VI

Reserving hexameter poetry and Comedy for consideration hereafter, let us proceed now to the discussion of Tragedy; before doing so, however, we must gather up the definition resulting from what has been said. A tragedy, then, is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not in narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions. Here by ‘language with pleasurable accessories’ I mean that with rhythm and harmony or song superadded; and by ‘the kinds separately’ I mean that some portions are worked out with verse
only, and others in turn with song.

I. As they act the stories, it follows that in the first place the Spectacle (or stage-appearance of the actors) must be some part of the whole; and in the second Melody and Diction, these two being the means of their imitation. Here by ‘Diction’ I mean merely this, the composition of the verses; and by ‘Melody’, what is too completely understood to require explanation. But further: the subject represented also is an action; and the action involves agents, who must necessarily have their distinctive qualities both of character and thought, since it is from these that we ascribe certain qualities to their actions. There are in the natural order of things, therefore, two causes, Character and Thought, of their actions, and consequently of their success or failure in their lives. Now the action (that which was done) is represented in the play by the Fable or Plot. The Fable, in our present sense of the term, is simply this, the combination of the incidents, or things done in the story; whereas Character is what makes us ascribe certain moral qualities to the agents; and Thought is shown in all they say when proving a particular point or, it may be, enunciating a general truth. There are six parts consequently of every tragedy, as a whole, that is, of such or such quality, viz. a Fable or Plot, Characters, Diction, Thought, Spectacle and Melody; two of them arising from the means, one from the manner, and three from the objects of the dramatic imitation; and there is nothing else besides these six. Of these, its formative elements, then, not a few of the dramatists have made due use, as every play, one may say, admits of Spectacle, Character, Fable, Diction, Melody, and Thought.

II. The most important of the six is the combination of the incidents of the story. Tragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons but of action and life, of happiness and misery. All human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality. Character gives us qualities, but it is in our actions—what we do—that we are happy or the reverse. In a play accordingly they do not act in order to portray the Characters; they include the Characters for the sake of the action. So that it is the action in it, i.e. its Fable or Plot, that is the end and purpose of the tragedy; and the end is everywhere the chief thing. Besides this, a tragedy is impossible without action, but there may be one without Character. The tragedies of most of the moderns are characterless—a defect common among poets of all kinds, and with its counterpart in painting in Zeuxis as compared with Polygnotus; for whereas the latter is strong in character, the work of Zeuxis is devoid of it. And again: one may string together a series of characteristic speeches of the utmost finish as regards Diction and Thought, and yet fail to produce the true tragic effect; but one will have much better success with a tragedy which,
however inferior in these respects, has a Plot, a combination of incidents, in it. And again: the most powerful elements of attraction in Tragedy, the Peripeties and Discoveries, are parts of the Plot. A further proof is in the fact that beginners succeed earlier with the Diction and Characters than with the construction of a story; and the same may be said of nearly all the early dramatists. We maintain, therefore, that the first essential, the life and soul, so to speak, of Tragedy is the Plot; and that the Characters come second - compare the parallel in painting, where the most beautiful colours laid on without order will not give one the same pleasure as a simple black-and-white sketch of a portrait. We maintain that Tragedy is primarily an imitation of action, and that it is mainly for the sake of the action that it imitates the personal agents. Third comes the element of Thought, i.e. the power of saying whatever can be said, or what is appropriate to the occasion. This is what, in the speeches in Tragedy, falls under the arts of Politics and Rhetoric; for the older poets make their personages discourse like statesmen, and the moderns like rhetoricians. One must not confuse it with Character. Character in a play is that which reveals the moral purpose of the agents, i.e. the sort of thing they seek or avoid, where that is not obvious - hence there is no room for Character in a speech on a purely indifferent subject. Thought, on the other hand, is shown in all they say when proving or disproving some particular point, or enunciating some universal proposition. Fourth among the literary elements is the Diction of the personages, i.e. as before explained, the expression of their thoughts in words, which is practically the same thing with verse as with prose. As for the two remaining parts, the Melody is the greatest of the pleasurable accessories of Tragedy. The Spectacle, though an attraction, is the least artistic of all the parts, and has least to do with the art of poetry. The tragic effect is quite possible without a public performance and actors; and besides, the getting-up of the Spectacle is more a matter for the costumier than the poet.

Chapter - XIV

The tragic fear and pity may be aroused by the Spectacle; but they may also be aroused by the very structure and incidents of the play - which is the better way and shows the better poet. The Plot in fact should be so framed that, even without seeing the things take place, he who simply hears the account of them shall be filled with horror and pity at the incidents; which is just the effect that the mere recital of the story in Oedipus would have on one. To produce this same effect by means of the Spectacle is less artistic, and requires extraneous aid. Those, however, who make use of the Spectacle to put before us that which is merely monstrous and not productive of fear, are wholly out of touch with Tragedy; not every kind of pleasure should be required of a tragedy, but only its own proper pleasure.
The tragic pleasure is that of pity and fear, and the poet has to produce it by a
work of imitation; it is clear, therefore, that the causes should be included in the
incidents of his story. Let us see, then, what kinds of incident strike one as horrible,
or rather as piteous. In a deed of this description the parties must necessarily be
either friends, or enemies, or indifferent to one another. Now when enemy does it
on enemy, there is nothing to move us to pity either in his doing or in his meditating
the deed, except so far as the actual pain of the sufferer is concerned; and the
same is true when the parties are indifferent to one another. Whenever the tragic
deed, however, is done within the family—when murder or the like is done or
meditated by brother on brother, by son on father, by mother on son, or son on
mother—these are the situations the poet should seek after. The traditional stories,
accordingly, must be kept as they are, e.g. the murder of Clytemnestra by Orestes
and of Eriphyle by Alcmeon. At the same time even with these there is something
left to the poet himself; it is for him to devise the right way of treating them. Let us
explain more clearly what we mean by ‘the right way’. The deed of horror may be
done by the doer knowingly and consciously, as in the old poets, and in Medea’s
urder of her children in Euripides. Or he may do it, but in ignorance of his relationship,
and discover that afterwards, as does the Oedipus in Sophocles. Here the deed is
outside the play; but it may be within it, like the act of the Alcmeon in Astydamas, or
that of the Telegonus in Ulysses Wounded. A third possibility is for one meditating
some deadly injury to another, in ignorance of his relationship, to make the discovery
in time to draw back. These exhaust the possibilities, since the deed must necessarily
be either done or not done, and either knowingly or unknowingly.

The worst situation is when the personage is with full knowledge on the point of
doing the deed, and leaves it undone. It is odious and also (through the absence
of suffering) untragic; hence it is that no one is made to act thus except in some few
instances, e.g. Haemon and Creon in Antigone. Next after this comes the actual
perpetration of the deed meditated. A better situation than that, however, is for the
deed to be done in ignorance, and the relationship discovered afterwards, since
there is nothing odious in it, and the Discovery will serve to astound us. But the best
of all is the last; what we have in Crasphontes, for example, where Merope, on the
point of slaying her son, recognizes him in time; in Iphigenia, where sister and
brother are in a like position; and in Helle, where the son recognizes his mother,
when on the point of giving her up to her enemy.

This will explain why our tragedies are restricted (as we said just now) to such
a small number of families. It was accident rather than art that led the poets in quest
of subjects to embody this kind of incident in their Plots. They are still obliged,
accordingly, to have recourse to the families in which such horrors have occurred.
On the construction of the Plot, and the kind of Plot required for Tragedy, enough has now been said.

5.6 Explanation

Chapter - VI

It is the most important and the core chapter in the poetics. It presents the famous definition of tragedy. It is like a summary of all the ideas related to tragedy. Aristotle says, "Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in several parts of the play, in the form of action, not of narration; through pity and fear effecting catharsis of such emotions."

The definition falls into two divisions. The first part i.e. "Tragedy is an imitation ........ not of narrative", consists the nature of tragedy. The second part i.e. "through pity and fear ........ catharsis of such emotions", explains the effect or function of tragedy. While explaining the nature of tragedy, Aristotle says that tragedy, being an art imitates action. Just as all arts differ from one another in three ways - their mediums, objects and manners of imitation. In a tragedy the objects of imitation of 'men in action'. It is not imitation of men but the actions performed by them. Then, this action must be serious, complete in itself and must have certain magnitude. The term magnitude implies that the action should be long enough to present rise and fall in the life of the tragic characters.

The medium of imitation that tragedy employs is language with all its embellishments. The manner of imitation is dramatic and not narrative. It means that the story is not narrated but is presented through characters, acting it out. Tragedy has six constituent parts, namely, plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle and song. Out of these, the three, i.e. plot, character and thought constitute the objects of imitation. Two parts - diction and song, constitute the medium of imitation. Spectacle is the manner by which the story is presented on the stage.

The final clause of the definition which reads,"through pity and fear effecting catharsis of these emotions". Explains the function of tragedy. It says that tragedy arouses the emotions of pity and fear; and provides an outlet to these and similar emotions. In the process, it brings about catharsis which is a sense of pleasurable relief. Aristotle says that this effect of tragedy is not only pleasurable but also beneficial. It saves the audience from psychic distress by providing an emotional outlet. After watching a tragedy, we feel better and leave the theatre "in peace of mind, all passions spent".
Chapter XIV

In this chapter, Aristotle further explains his views. Pity and fear are the emotions proper to tragedy. They are aroused by the spectacle. Here, spectacle means presentation of scenes of suffering and disaster in a tragedy. This way of arousing emotions is less artistic, according to Aristotle. The best way of arousing pity and fear is through structure and incidents of the play.

While talking of the sources of pity and fear, Aristotle states that when dramatic persons are involved in some deeds of horror, they must either be friends, enemies or indifferent to one another. When an enemy kills an enemy, these is nothing to arouse our pity. It is the same case when two indifferent people get involved in some horrible deeds. We do not experience any pity for them. On the other hand, when a friend or a member of a family causes some serious, irreparable injury to another friend, the sense of pity is aroused among spectators. It is the most effective situation for a trageday when a friend or near relative murders another, when a mother kills her children or a wife murders her husband.

According to Aristotle, there may be four possibilities in such situations. The fatal act may done in complete ignorance of the relationship which is later on discovered. Secondly, more effective situation may occur when the relationship is discovered just in time to avert the latter horror. Thirdly, the act may be performed with full knowledge of the situation and relationship. All these options mentioned above, are not the best because they fail to arouse proper pity and fear. The best situation is one, when the horrible action is taken and relationship / situation is discovered immediately. Such situation arouses powerful emotions of pity and fear. They also have a lasting effect on spectators.

In this way the spectacle arouses emotions of pity and fear. They are experienced through suffering, disaster or misfortune of the characters. Such situation provides proper pleasure of tragedy.

The place of pity and fear in catharsis

The terms pity and fear are closely associated with Aristotle's theory of catharsis. There are different types of fears in human life. Fear may be centred on an individual or it may be at collective or society level also. It may arise due to some vague feeling of danger, insecurity or anxiety. It may occur because of some awful, disastrous or inexplicable event in life. It may come because of the sense of guilt due to some error committed. All these forms of fear are well expressed in a tragedy.

Pity is occasioned by some underserved misfortune. It is a sort of pain for one who comes across some destructive evil, even if he doesn't deserve it we pity
someone who is suffering because of a misfortune. We feel pity for others, at the same time we fear for ourselves, if we are placed in those circumstances. Thus, pity and fear are closely related emotions.

5.6.1 Different interpretations of catharsis

Aristotle in his famous definition of tragedy has used the term 'Catharsis'. He used it to suggest the effect or the function of tragedy. It is a Greek word and Aristotle himself has not provided any explanation of it. Naturally, it gave way to different explanations and interpretations in the world of literature. The term has been interpreted by different critics in different ways. They have different opinions regarding the exact meaning of the term. Each critic takes some aspect of it into consideration. The traditional critics have emphasized the emotional aspect of catharsis, whereas the modern critic analyses it from intellectual point of view. Scholars have suggested religious, moral, medical, psychological and aesthetic interpretations of it.

There are three common interpretations of catharsis. They are 'purification, purification and clarification'. Now, let us examine them in detail.

1) The Purgation Theory

The purgation theory interprets catharsis in medical terms. It is a medical metaphor. In medical terms (especially in the older sense) purgation meant the removal of excess or unnecessary elements from body. The health of body depends upon a true balance of all elements. If they are in excess, it is suggested to provide an outlet. In the same way, the excess or unhealthy passions also need to be purged. Catharsis is thus a process of purgation to such unhealthy emotions. Tragedy arouses emotions of pity and fear. Then it provides an outlet. The excessive emotions are purged, removed away from mind. It helps to create an emotional balance. A calmness of mind is maintained. Purgation thus denotes the pathological effect on the mind comparable to the effect of medicine on body. This theory was advocated by critics like Milton, Twining & Barney.

Some critics interpreted catharsis in homeopathic process. They thought it to be case of 'like curing the like' ? A little substance of some element cures the body of an excess of the same thing. To support this, these critics refer to some passages by Aristotle in 'Politics' and 'Poetics'. These passages describe the effect of music on body and some religious frenzy, calmed down by the same things.

Neo-classical critics like Dryden interpret it in the opposite way. They consider catharsis in allopathic way of 'like curing unlike'. According to this method, the arousing of pity and fear was supposed to bring about the purgation of other emotions such as anger, hatred, pride etc. It is the process of feeding and watering of
unhealthy emotions. Purgation is thus a major explanation of catharsis. Sigmond Freud, a modern psychoanalyst also supports this theory. He said, "by helping patients to recall their painful childhood experiences, neurosis can be cured."

2) The purification Theory

Another interpretation of catharsis is purification. Some critics like Humphrey House rejected the purgation theory in the medical sense of the term. They criticised that 'theature is not a hospital and audience are not patients'. Humphrey House advocated the purification theory, which means 'moral, learning, moral instructing or moral conditioning of mind'. It is the idea of cleaning or cleansing of soul. Tragedy by arousing pity and fear, brings back the soul to a balanced state. Tragedy, thus trains and purifies the emotions and brings them to a balanced state. The emotions are directed towards the right objects, at the right time. In this way, we are made virtuous and good. The purification theory is related to soul as the purgation is related to body. Critics like Butcher corneille and Lessing have supported it.

3) The clarification theory

It is the third interpretation of catharsis. It is advocated by critics like Leon Golden, O. B. Hardison and G. E. Else. They think, that Aristotle was mainly concerned with the intellectual effect and not the emotional effect of tragedy. Tragedy is concerned with the spectator’s understanding of the events of plot. A tragedy presents some universal truths of human life through particular events and characters. Watching a tragedy gives us joy, pleasure. It is called the aesthetic pleasure. Aristotle himself has said, "if well imitated pictures even of corpse and ugly creatures, give us pleasure". Thus incidents like a person blinding himself, murdering his friend or a husband killing his wife, would horrify us in routine life. If they are presented artistically, they provide delight, a sort of pleasure. It is this pleasure that tragedy gives.

According to the clarification theory, catharsis becomes an indication of the function of tragedy, and not of its emotional effect on audience. It leads to an understanding of the universal law that governs the universe. Cathavsis, thus turns to be an intellectual process.

Some other interpretations

Apart from these commonly accepted explanations, there are some other theories also. Some critics tried to give the psychological interpretation of it. S. H. Butcher regards it as a refining process. He thinks that tragedy provides a process of reforming lower type of emotions into the refined ones.

Another critic, Herbert Read considers catharsis to be a safety value, that
provides outlet to excess emotions. It results in the feeling of emotional relief.

I. A. Richards considers 'Pity as an emotion to approach, where as fear is an emotion to retreat or withdraw. Tragedy brings these opposite emotions harmoniously together. It creates a balance, an equilibrium of mind.

Conclusion

As Aristotle himself has not provided any explanation of catharsis, critics vary in interpretations. There is no agreement as to what Aristotle really meant. The theories like purgation and purification relate catharsis to the psychology of the audience. The clarification theory seems to be more acceptable because it focuses on the work of art and not the audience. It is to be noted that Aristotle was writing on the art of poetry and not on psychology of the audience.

5.7 Check Your Progress.

I) Choose the correct alternatives from the following.

1) Aristotle's poetics was an answer to ...........
   a) sidney's 'An Apology For Poetry'
   b) Shelley's 'A Defence of Poetry'
   c) Plato's 'Republic'
   d) Chaucer's 'The Cauterbury Tales'

2) 'Poetics' is mainly concerned with ..........
   a) Comedy    b) Poetry    c) Epic    d) Tragedy

3) The common principle of all fine arts is that ..........
   a) they give us pleasure
   b) they imitate something
   c) they are useful to us
   d) they are no use

4) Tragedy is an imitation of ..........
   a) action   b) people   c) life   d) world

5) Purgation is basically a ........... term.
   a) literary b) psychological c) medical d) philosophical
II) Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each.
1) What is the common principle of all arts?
2) Which medium of imitation does poetry use?
3) Which are the two types of dramatic poetry?
4) What does catharsis mean?
5) Who advocated the purgation theory?

5.8 Glossary
- **Imitation**: copying something as it is
- **disciple**: student
- **treatise**: a written work dealing formally and systematically with a subject.
- **Dithyrambic**: Greek religious song sung to Dionysus, originally sung by a single person.
- **catharsis**: a greek word indicating the effect of tragedy.
- **anarchy**: disorder
- **magnitude**: length
- **language embellishments**: ornaments of language
- **Aesthetic pleasure**: joy concerned with beauty and appreciation
- **inexplicable**: that cannot be explained

5.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
i) 1) Plato's 'Republic'
   2) Tragedy
   3) They imitate something
   4) action
   5) medical
ii) 1) The common principle of all arts is that they imitate something.
   2) Language is the medium of imitation that poetry uses.
   3) Tragedy and comedy are the two types of dramatic poetry.
4) Catharsis means the emotional effect of tragedy on spectators.
5) Critics like Milton, Twining and Barney advocated the purgation theory.

5.10 Exercise

1) Write a critical note on Aristotle's theory of imitation and compare his views with those of Plato?
2) 'Poetry is not a slavish imitation but is a creative process'. Explain the remark in context of Aristotle's theory of imitation.
3) What, according to Aristotle, is the proper pleasure of tragedy? How does tragedy achieve its ends?
4) What different theories have been advanced to explain Aristotle's concept of catharsis?

5.11 Reference For Further Study

2) Bywater, Ingram. 'Aristotle on the Art of Poetry', London, Oxford University Press
3) Fyfe, Hamiton, (1940) 'Aristotle's Art of Poetry', London; Oxford University Press
6.0 Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able to know

- The place of William Wordsworth in the history of literary criticism.
- Wordsworth's views about the subject - matter of poetry.
- Wordsworth's theory of poetry.
- The nature and function of poetry.
- Wordsworth's aim of writing 'Preface' to the Lyrical Ballads.

6.1 Introduction

Students, you have studied Aristotle's theory of poetry in the earlier unit. Aristotle defined poetry as 'an art of imitation'. He laid emphasis on certain rules, methods and forms of poetry. However, William Wordsworth discards the rules devised by Aristotle and his followers. He gives importance to novelty, experiment, liberty, feelings,
spontaneity, inspiration and imagination. His 'Preface to Lyrical Ballads' gives a new direction to English poetry so it is regarded as the manifesto of English romantic poetry.

6.1.1 Introduction to William Wordsworth

A) Life

William Wordsworth is one of the major critics of the romantic criticism. He was born on April 7, 1770 at Cockermouth in Cumberland. He took his early education from Grammar's School of Hawkshed. He was greatly influenced, at this early age, by the scenes around him. In 1787, he entered St, John's College, Cambridge and took his B. A. degree in 1791.

Wordsworth did not care much for the university curriculum. His education was largely carried on by self-chosen reading and by communion with nature. After his graduation he visited France and welcomed the French revolution. He was highly influenced by the principles of French revolution. But when he returned to England, his enthusiasm for revolution declined. In 1796, his friend, Raisely Calvert, died of consumption and left him the legacy of 900 pounds a year. The legacy made him free to devote his life to his poetic mission. He, then, met S. T. Coleride, the famous poet of the age. Wordsworth was very close friend of Coleridge. In 1798, the two poets published "The Lyrical Ballads" together. After the publication of this volume, Wordsworth visited Germany where he composed some of his best poems. In 1799, he settled in the Lake District with his sister, Dorothy. He, then, married his cousin, Mary Hutchinson. After his marriage, Wordsworth lived an ideal poet's life. His reputation as a poet increased. In 1839, he was honoured by Oxford University with the degree of Doctor of Civil Law. In 1843, he became the Poet Laureate. He died of pleurisy in 1850, at the age of eighty.

B) Critical Works

Wordsworth was primarily a poet, and not a critic. His poetical output is enormous. His major poetical works consist of Lyrical Ballads (1798), The Excursion (1814), The Prelude (1850) etc. He has written more than 500 sonnets and short poems. His poems show his love for nature and simple life of the rustics. As a critic Wordsworth has not left any systematic work. We do not get any comprehensive treatise of Wordsworth on literary criticism. His critical works consist of Advertisement to the Lyrical Ballads (1798), Preface to the Lyrical Ballads (1800) Preface to Lyrical Ballads (1802) with Appendix of Poetic Diction. He constantly revised the preface with each edition. However, the 1802 preface is generally regarded as the standard text. His critical writings also include his 'Notes to the Thorn and Other Poems' and his critical
remarks on poetry. Although his critical output was scanty, his 'Preface to Lyrical Ballads' changed the whole course of English Poetry. So he is regarded as an exponent of English romantic criticism.

6.1.2 Introduction to the 'Preface......'

'TPreface to the Lyrical Ballads' is an important critical document in the history of literary criticism. It was first published in 1798 in the form of an advertisement. In this advertisement Wordsworth had merely pointed out the nature of his poetry. To the second edition of the Lyrical Ballads, published in 1800, he added a more detailed preface. This preface was again revised and enlarged for 1802 edition of the volume. To this edition he also added an Appendix on Poetic Diction. The preface was constantly revised and perfected for each subsequent edition, but his views on poetry remained the same. As this revised and enlarged 'Preface' gave new direction to English poetry, it is regarded as the manifesto of English Romantic Movement.

6.2 Preface to Lyrical Ballads, 1802

The first Volume of these Poems has already been submitted to general perusal. It was published, as an experiment, which, I hoped, might be of some use to ascertain, how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may rationally endeavour to impart.

I had formed no very inaccurate estimate of the probable effect of those Poems: I flattered myself that they who should be pleased with them would read them with more than common pleasure: and, on the other hand, I was well aware, that by those who should dislike them, they would be read with more than common dislike. The result has differed from my expectation in this only, that a greater number have been pleased than I ventured to hope I should please.

Several of my Friends are anxious for the success of these Poems, from a belief, that, if the views with which they were composed were indeed realised, a class of Poetry would be produced, well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and not unimportant in the quality, and in the multiplicity of its moral relations: and on this account they have advised me to prefix a systematic defence of the theory upon which the Poems were written. But I was unwilling to undertake the task, knowing that on this occasion the Reader would look coldly upon my arguments, since I might be suspected of having been principally influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of reasoning him into an approbation of these particular Poems: and I was still more unwilling to undertake the task, because, adequately to display the
opinions, and fully to enforce the arguments, would require a space wholly disproportionate, to a preface. For, to treat the subject with the clearness and coherence of which it is susceptible, it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved; which, again, could not be determined, without pointing out in what manner language and the human mind act and re-act on each other, and without retracing the revolutions, not of literature alone, but likewise of society itself. I have, therefore altogether declined to enter regularly upon this defence; yet I am sensible, that there would be something like impropriety in abruptly obtruding upon the Public, without a few words of introduction, Poems so materially different from those upon which general approbation is at present bestowed.

It is supposed, that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association; that he not only thus apprises the Reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully excluded. This exponent or symbol held forth by metrical language must in different eras of literature have excited very different expectations: for example, in the age of Catullus, Terence, and Lucretius, and that of Statius or Claudian; and in our own country, in the age of Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope. I will not take upon me to determine the exact import of the promise which, by the act of writing in verse, an Author, in the present day, makes to his reader: but it will undoubtedly appear to many persons that I have not fulfilled the terms of an engagement thus voluntarily contracted. They who have been accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will, no doubt, frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness: they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to inquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. I hope therefore the reader will not censure me for attempting to state what I have proposed to myself to perform; and also (as far as the limits of a preface will permit) to explain some of the chief reasons which have determined me in the choice of my purpose: that at least he may be spared any unpleasant feeling of disappointment, and that I myself may be protected from one of the most dishonourable accusations which can be brought against an Author; namely, that of an indolence which prevents him from endeavouring to ascertain what is his duty, or, when his duty is ascertained, prevents him from performing it.

The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems was to choose incidents and situation from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as
was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly; as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation.

I cannot, however, be insensible to the present outcry against the triviality and meanness, both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonourable to the Writer’s own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time, that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the Poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy purpose. Not that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but habit of meditation have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings, that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a purpose. If this opinion be erroneous,
I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of such sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified.

It has been said that each of these Poems has a purpose. Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling.

A sense of false modesty shall not prevent me from asserting, that the Reader's attention is pointed to this mark of distinction, far less for the sake of these particular Poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint preception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavour to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a Writer can be engaged; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic
novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse. When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation, I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble endeavour made in these volumes to counteract it; and, reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonourable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it, which are equally inherent and indestructible; and were there not added to this impression a belief, that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed, by men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished success.

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these Poems, I shall request the Reader's permission to appraise him of a few circumstances relating to their style, in order, among other reasons, that he may not censure me for not having performed what I never attempted. The reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes; and are utterly rejected, as an ordinary device to elevate the style, and raise it above prose. My purpose was to imitate, and, as far as is possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such; but have endeavoured utterly to reject them as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which Writers in metre seem to lay claim to by prescription. I have wished to keep the Reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. Others who pursue a different track will interest him likewise; I do not interfere with their claim, but wish to prefer a claim of my own. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; as much pain has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it; this has been done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men; and further, because the pleasure which I have proposed to myself to impart, is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the proper object of poetry. Without being culpably particular, I do not know how to give my Reader a more exact notion of the style in which it was my wish and intention to write, than by informing him that I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject; consequently, there is I hope in these Poems little falsehood of description, and my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something must have been gained by this practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry, namely, good sense: but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded
as the common inheritance of Poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad Poets, till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

If in a poem there should be found a series of lines, or even a single line, in which language, though naturally arranged, and according to the strict laws of metre, does not differ from that of prose, there is a numerous class of critics, who, when they stumble upon these prosaisms, as they call them, imagine that they have made a notable discovery, and exult over the Poet as over a man ignorant of his own profession. Now these men would establish a canon of criticism which the Reader will conclude he must utterly reject, if he wishes to be pleased with these volumes. And it would be a most easy task to prove to him, that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written. The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of Milton himself. To illustrate the subject in a general manner, I will here adduce a short composition of Gray, who was at the head of those who by their reasonings, have attempted to widen the space of separation betwixt Prose and Metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

‘In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire:
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire.
These ears, alas! for other notes repine;
A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire;
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
To warm their little loves the birds complain.

I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain.’

It will easily be perceived, that the only part of this Sonnet which is of any value is the lines printed in Italics; it is equally obvious, that, except in the rhyme, and in the use of the single word ‘fruitless’ for fruitlessly, which is so far a defect, the language of these lines does in no respect differ from that of prose.

By the foregoing quotation it has been shown that the language of Prose may yet be well adapted to Poetry; and it was previously asserted, that a large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good Prose. We will go further. It may be safely affirmed, that there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition. We are fond of tracing the resemblance between Poetry and Painting, and, accordingly, we call them Sisters; but where shall we find bonds of connection sufficiently strict to typify the affinity betwixt metrical and prose composition? They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred, and almost identical, not necessarily differing even in degree; Poetry sheds no tears ‘such as Angels weep,’ but natural and human tears; she can boast of celestial ichor that distinguishes her vital juices from those of prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.

If it be affirmed that rhyme and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction which overturns what has just been said on the strict affinity of metrical language with that of prose, and paves the way for other artificial distinctions which the mind voluntarily admits, I answer that the language of such Poetry as is here recommended is, as far as is possible, a selection of the language really spoken by men; that this selection, wherever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life; and, if metre be superadded thereto, I believe that a dissimilitude will be produced altogether sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind. What other distinction would we have? Whence is it to come? And where is it to exist? Not, surely, where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters: it cannot be necessary here, either for elevation of style, or any of its supposed ornaments: for, if the Poet’s subject be judiciously chosen, it will naturally, and upon fit occasion, lead him to passions the language of which, if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and
variegated and alive with metaphors and figures. I forbear to speak of an incongruity which would shock the intelligent Reader, should the Poet interweave any foreign splendour of his own with that which the passion naturally suggests: it is sufficient to say that such addition is unnecessary. And, surely, it is more probable that those passages, which with propriety abound with metaphors and figures, will have their due effect, if upon other occasions where the passions are of a milder character, the style also be subdued and temperate.

But, as the pleasure which I hope to give by the Poems now presented to the Reader must depend entirely on just notions upon this subject, and, as it is in itself of high importance to our taste and moral feelings, I cannot content myself with these detached remarks. And if, in what I am about to say, it shall appear to some that my labour is unnecessary, and that I am like a man fighting a battle without enemies, such persons may be reminded, that, whatever be the language outwardly holden by men, a practical faith in the opinions which I am wishing to establish is almost unknown. If my conclusions are admitted, and carried as far as they must be carried if admitted at all, our judgements concerning the works of the greatest Poets both ancient and modern will be far different from what they are at present, both when we praise, and when we censure: and our moral feelings influencing and influenced by these judgements will, I believe, be corrected and purified.

Taking up the subject, then, upon general grounds, let me ask, what is meant by the word Poet? What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him? He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves: —whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.
But whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest Poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt that the language which it will suggest to him, must often, in liveliness and truth, fall short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions, certain shadows of which the Poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself.

However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a Poet, it is obvious, that while he describes and imitates passions, his employment is in some degree mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. Here, then, he will apply the principle of selection which has been already insisted upon. He will depend upon this for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion, he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature: and, the more industriously he applies this principle, the deeper will be his faith that no words, which his fancy or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth.

But it may be said by those who do not object to the general spirit of these remarks, that, as it is impossible for the Poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who does not scruple to substitute excellences of another kind for those which are unattainable by him; and endeavours occasionally to surpass his original, in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels that he must submit. But this would be to encourage idleness and unmanly despair. Further, it is the language of men who speak of what they do not understand; who talk of Poetry as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure; who will converse with us as gravely about a taste for Poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for rope-dancing, or Frontiniac or Sherry. Aristotle, I have been told, has said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature. The obstacles which stand in the way of the fidelity of the Biographer and Historian, and of their consequent
utility, are incalculably greater than those which are to be encountered by the Poet who comprehends the dignity of his art. The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man. Except this one restriction, there is no object standing between the Poet and the image of things; between this, and the Biographer and Historian, there are a thousand.

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgement of the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgement the more sincere, because not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves. We have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure: I would not be misunderstood; but wherever we sympathise with pain, it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure. We have no knowledge, that is, no general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone. The Man of science, the Chemist and Mathematician, whatever difficulties and disgusts they may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. However painful may be the objects with which the Anatomist's knowledge is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge. What then does the Poet? He considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure, he considers man in his own nature and in his ordinary life as contemplating this with a certain quantity of immediate knowledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions, which from habit acquire the quality of intuitions; he considers him as looking upon this complex scene of ideas and sensations, and finding everywhere objects that immediately excite in him sympathies which, from the necessities of his nature, are accompanied by an overbalance of enjoyment.

To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these sympathies in which, without any other discipline than that of our daily life, we are fitted to take delight, the Poet principally directs his attention. He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature. And thus the Poet, prompted by this feeling of pleasure, which accompanies him through the whole course of his studies,
converses with general nature, with affections akin to those, which, through labour and length of time, the Man of science has raised up in himself, by conversing with those particular parts of nature which are the objects of his studies. The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The Man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science. Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, ‘that he looks before and after.’ He is the rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs: in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed; the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the Poet’s thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favourite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labours of Men of science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present; he will be ready to follow the steps of the Man of science, not only in those general indirects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet’s art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarised to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man—It is not, then, to be supposed that any one, who holds that sublime notion of Poetry which I have attempted to convey, will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments, and endeavour to excite
admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject.

What has been thus far said applies to Poetry in general; but especially to those parts of composition where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters; and upon this point it appears to authorise the conclusion that there are few persons of good sense, who would not allow that the dramatic parts of composition are defective, in proportion as they deviate from the real language of nature, and are coloured by a diction of the Poet's own, either peculiar to him as an individual Poet or belonging simply to Poets in general; to a body of men who, from the circumstance of their compositions being in metre, it is expected will employ a particular language.

It is not, then, in the dramatic parts of composition that we look for this distinction of language; but still it may be proper and necessary where the Poet speaks to us in his own person and character. To this I answer by referring the Reader to the description before given of a Poet. Among the qualities there enumerated as principally conducing to form a Poet, is implied nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree. The sum of what was said is, that the Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men. And with what are they connected? Undoubtedly with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these; with the operations of the elements, and the appearances of the visible universe; with storm and sunshine, with the revolutions of the seasons, with cold and heat, with loss of friends and kindred, with injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, with fear and sorrow. These, and the like, are the sensations and objects which the Poet describes, as they are the sensations of other men, and the objects which interest them. The Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of human passions. How, then, can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly? It might be proved that it is impossible. But supposing that this were not the case, the Poet might then be allowed to use a peculiar language when expressing his feelings for his own gratification, or that of men like himself. But poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men. Unless therefore we are advocates for that admiration which subsists upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the Poet must descend from this supposed height; and, in order to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves. To this it may be added, that while he is only selecting from the real language of
men, or, which amounts to the same thing, composing accurately in the spirit of such selection, he is treading upon safe ground, and we know what we are to expect from him. Our feelings are the same with respect to metre; for, as it may be proper to remind the Reader, the distinction of metre is regular and uniform, and not, like that which is produced by what is usually called POETIC DICTION, arbitrary, and subject to infinite caprices upon which no calculation whatever can be made. In the one case, the Reader is utterly at the mercy of the Poet, respecting what imagery or diction he may choose to connect with the passion; whereas, in the other, the metre obeys certain laws, to which the Poet and Reader both willingly submit because they are certain, and because no interference is made by them with the passion, but such as the concurring testimony of ages has shown to heighten and improve the pleasure which co-exists with it.

It will now be proper to answer an obvious question, namely, Why, professing these opinions, have I written in verse? To this, in addition to such answer as is included in what has been already said, I reply, in the first place, Because, however I may have restricted myself, there is still left open to me what confessedly constitutes the most valuable object of all writing, whether in prose or verse; the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature before me to supply endless combinations of forms and imagery. Now, supposing for a moment that whatever is interesting in these objects may be as vividly described in prose, why should I be condemned for attempting to superadd to such description, the charm which, by the consent of all nations, is acknowledged to exist in metrical language? To this, by such as are yet unconvinced, it may be answered that a very small part of the pleasure given by Poetry depends upon the metre, and that it is injudicious to write in metre, unless it be accompanied with the other artificial distinctions of style with which metre is usually accompanied, and that, by such deviation, more will be lost from the shock which will thereby be given to the Reader's associations than will be counterbalanced by any pleasure which he can derive from the general power of numbers. In answer to those who still contend for the necessity of accompanying metre with certain appropriate colours of style in order to the accomplishment of its appropriate end, and who also, in my opinion, greatly under-rate the power of metre in itself, it might, perhaps, as far as relates to these Volumes, have been almost sufficient to observe, that poems are extent, written upon more humble subjects, and in a still more naked and simple style, which have continued to give pleasure from generation to generation. Now, if nakedness and simplicity be a defect, the fact here mentioned affords a strong 'presumption that poems somewhat less naked and simple are capable of affording
pleasure at the present day; and, what I wished chiefly to attempt, at present, was to justify myself for having written under the impression of this belief.

But various causes might be pointed out why, when the style is manly, and the subject of some importance, words metrically arranged will long continue to impart such a pleasure to mankind as he who proves the extent of that pleasure will be desirous to impart. The end of Poetry is to produce excitement in coexistence with an overbalance of pleasure; but, by the supposition; excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not, in that state, succeed each other in accustomed order. If the words, however, by which this excitement is produced be in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence of somethings regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods and in a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling and of feeling not strictly and necessarily connected with the passion. This is unquestionably true; and hence, though the opinion will at first appear paradoxical, from the tendency of metre to divest language, in a certain degree, of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half-consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition, there can be little doubt but that more pathetic situations and sentiments, that is, those which have a greater proportion of pain connected with them, may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rhyme, than is prose. The metre of the old ballads is very artless; yet they contain many passages which would illustrate this opinion; and I hope, if the following Poems be attentively perused, similar instances will be found in them. This opinion may be further illustrated by appealing to the Reader's own experience of the reluctance with which he comes to the re-perusal of the distressful parts of Clarissa Harlowe, or The Gamester; while Shakespeare's writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us, as pathetic, beyond the bounds of pleasure—an effect which, in a much greater degree than might at first be imagined, is to be ascribed to small, but continued and regular impulses of pleasurable surprise from the metrical arrangement. On the other hand (what it must be allowed will much more frequently happen) if the Poet's words should be incommensurate with the passion, and inadequate to raise the Reader to a height of desirable excitement, then, (unless the Poet's choice of his metre has been grossly injudicious) in the feelings of pleasure which the Reader has been accustomed to connect with metre in general, and in the feeling, whether cheerful or melancholy, which he has been accustomed to connect with the particular movement of metre, there will be found something which will greatly contribute to impart passion to the words, and to effect the complex end which the Poet proposes to himself.
If I had undertaken a SYSTEMATIC defence of the theory here maintained, it would have been my duty to develop the various causes upon which the pleasure received from metrical language depends. Among the chief of these causes is to be reckoned a principle which must be well known to those who have made any of the Arts the object of accurate reflection: namely, the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude. This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds, and their chief feeder. From this principle the direction of the sexual appetite, and all the passions connected with it, take their origin: it is the life of our ordinary conversation; and upon the accuracy with which similitude in dissimilitude, and dissimilitude in similitude are perceived, depend our taste and our moral feelings. It would not be a useless employment to apply this principle to the consideration of metre, and to show that metre is hence enabled to afford much pleasure, and to point out in what manner that pleasure is produced. But my limits will not permit me to enter upon this subject, and I must content myself with a general summary.

I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of re-action, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and emotion kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, from various causes, is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will, upon the whole, be in a state of enjoyment. If Nature be thus cautious to preserve in a state of enjoyment a being so employed, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson held forth to him, and ought especially to take care, that, whatever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader’s mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling always found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while, in lighter compositions, the ease and gracefulness with which the Poet manages his numbers are themselves
confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the Reader. All that it is necessary
to say, however, upon this subject, may be effected affirming, what few persons will
deny, that, of two descriptions, either of passions, manners, or characters, each of
them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be
read a hundred times where the prose is read once.

Having thus explained a few of my reasons for writing in verse, and why I have
chosen subjects from common life, and endeavoured to bring my language near to
the real language of men, if I have been too minute in pleading my own cause, I have
at the same time been treating a subject of general interest; and for this reason a few
words shall be added with reference solely to these particular poems, and to some
defects which will probably be found in them. I am sensible that my associations
must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently,
giving to things a false importance, I may have sometimes written upon unworthy
subject; but I am less apprehensive on this account, than that my language may
frequently have suffered from those arbitrary connections of feelings and ideas with
particular words and phrases from which no man can altogether protect himself.
Hence I have no doubt, that, in some instances, feelings, even of the ludicrous, may
be given to my Readers by expressions which appeared to me tender and pathetic.
Such faulty expressions, were I convinced they were faulty at present, and that they
must necessarily continue, to be so, I would willingly take all reasonable pains to
correct. But it is dangerous to make these alternations on the simple authority of a
few individuals, or even of certain classes of men; for where the understanding of
an Author is not convinced, or his feelings altered, this can not be done without great
injury to himself: for his own feelings are his stay and support; and if he set them
aside in one instance, he may be induced to repeat this act till his mind shall lose all
confidence in itself, and become utterly debilitated. To this it may be added, that the
critic ought never to forget that he is himself exposed to the same errors as the poet,
and perhaps, in a much greater degree: for there can be no presumption in saying
of most readers, that it is not probable they will be so well acquainted with the various
stages of meaning through which words have passed, or with the fickleness or
stability of the relations of particular ideas to each other; and above all, since they
are so much less interested in the subject, they must decide lightly and carelessly.

Long as the Reader has been detained, I hope he will permit me to caution him
against a mode of false criticism which has been applied to poetry, in which the
language closely resembles that of life and nature. Such verses have been triumphed
over in parodies, of which Dr. Johnson's stanza is a fair specimen:
'I put my hat upon my head
And walked into the Strand,
And there I met another man
Whose hat was in his hand'.

Immediately under these lines let us place one of the most justly - admired
stanzas of the 'Babes in the Wood'.

'These pretty Babes with hand in hand
Went wandering up and down;
But never more they saw the Man
Approaching from the Town'.

In both these stanzas the words, and the order of the words, in no respect differ
from the most unimpassioned conversation. There are words in both, for example,
'the Strand,' and 'the Town,' connected with none but the most familiar ideas; yet the
one stanza we admit as admirable and the other as a fair example of the superlatively
contemptible. Whence arises this difference? Not from the metre, not from the
language, not from the order of the words; but the matter expressed in Dr. Johnson's
stanza is contemptible. The proper method of teaching trivial and simple verses, to
which Dr. Johnson's stanza would be a fair parallelism, is not to say, this is a bad kind
of poetry, or, this is not poetry; but, this wants sense; it is neither interesting in itself,
nor can lead to any thing interesting; the images neither originate in that same state
of feeling which arises out of thought, nor can excite thought or feeling in the Reader.
This is the only sensible manner of dealing with such verses. Why trouble yourself
about the species till you have previously decided upon the genus? Why take pains
to prove that an ape is not a Newton, when it is self evident that he is not a man?

One request I must make of my reader, which is, that in judging these Poems
he would decide by his own feelings genuinely and not by reflection upon what will
probably be the judgement of others. How common is it to hear a person say, I
myself do not object to this style of composition, or this or that expression, but, to
such and such classes of people it will appear mean or ludicrous! This mode of
criticism, so destructive of all sound unadulterated judgement, is almost universal;
let the Reader then abide, independently, by his own feelings, and, if he finds himself
affected, let him not suffer such conjectures to interfere with his pleasure.

If an Author, by any single composition, has impressed us with respect for his
talents, it is useful to consider this as affording a presumption, that on other occasions
where we have been displeased, he, nevertheless, may not have written ill or absurdly; and further, to give him so much credit for this one composition as may induce us to review what has displeased us, with more care than we should otherwise have bestowed upon it. This is not only an act of justice, but, in our decisions upon poetry especially, may conduce, in a high degree, to the improvement of our own taste; for an accurate taste in poetry and in all other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an acquired talent, which can only be produced by thought and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is mentioned, not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most unexperienced Reader from judging for himself, (I have already said that I wish him to judge for himself;) but merely to tempor the rashness of decision, and to suggest, that, if Poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgement may be erroneous and that, in many case, it necessarily will be so.

Nothing would, I know, have so effectually contributed to further the end which I have in view, as to have shown of what kind the pleasure is, and how that pleasure is produced, which in confessedly produced by metrical composition essentially different from that which I have here endeavoured to recommend: for the Reader will say that he has been pleased by such composition; and what more can be done for him? The power of any art is limited; and he will suspect, that, if it be proposed to furnish him with new friends, that can be only upon condition of his abandoning his old friends. Besides, as I have said, the Reader is himself conscious of pleasure which he has received from such composition, composition to which he has peculiarly attached the endearing name of Poetry; an all men feel an habitual gratitude, and something of an honourable bigotry, for the objects which have long continued to please them: we not only wish to be pleased, but to be pleased in the particular way in which we have been accustomed to be pleased. There is in these feelings enough to resist a host of arguments; and I should be the less able to combat them successfully, as I am willing to allow, that, in order entirely to enjoy the Poetry which I am recommending, it would be necessary to give up much of what is ordinarily enjoyed. But, would my limits have permitted me to point out how this pleasure is produced, many obstacles might have been removed, and the Reader assisted in perceiving that the powers of language are not so limited as he may suppose; and that it is possible for poetry to give other enjoyments, of a purer, more lasting, and more exquisite nature. This part of the subject has not been altogether neglected, but it has not been so much my present aim to prove, that the interest, excited by some other kinds of poetry of less vivid, and less worthy of the nobler powers of the mind, as to offer reasons for presuming, that if my purpose were fulfilled, a species of poetry would be produced, which is genuine poetry; in its nature well adapted to
interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations.

From what has been said, and from a perusal of the Poems, the Reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which I had in view; he will determine how far it has been attained, and what is a much more important question, whether it be worth attaining: and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the approbation of the Public.

**Appendix**

Perhaps, as I have no right to expect that attentive perusal, without which, confined, as I have been, to the narrow limits of a preface, my meaning cannot be thoroughly understood, I am anxious to give an exact notion of the sense in which the phrase poetic diction has been used; and for this purpose, a few words shall here be added, concerning the origin and characteristics of the phraseology, which I have condemned under that name.

The earliest poets of all nations generally wrote from passion excited by real events; they wrote naturally, and as men: feeling powerfully as they did, their language was daring, and figurative. In succeeding times, Poets, and Men ambitious of the fame of Poets, perceiving the influence of such language, and desirous of producing the same effect without being animated by the same passion, set themselves to a mechanical adoption of these figures of speech, and made use of them, sometimes with propriety, but much more frequently applied them to feelings and thoughts with which they had no natural connection whatsoever. A language was thus insensibly produced, differing materially from the real language of men in any situation. The Reader or Hearer of this distorted language found himself in a perturbed and unusual state of mind: when affected by the genuine language of passion he had been in a perturbed and unusual state of mind also: in both cases he was willing that his common judgement and understanding should be laid asleep, and he had no instinctive and infallible perception of the true to make him reject the false; the one served as a passport for the other. The emotion was in both cases delightful, and no wonder if he confounded the one with the other, and believed them both to be produced by the same, or similar causes. Besides, the Poet spoke to him in the character of a man to be looked up to, a man of genius and authority. Thus, and from a variety of other causes, this distorted language was received with admiration; and Poets, it is probable, who had before contented themselves for the most part with misapplying only expressions which at first had been dictated by real passion, carried the abuse still further, and introduced phrases composed apparently in the spirit of
the original figurative language of passion, yet altogether of their own invention, and
distinguished by various degrees of wanton deviation from good sense and nature.

It is indeed true, that the language of the earliest Poets was felt to differ
materially from ordinary language, because it was the language of extraordinary
occasions; but it was really spoken by men, language which the Poet himself had
uttered when he had been affected by the events which he described, or which he
had heard, uttered by those around him. To this language it is probable that metre of
some sort or other was early superadded. This separated the genuine language of
Poetry still further from common life, so that whoever read or heard the poems of
these earliest Poets felt himself moved in a way in which he had not been accustomed
to be moved in real life, and by causes manifestly different from those which acted
upon him in real life. This was the great temptation to all the corruptions which have
followed: under the protection of this feeling succeeding Poets constructed a
phraseology which had one thing, it is true, in common with the genuine language of
poetry, namely, that it was not heard in ordinary conversation; that it was unusual.
But first Poets, as I have said, spoke a language which, though unusual, was still the
language of men. This circumstance, however, was disregarded by their successors;
they found that they could please by easier means; they became proud of modes
of expression which they themselves had invented, and which were uttered only by
themselves. In process of time metre became a symbol or promise of this unusual
language, and whoever took upon him to write in metre, according as he possessed
more or less of true poetic genius, introduced less or more of this adulterated
phraseology into his compositions, and the true and the false were inseparably
interwoven until, the taste of men becoming gradually perverted, this language was
received as a natural language: and at length, by the influence of books upon men,
did to a certain degree really become so. Abuses of this kind were imported from one
nation to another, and with the progress of refinement this diction became daily more
and more corrupt, thrusting out of sight the plain humanities of nature by motley
masquerade of tricks, quaintnesses, hieroglyphics, and enigmas.

It would not be uninteresting to point out the causes of the pleasure given by this
extravagant and absurd diction. It depends upon a great variety of causes, but upon
none, perhaps, more than its influence in impressing a nation of the peculiarity and
exaltation of the Poet’s character, and in flattering the Reader’s self-love by bringing
him nearer to a sympathy with that character; an effect which is accomplished by
unsettling ordinary habits of thinking, and thus assisting the Reader to approach to
that perturbed and dizzy state of mind in which if he does not find himself, he
imagines that he is balked of a peculiar enjoyment which poetry can and ought to
bestow.
The sonnet quoted from Gray, in the Preface, except the lines printed in Italics, consists of little else but this diction, though not of the worst kind; and indeed, if one may be permitted to say so, it is far too common in the best writers both ancient and modern. Perhaps in no way, by positive example, could more easily be given a notion of what I mean by the phrase poetic diction than by referring to a comparison between the metrical paraphrases which we have of passages in the Old and New Testament, and those passages as they exist in our common Translation. See Pope’s ‘Messiah’ throughout; Prior’s ‘Did sweeter sounds adorn my flowing tongue,’ & c. & c. ‘Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,’ & c, & c. 1st Corinthians, chap. xiii. By way of immediate example, take the following of Dr. Johnson:

Turn on the prudent Ant thy heedless eyes,
Observe her labours, Sluggard, and be wise;
No stern command, no monitory voice,
Prescribes her duties, or directs her choice;
Yet, timely provident, she hastes away,
To snatch the blessings of a plenteous day;
When fruitful Summer loads the teeming plain,
She crops the harvest, and she stores the grain.
How long shall sloth usurp thy useless hours,
Unnerve thy vigour, and enchain thy powers?
While artful shades thy downy couch enclose,
And soft solicitation courts repose,
Amidst the drowsy charms of dull delight,
Year chases year with unremitted flight,
Till Want now following, fraudulent and slow
Shall spring to seize thee, like an ambush’d foe.’

From this hubbub of words pass to the original. ‘Goto the Ant, thou Sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.’ Proverbs, chap. vi.
One more quotation, and I have done. It is from Cowper’s Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk:

‘Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Ne’er sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a sabbath appeared.
Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I must visit no more.
My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.’

This passage is quoted as an instance of three different styles of composition. The first four lines are poorly expressed; some Critics would call the language prosaic; the fact is, it would be bad prose, so bad, that it is scarcaly worse in metre. The epithet ‘church-going’ applied to a bell, and that by so chaste a writer as Cowper, is an instance of the strange abuses which Poets have introduced into their language, till they and their Readers take them as matters of course, if they do not single them out expressly as subjects of admiration. The two lines Ne’er sighed at the sound,’ &c., are, in my opinion, an instance of the language of passion wrested from its proper use, and, from the mere circumstance of the composition being in metre, applied upon an occasion that does not justify such violent expressions; and I should condemn the passage, though perhaps few Readers will agree with me, as vicious poetic diction. The last stanza is thoughout admirably expressed: it would be equally good whether in prose or verse, except that the Reader has an exquisite pleasure in seeing such natural language so naturally connected with metre. The beauty of this
stanza tempts me to conclude with a principle which ought never to be lost sight of, and which has been my chief guide in all I have said, - namely that in works of imagination and sentiment, for of these only have I been treating, in proportion as ideas and feelings are valuable, whether the composition be in prose or in verse, they require and exact one and the same language. Metre is but adventitious to composition, and the phraseology for which that passport is necessary, even where it may be graceful at all, will be little valued by the judicious.

6.3 Explanation

The ‘preface’ begins with the reference to the first edition of Lyrical Ballads, published in 1798. Wordsworth points out that the first edition of his poems was an experiment to test the response from the readers. The edition gave him proof that the public reaction was very favourable to his experiment. It was sold very quickly and the poems enjoyed great popularity beyond expectations. Wordsworth succeeded in imparting the poetic pleasure which the readers naturally expect from a poet.

The first edition of the Lyrical Ballads had no preface. It had only a brief Advertisement or introduction. As wordsworth was introducing a new kind of poetry, his friends advised him to add a preface to the second edition of Lyrical Ballads. They wanted that he should state his aims and objectives as well as a defence of theory of poetry. In fact, wordsworth was not willing to write a preface for two reasons. First he felt that, the readers would think that he was selfishly hoping appreciation and recognition for his poems. Secondly, he knew that a suitable and adequate defence of a new kind of poetry can not be put forward within the limited compass of a preface. However, he finally decided to add a preface to explain the theme and language of his new kind of poetry. He did not like to thrush his poems on the readers abruptly without any proper introduction. He added the preface to explain the difference between his new kind of poetry and the poetry of neo-classical age.

Wordsworth, then, explains the themes and language of his poems. He says that his main aim in writing the poems is to choose incidents and situations of common life and to relate them in a selection of the language really used by men. The imaginative colouring given to these ordinary incidents would make them appear in an unusual light. His aim of presenting these incidents in an unusual way is to make them interesting. He has chosen the aspects of humble and rustic life for several reasons. They are

1) The essential passions of the human heart find free and frank expression in humble and rustic surrounding.
2) In rustic life the feelings are simpler and they are expressed more accurately and forcefully.

3) The manners of rustic life are not sophisticated, and hence are more easily understood and, are more durable. Social vanity does not prevent them from frank expression of feeling.

4) In the humble and rustic condition, the human passions are deeply associated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. He further says that the rustic people live in constant communication with the best objects of nature from which the best part of language is derived. The simple language in which they convey their feelings, is more permanent and philosophical than the artificial diction used by the neo-classical poets.

Wordsworth’s poems in *Lyrical Ballads* differ from contemporary poetry because they enlighten the readers and purify their emotions. They are spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings tempered and modified by thought. Secondly, feelings are more important than action and situation. The poet has tried to enlarge the sensibility of his readers to keep them away from cheap and sensational literature.

The language of Wordsworth’s poem is completely different from the contemporary poets. He has avoided the various hackneyed and artificial devices of poetic diction used by contemporary poets. He has selected natural themes and natural language, i.e. the language really used by men. According to him men use personifications only when they are emotionally excited. He, too, has used them in his poems on such occasions. He has never used them as a mechanical device. He has avoided poetic diction in order to bring his language nearer to the language of men. In short, he has used a natural style. We even found prosaic language in his poetry. Here Wordsworth says that even in the best poetry, the really important passages have an order of words which is similar to that found in a good prose composition. The only difference between the two is in the metre. Wordsworth here concludes that, “there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition”. They are closely related in their nature, function and appeal. The same materials are used in both. They originate from the same sources and appeal to the same faculties.

According to some critics rhyme and metre distinguish the language of poetry from prose. Wordsworth does not agree with this remark. He says that metre is not essential to poetry, but it is an essential source of pleasure. So, its use is desirable. In fact passion is the primary thing. If the feelings are noble, the expression becomes elevated by itself. The simple diction is really useful. The use of artificial diction is not
merely useless but harmful to good poetry. When the poet speaks through his character, the language used must be appropriate to character and situation. So a simple diction should be used for the less elevated emotions. Coleridge criticizes Wordsworth's use of simple diction but Wordsworth remarks that the addition of metre is enough distinction. There is no need for artificial devices. It is the passion and emotions that matter. A judicious choice of subject would lead him to appropriate passions. Elevated passions and emotions would by themselves ennoble diction.

Wordsworth's purpose in writing this 'Preface' was to bring about a revolution in poetic taste. An important part of this Preface is concerned with his concept of poet. He believes that a poet is essentially a man speaking to men. He writes not for his pleasure alone but for the pleasure of his readers. To give pleasure is the primary function of poetry. A poet differs from an ordinary man not in nature but in degree. He has a greater knowledge of human nature. His power of imagination and sensibility is greater than the average human beings. He can express better those thoughts and feelings which arise him without external stimulation. He communicates which he has not directly experienced. Hence his language is often likely to be mechanical. So he should try to achieve his identifications with his characters to make his language more lively and forceful. As the purpose of poetry is to give pleasure, the poet should use a language purified of what is disgusting and painful.

Wordsworth, then, points out that the poetic truth is much higher than the truth of philosophy and history. According to him philosophy deals with abstract truth and history deals with particular facts. However poetry deals with both kinds of truths. It aims at universal truths and also illustrates them through particular examples. In fact, poetry is the image of man and nature. It aims at being true to nature and provides higher pleasure. In order to provide pleasure the poet studies the elemental instincts of man and his natural impulses. He sees man in ordinary life. He writes of emotions which his characters are supposed to have experienced. So the passions which he communicates are the passions of real men. He also perceives an organic unity in nature and man. The realization of this universal truth gives him pleasure.

Poetry, according to Wordsworth, is also superior to science. The scientists work hard to discover truths. However, their, truth is particular and individual. The poetic truth is universal and general. It can be shared by all. Science is restricted to intellectual field. It deals with only particularities. But the poetry goes down to the soul of things. The truths which he realizes are coloured by his imagination and emotion. So Wordsworth says that poetry is superior to science. It is really ‘the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge’. The scientists appeal to the intellect whereas the appeal of the poet is to heart and soul of the readers. In short, poetic truth involves the
permanent feelings of the human heart. He finally says that poetic truth is complimentary to scientific truth. It endows the achievement of science with emotion and feeling.

Wordsworth gives importance to the real language of men and condemns the use of poetic diction. While justifying the use of metre he says that metre is regular and uniform. The rules of metre are fixed. Metre adds the charm and beauty to the description. It has a restraining effect on the flow of emotions and passions. It is really an additional source of pleasure. It softens the painful and the pathetic. The use of metre is also traditional. It imparts grace and dignity to the lighter emotions. In short, metre is an inseparable part of poetry. However, poetic diction is arbitrary and capricious. It has neither rules nor tradition. So Wordsworth condemns poetic diction and defends metre.

The concluding part of the 'Preface' presents Wordsworth's famous definition of poetry. The process of poetic creation and his warning against false criticism. Here Wordsworth defines poetry as "Spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquility". He, then, points out the four stages of poetic creation. They are:

1) Observation
2) Recollection
3) Contemplation and
4) Imaginative excitement

Finally, he appeals to his readers to judge him on the basis of their own feelings and not to be carried away by the views of the critics. Here we get Wordsworth's warning against false criticism. In the end, Wordsworth makes an earnest plea to the readers to read his poems with an open mind and judge him on the basis of their own feelings.

In 'Appendix On Poetic Diction' Wordsworth has explained the purpose of Appendix, a brief history of the rise of poetic diction and causes of poetic diction. In the end he points out that metre is not essential to poetry. It is merely external. It is merely pleasure superadded.
6.4 Check Your Progress

I) Choose the correct option.

1) William Wordsworth is a .......... critic.
   a) traditional     b) neo-classical     c) romantic     d) modern

2) Wordsworth's main purpose of writing a new kind of poetry was to choose
   incidents and situation from .......... 
   a) common life     b) urban life
   c) mythology     d) imaginative world

3) Wordsworth believed that the difference in good and bad poetry is due to .......... 
   a) metre     b) language     c) feelings     d) order of words

4) Appendix on Poetic Diction was added to .......... edition of Lyrical Ballads.
   a) 1798     b) 1800     c) 1802     d) 1815

   a) five     b) two     c) three     d) four

II) Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each.

1) Who advised Wordsworth to add a 'Preface' to the second edition of Lyrical Ballads ?

2) What, according to Wordsworth, is the definition of poetry ?

3) Why did Wordsworth say 'poetry is superior to science' ?

4) What, according to Wordsworth is the primary function of poetry ?

5) Name the four stages of poetic creation.

6.5 Glossary

- **ascertain**: to find out, determine
- **approbation**: approval
- **obtrude**: to present or introduce to the public
- **Catallus, Terence, Lucretis**: Roman poets of Golden Age
- **Statius and Claudian**: Roman poets of 4th century A. D.
- import: significance
- guadiness: decorative words and conceits
- inane: lifeless, meaningless
- cencure: criticise
- indolence: laziness
- pernicious: harmful
- stimulation: excitement
- apprise: to tell, to make know to
- impart: give
- culpably: offensive, wrong
- stumble upon: to find something by chance
- prosaisms: prosaic phrases / language
- affections: attributes or properties
- kindred: related
- Celestial Ichor: the fluid flowing through the veins of gods (according to mythology)
- dissimilitude: dissimilarity
- volitions: act of choosing
- emanations: outcome
- scruple: hesitate
- Frontiniac: a french wine
- homage: respect
- properties: qualities
- unalienable: inseparable
- palpably: feeling by touch
- transfiguration: change
- caprices: whims
- Clarisa Harlowe: a novel by Samuel Richardson
• **Gamester**: a tragedy by Edward Moore
• **Motley**: made up of many colours or elements
• **masquearade**: to hide the true nature
• **quaintnnesses**: odd or old fashioned ornaments in language
• **hieroglyphics**: words which are difficult to understand
• **enigmas**: riddles
• **balked**: missed, to prevent something deliberately, disappointed
• **hubbub**: confusion
• **sluggard**: lazy person
• **Cowper**: a poet of 18th century
• **wrested**: removed forcibly
• **vicious**: bad
• **adventitious**: accidental
• **passport**: metre

### 6.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

**I)**
1) Romantic
2) Common life
3) Feelings
4) 1802
5) Four

**II)**
1) his friends
2) Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, it takes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquility.
3) The truths of science are particular and individual, while poetic truth is universal and general and can be shared by all.
4) to give pleasure
5) a) observation b) recollection c) contemplation and d) imaginative excitement of the emotions.
6.7 Exercises

I) Answer the following questions in about 250 words each.

1) What are Wordsworth's views regarding the subject matter of poetry?
2) Write a note on Wordsworth's views on the language of poetry.
3) Examine Wordsworth's conception of the nature and function of poetry.
4) What, according to Wordsworth, is the difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.
5) 'Preface to Lyrical Ballads' is an epochmaking document. Comment.

6.8 Reference for Further Study

Why the Novel Matters

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7.0 Objectives

After studying this unit, you will

- know the importance of life in the novel.
- know the reasons for studying the novel.
- know Lawrence's style as an essayist.
- be able to answer the questions on the essay

7.1 Introduction

Through 'Preface to Lyrical Ballads' we come to know Wordsworth's theory of poetry, his ideas of language and themes of poetry. Through this unit, we will try to know about D. H. Lawrence's ideas about novel. Novel is one of the major forms of literature. It observes and studies human life minutely.

D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930) is a prolific modern writer. He wrote novels, short stories, poetry, plays and essays. His fame rests chiefly on his novels like Sons and Lovers (1913), The White Peacock (1911), The Trespasser (1912), Women in Love
(1921), The Plumed Serpent (1926), Lady Chatterley's Lover (1929). As a short story writer he published the following collections of short stories. The Prussian Officer (1914), England, My England (1922), The Ladybird, The Fox, The Captain's Doll (1923), The Virgin and the Gipsy (1930), The Lovely Lady (1930) etc. His following essay and travelbooks are also of good reputation: Twilight in Italy (1916), Sea and Sardinia (1921), Reflections on the Death of Porcupine (1925), Mornings in Mexico (1927). Through his literature, Lawrence presents his own interpretation of life. He is very much concerned with basic problems of human existence, man's relations with man and the universe beyond himself.

Though Lawrence is not a critic, the present essay has all the capacity to call him a critic. The present essay Why the Novel Matters tells us about the importance of the novel. Lawrence says that the novel is a bright book of life. According to him life and novel are inseparable. He firmly believes that a novelist is superior to the saint, the scientist, the philosopher and the poet also. The novel helps us not to be a dead man in life.

7.2 Why the Novel Matters

We have curious ideas of ourselves. We think of ourselves as body with a spirit in it, or a body with a soul in it, or a body with a mind in it. Mens sana in corpore sano. The years drink up the wine, and at last throw the bottle away, the body, of course being the bottle.

It is a funny sort of superstition. Why should I look at my hand, as it so cleverly writes these words, and decide that it is a mere nothing compared to the mind that directs it? Is there really any huge difference between my hand and my brain? Or my mind? My hand is alive, it flickers with a life of its own. It meets all the strange universe in touch, and learns a vast number of things, and knows a vast number of things. My hand, as it writes these words, slips gaily along, jumps like a grass hopper to dot an i, feels the table rather cold, gets a little bored if I write too long, has its own rudiments of thought, and is just as much me as is my brain, my mind, or my soul. Why should I imagine that there is a me which is more me than my hand is? Since my hand is absolutely alive, me alive.

Whereas, of course, as far as I am concerned, my pen isn't alive at all. My pen isn't me alive. Me alive ends at my fingertips.

Whatever is me alive is me. Every tiny bit of my hands is alive, every little freckle and hair and fold of skin. And whatever is me alive is me. Only my finger-nails, those ten little weapons between me and an inanimate universe, they cross the
mysterious Rubicon between me alive and things like my pen, which are not alive, in my own sense.

So, seeing my hand is all alive and me alive, wherein is it just a bottle, or a jug, or a tin can, or a vessel of clay, or any of the rest of that nonsense? True, if I cut it it will bleed, like a can of cherries. But then the skin that is cut, and the veins that bleed, and the bones that should never be seen, they are all just as live as the blood that flows. So the tin can business or vessel of clay, is just bunk.

And that's what you learn, when you're a novelist. And that's what your are very liable not to know, if your're a parson, or a philosopher, or a scientist, or a stupid person. If you're a parson, you talk about souls in heaven. If you're a novelist, your know that paradise is in the palm of your hand, and on the end of your nose, because both are alive; and alive, and man alive, which is more than you can say, for certain, of paradise. Paradise is after life, and I for one am not keen on anything that is after life. If you are philosopher, you talk about infinity, and the pure spirit which knows all things. But if you pick up a novel, you realize immediately that infinity is just a handle to this self - same jug of a body of mine; while as for knowing, if I find my finger in the fire, I know that fire burns with a knowledge so emphatic and vital, it leaves Nirvana merely a conjecture. Oh, yes, my body, me alive, knows, and knows intensely. And as for the sum of all knowledge, it can't be anything more than an accumulation of all the things I know in the body, and you dear reader, know in the body.

These damned philosophers, they talk as if they suddenly went off in steam, and were then much more important than they are when they're in their shirts. It is nonsense. Everyman, philosopher included, ends in his own finger - tips. That's the end of his man alive. As for the words and thoughts and sighs and aspirations that fly from him, they are so many tremulations in the ether, and not alive at all. But if the tremulations reach another man alive, he may receive them into his life, and his life may take on a new colour, like a chameleon creeping from a brown rock on to a green leaf. All very well and good. It still doesn't alter the fact that the so-called spirit, the message or teaching of the philosopher or the saint, isn't alive at all, but just a tremulation upon the ether, like a radio message. All this spirit stuff is just tremulations upon the ether. If you, as man alive, quiver from the tremulation of the ether into new life, that is because you are man alive, and you take sustenance and stimulation into your alive man in a myriad ways. But to say that the message, or the spirit which is communicated to you, is more important than your living body, is nonsense. You might as well say that the potato at dinner was more important.
Nothing is important but life. And for myself, I can absolutely see life nowhere but in the living. Life with a capital L is only man alive. Even a cabbage in the rain is cabbage alive. All things that are alive are amazing. And all things that are dead are subsidiary to the living. Better a live dog than a dead lion. But better a live lion than a live dog C'est la vie!

It seems impossible to get a saint, or a philosopher, or a scientist, to stick to this simple truth. They are all, in a sense, renegades. The saint wishes to offer himself up as spiritual food for the multitude. Even Francis of Assisi turns himself into a sort of angel cake, of which anyone may take a slice. But an angle cake is rather less than man alive. And poor St. Francis might well apologize to his body, when he is dying; 'Oh, pardon me, my body, the wrong I did you through the years!'. It was no wafer, for others to eat.

The philosopher, on the other hand, because he can think, decides that nothing but thoughts matter. It is as if a rabbit because he can make little pills, should decide that nothing but little pills matter. As for the scientist, he has absolutely no use for me so long as I am man alive. To the scientist, I am dead. He puts under the microscope a bit of dead me, and calls it me. He takes me to pieces, and says first one piece, and then another piece, is me. My heart, my liver, my stomach have all been scientifically me, according to the scientist; and nowadays I am either a brain, or nerves, or glands, or something more up-to-date in the tissue line.

Now I absolutely flatly deny that I am a soul, or a body, or a mind, or an intelligence, or a brain, or a nervous system, or a bunch of glands, or any of the rest of these bits of me. The whole is greater than the part. And therefore I, who am man alive, am greater than my soul, or spirit, or body, or mind, or consciousness, or anything else that is merely a part of me. I am a man, and alive. I am man alive, and as long as I can, I intend to go on being man alive.

For this reason I am a novelist. And being a novelist, I consider myself superior to the saint, the scientist, the philosopher, and the poet, who are all great masters of different bits of man alive, but never get the whole hog.

The novel is the one bright book of life. Books are not life. They are only tremulations on the ether. But the novel as a tremulation can make the whole man alive tremble. Which is more than poetry, philosophy, science, or any other book tremulation can do.

The novel is the book of life. In this sense, the Bible is a great confused novel. You may say, it is about God. But it is really about man alive. Adam, Eve, Sarai, Abraham Issac, Jacob, Samuel, David, Bath - Sheba, Ruth, Esther, Solomon, Job,
Isaiah, Jesus, Mark, Judas, Paul, Peter: What is it but man alive, from start to finish? Man alive, not mere bits. Even the Lord is another man alive, in a burning bush, throwing the tablets of stone at Moses's head.

I do hope you begin to get my idea, why the novel is supremely important, as a tremulation on the ether. Plato makes the perfect ideal being tremble in me. But that's only a bit of me. Perfection is only a bit, in the strange make-up of man alive. The Sermon on the Mount makes the selfless spirit of me quiver. But that, too, is only a bit of me. The Ten Commandments set the old Adam shivering in me, warning me that I am a thief and a murderer, unless I watch it. But even the old Adam is only a bit of me.

I very much like all these bits of me to be set trembling with life and the wisdom of life. But I do ask that the whole of me shall tremble in its wholeness, some time or other.

And this, of course, must happen in me, living.

But as far as it can happen from a communication, it can only happen when a whole novel communicates itself to me. The Bible - but all the Bible - and Homer, and Shakespeare: these are the supreme old novels. These are things to all men. Which means that in their wholeness they affect the whole man alive, which is the man himself, beyond any part of him. They set the whole tree trembling with a new access of life, they do not just stimulate growth in one direction.

I don't want to grow in any one direction any more. And, if I can help it, I don't want to stimulate anybody else into some particular direction. A particular direction ends in a cul-de-sac. We're in a cul-de-sac at present.

I don't believe in any dazzling revelation, or in any supreme word. 'The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord' shall stand for ever'. That's the kind of stuff we've drugged ourselves with. As a matter of fact, the grass withereth, but comes up all the greener for that reason, after the rains. The flower fadeth, and therefore the bud opens. But the word of the Lord, being man-uttered and a mere vibration on the ether, becomes staler and staler, more and more boring, till at last we turn a deaf ear and it ceases to exist, far more finally than any withered grass. It is grass that renews its youth like the eagle, not any word.

We should ask for no absolutes, or absolute. Once and for all and for ever, let us have done with the ugly imperialism of any absolute. There is no absolute good, there is nothing absolutely right. All things flow and change, and even change is not absolute. The whole is a strange assembly of apparently incongruous parts, slipping past one another.
Me, man alive, I am a very curious assembly of incongruous parts. My yea! of today is oddly different from my yea! of yesterday. My tears of tomorrow will have nothing to do with my tears of a year ago. If the one I love remains unchanged and unchanging, I shall cease to love her. It is only because she changes and startles me into changes and defies my inertia, and is herself staggered in her inertia by my changing, that I can continue to love her. If she stayed put, I might as well love the pepper-pot.

In all this change, I maintain a certain integrity. But woe betide me if I try to put finger on it. If I say of myself, I am this, I am that! - then, if I stick to it, I turn into a stupid fixed thing like a lamp-post, I shall never know wherein lies my integrity, my individuality, my me. I can never know it. It is useless to talk about my ego. That only means that I have made up an idea of myself, and that I am trying to cut myself out to pattern. Which is no good. You can cut your cloth to fit your coat, but you can't clip bits off your living body, to trim it down to your idea. True, you can put yourself into ideal corsets. But even in ideal corsets, fashions change.

Let us learn from the novel. In the novel, the characters can do nothing but live. If they keep on being good, according to pattern, they cease to live, and the novel falls dead. A character in a novel has got to live, or it is nothing.

We, likewise, in life have got to live, or we are nothing.

What we mean by living is, of course, just as indescribable as what we mean by being. Men get ideas into their heads, of what they mean by Life, and they proceed to cut life out to pattern. Sometimes they go into the desert to seek God, sometimes they go into the desert to seek cash, sometimes it is wine, woman, and song, and again it is water, political reform, and votes. You never know what it will be next: from killing your neighbour with hideous bombs and gas that tears the lungs, to supporting a Foundlings Home and preaching infinite Love and being co-respondent in a divorce.

In all this wild welter, we need some sort of guide. It's no good inventing. Thou Shalt Nots!

What then? Turn truly, honourably to the novel, and see wherein you are man alive, and wherein you are dead man in life. You may love a woman as man alive, and you may be making love to a woman as man alive, and you may be making love to a woman as sheer dead man in life. You may eat you dinner as man alive, or as a mere masticating corpse. As man alive you may have a shot at your enemy. But as a ghastly simulacrum of life you may be firing bombs into men who are neither your
enemies nor your friends, but just things you are dead to. Which criminal, when the things happen to be alive.

To be alive, to be man alive, to be whole man alive: that is the point. And at its best, the novel and the novel supremely, can help you. It can help you not to be dead man in life. So much of a man walks about dead and carcass in the street and house, today: so much of women is merely dead. Like a pianoforte with half the notes mute.

But in the novel you can see, plainly, when the man goes dead, the woman goes inert. You can develop an instinct for life, if you will, instead of a theory of right and wrong, good and bad.

In life, there is right and wrong, good and bad all the time. But what is right in one case is wrong in another. And in the novel you see one man becoming a corpse, because of his so called goodness, another going dead because of his so-called wickedness. Right and wrong is an instinct: but an instinct of the whole consciousness in a man, bodily, mental, spiritual at once. And only in the novel are all things given full play, or at least, they may be given full play, when we realize the life itself, and not inert safety, is the reason for living. For out of the full play of all things emerges the only thing that is anything, the wholeness of a man, the wholeness of a woman, man alive, and live woman.

7.3 Chief Features of the Essay

The present essay by Lawrence is very short and precise. It shows minute observation of the human life. Accuracy in writing is an important feature of the essay. His concentration is on the importance of the novel in the human life and the importance of human life in the novel. His sole effort is to highlight the relationship between the novel and the life. By using the examples of the parson/saint, philosopher, scientist and novelist, he emphasizes the superiority of the novelist over all others. Life as it is, becomes the very subject of a novel. His style is somewhat clumsy. The striking element of this essay is his love for life. According to him the novel describes man alive and his life. Change is an important aspect of life. It is this change which makes our life interesting and live. And hence, for him, the novel matters much.
7.4 Check Your Progress

I) Choose the correct option.

1) The main idea of this essay is ..........
   a) the importance of life.
   b) the knowledge of the novel.
   c) superiority of the novelist over others.
   d) to highlight the importance of the novel.

2) According to Lawrence, the novel is a ........
   a) dull book of life.
   b) book of after life.
   c) book of infinity.
   d) bright book of life.

3) Lawrence calls the Bible, Homer and Shakespeare as 'supreme old novels' because ...........
   a) they are great.
   b) they are classic.
   c) they describe human life minutely.
   d) none of these.

4) The novel can help us not to be ........
   a) a dead man in life.
   b) a live man in life.
   c) a struggling man in life.
   d) a hyperactive man in life.

5) Lawrence doesn't like to compare 'the Word of the Lord' with grass and flower because ........
   a) 'the word' always remains fresh
   b) 'the word' becomes stale.
   c) 'the word' renews the life.
   d) it is the Lord's word.
II) Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each.

1) What does a philosopher talk about?
2) In the first paragraph of the essay with what, does Lawrence compare the body?
3) For which reason does Lawrence call himself ‘the novelist’?
4) Which word does the essayist use to describe the Bible as a novel?
5) What does the essayist want to maintain in all the change?

7.5 Summary

Lawrence describes the importance of the novel in our life. He believes in the principle of 'sound mind in sound body'. He says that both the mind and the body are alive and equally important. As the novel describes alive man and his life, man's relations with others and the universe, become the most important themes of the novel.

He says that every parson / saint, philosopher, scientist and novelist has different attitudes towards life. No doubt that all these persons are related with the human life, but each one looks at it in a different way. The parson saint talks about the souls in the heaven after death. The philosopher talks about the infinity and the pure spirit which knows all things. Even the saint like Francis of Assissi wishes to offer spiritual food to the people. For the scientist, the body is a dead thing for his experiments and dissection. But the novelist knows that the paradise can be found anywhere in the life, and not in the life after death. Lawrence denies that he is a soul, body, drain etc. because he believes himself as a man alive.

For Lawrence, the novel is a bright book of life. It is more important than any other book, it makes whole man alive. The Bible, Homer and Shakespeare, in a way, are also supreme novels. About the Bible he says that it is a great confused novel. It is not only about God, but even about man alive. Even the grass and the flower have life, and so, more important than the Word of the Lord. He explains that though the grass withers, after rain it comes up all greener; the flower fades but because of it, the bud opens. But the Word of the Lord becomes staler and staler and boring because it is man - uttered.

Characters in the novel are living. They may be good or bad. If they are not living, the novel is dead. The novel helps us not to be a dead man in life. Life is full of change. It is the change in the human life, which keeps it moving and interesting.
continuously. If there is no change in the life it will become dull, stale and lifeless. Hence life itself is the reason for living. Right and wrong is an instinct. It is the whole consciousness in man. And it can be found powerfully in the novel.

7.6 Glossary

- 'Mens sana in corpore sano': a sound mind in sound body.
- rudiments: elements
- Rubicon: a stream in North Italy.
- bank: a shelf-like bed against a wall.
- ether: liquid used as an anaesthetic.
- myriad: ten thousand.
- renegade: a person who changes his religion.
- conjecture: the formation of an opinion on incomplete information.
- inertia: inertness, slow, inactive.
- stagger: totter, to walk unsteadily.
- corset: a close-fitting undergarment worn by women to shape and support the abdomen.
- volatile: changeable, evaporating rapidly.
- welter: confuse, puzzle.
- masticating: to chew, to grind.
- simulacrum: deceptive.
- carcass: a dead body of an animal.
- cul-de-sac: a street passage closed at one end.

7.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

I) 1) d  
   2) d  
   3) c  
   4) a  
   5) b
II) 1) infinity
    2) the bottle
    3) being man alive
    4) confused
    5) a certain integrity

7.8 Exercises
A) Answer the following question.
   1) Give the reasons for the superiority of the novelist over others like the
      scientist, parson, philosopher etc.
   2) How does Lawrence describe the relationship between the novel and life ?
   3) Why does Lawrence say ' the novel is supremely important' ?
   4) Write an essay on 'the Novel and the Life'.

7.9 Reference for Further Study
      backs.
   5) Enright, D. J. & Chickera ed. (1962), English Critical Texts, Oxford University
      Press, London.
**Unit-8**

**Practical Criticism**

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**8.0 Objectives**

After studying this unit, you will

- know different interpretations of a poem.
- know how to find out aesthetic joy from a poem.
- know the use of figurative language.
- know the use of various devices used by a poet.
- know the type of a poem.

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**8.1 Introduction**

We have already discussed some literary and critical terms in the previous unit. In this unit our efforts will be to bring such terms into practice. While trying to understand a poem, we should be able to know the purpose of the poet behind using such terms. These terms require special attention of the students. All of us know that poetry is more difficult to understand than prose. And this is mainly because of the use of language in poetry. A poet generally, has more restrictions about length of his
work of art than a prose writer. Moreover, the structure of poetry is much more complicated than a work of prose. With the use of minimum words, a poet tries to achieve the highest effect. To do this successfully, he uses figurative, symbolic language. Though Wordsworth in his 'Preface to Lyrical Ballads' says that poetry should be written in simple and everyday language, we know that he himself could not follow this principle in all his poems. By everyday language he means actual spoken language used by common people for performing their common duties daily. Further he points out that the language of poetry should be clear and simple, and there should be no use of figures of speech and high sounding phraseology. Wordsworth's theory about language sounds good to listen, but difficult to bring into practice for every poet.

Most of the poets generally use the figurative, symbolic and literary language. It is loaded with figures of speech, different levels of meanings, different images, symbols and sometimes elements like satire and irony. For an average student, to understand clear cut meaning of a poem, therefore, seems very difficult. If a student wants to appreciate a poem, he has to apply certain method or technique that would help him to understand that poem clearly. Practical Criticism suggests some tools and methods which can be applied to appreciate a poem. Therefore, Practical Criticism is also known as Applied Criticism. With the help of it, students can bring out the meaning, arrangement of words, emotions and even the use of language in a poem.

8.2 What is 'Critical Appreciation'?

Evaluating a poem is really a very tough task. In 'A Note to the Teacher' of his book Poetry and Prose Appreciation for Overseas Students L. G., Alexander says, "No subject can be more bewildering to the advanced learner of English than 'Literary Appreciation'. Even when the student is writing in his mother-tongue and reading literature by authors whose work may be familiar to him, appreciation is often a difficult task. When the student is faced with literature in a foreign language the problem becomes all the more acute. He is in command of a relatively limited vocabulary and yet is required to comment intelligently on works which may tax his powers of comprehension to the utmost. Further more a certain vagueness surrounds the whole subject; the student frequently does not know what to say about a piece of writing he has read. He may succeed in enjoying and understanding a poem or a prose-passage, but the necessity to explain why he has enjoyed it is usually far beyond his powers."
What L. G. Alexander has said in the above paragraph, is really true about our students. Most of the students in India learn English as the second or third language. Hence appreciating a poem in English language is truly a difficult job for them. Students have to interpret a poem from various angles like structure, meaning, emotions, language, images, figures of speech, allusions, etc. In order to know the proper meaning of a poem, students have to enter into the mind of the poet.

They have to imagine, why the poet has used certain terms, references, images, symbols in his poem. They should be able to know his ideas and thoughts. If students are able to do all these things, only then they will evaluate his poem properly. Proper interpretation of a poem is the prime purpose of critical appreciation. Only after proper interpretation, students can say whether the poem is good, bad, praiseworthy, simple or difficult. It leads to critical appreciation. Evaluating a poem with proper explanation, interpretation and justification that would help students to understand a poem may be called 'critical appreciation'.

8.3 Difficulties in appreciating poetry

When students will try to appreciate poetry, they will meet with various difficulties. I. A. Richards and other critics have enlisted such difficulties. Students should think over them first, and then try to overcome them. They are as following:

1) To find out the plain sense of a poem, is really an important difficulty. For students, it is difficult to make out the prose sense and plain meaning of a poem.

2) The second difficulty is of 'sensuous apprehension'. It means, the words used in a poem may have rhythm. Students should be able to find out such rhythm of a poem.

3) The third difficulty is about 'imagery'. To visualize an image at the mental level is a tough job for students. Some students can easily visualize it, but many can't.

4) The fourth difficulty is 'mnemonic irrelevances'. It means, misleading effects of the reader's being reminded of some personal scene or adventure from the past which may have nothing to do with a poem.

5) Sometimes, 'stock responses' or critical traps in a poem puzzle or confuse students. Though they are interesting, they may not be followed properly by students.

6) Effects of 'technical presupposition' is yet another difficulty. The things which don't happen in future as they have already happened, we are disappointed. Students have to try to avoid judging pianists by their hair.
7) 'Sentimentality' is another obstacle in appreciating a poem.

8) 'General critical preconceptions' also prove as an obstacle. It means - prior demands made upon poetry as a result of theories about its nature and value.

By removing these difficulties students will enjoy the poetry. For this, close attention to the words of a poem is required.

8.4 Tools / Technique for Appreciating Poetry

It was I. A. Richards who began Practical Criticism as a pedagogical discipline. He mentions in his book entitled Practical Criticism, A Study of Literary Judgement that he had taken the term from Coleridge. The tools / technique suggested by I. A. Richards are very much useful for analysis of a poem. L. G. Alexander too gives certain devices which would be of immense use for students in proper interpretation / understanding of a poem. The following are some important tools / technique:

1) **Figurative Language**: This type of language includes different symbols, figures of speech etc. All these, generally, have something different to say from as they appear. Carelessness in reading would bring students in trouble. Hence they must go through these terms carefully.

2) **Sense and Feeling**: While appreciating a poem, students should concentrate on the inter-relation of sense and feeling. Sometimes feeling is generated by sense, but sometimes, it happens in opposite way too.

3) **Tone and Intention**: Students should try to enter into the mind of the poet, so that, they would be able to understand the tone and intention of him in creating that poem. It would lead them to proper meaning of a poem.

4) **Melody**: In order to understand melody or music of a poem, students should know something about metre. While writing a poem, the poet may take the help of some metres. Most commonly used metres are iambic and trochee. Sometimes, anapaest, dactyl, spondee etc. are also used by poets. Such metres and figures of speech like alliteration, onomatopoeia, assonance, create rhythm and music in a poem.

L. G. Alexander gives three types of devices which would help students to appreciate poetry. They are as follows.

1) **Structural Devices**: Contrast, illustration and repetition are known as structural devices. They try to bring vivid picture the poet wants to create in the poem, before our eyes.
2) **Sense Devices**: The figures of speech like simile, metaphor and personification are known as sense devices. They create a peculiar effect because they bring together unrelated ideas or objects.

3) **Sound Devices**: These include alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhyme, assonance etc. They add considerably to the musical quality a poem has when it is read aloud.

Along with all the tools and technique mentioned above, students should be aware of different types of poems. The knowledge of such types would help students to know the intentions of a poet. The most common types of poems are as follows:

1) **Descriptive**: Main function of such poems is to describe people, scenes, experiences, objects, etc. minutely and clearly. Such description creates vivid picture of the things described, before our eyes.

2) **Reflective**: These types of poems are thoughtful. Such poems contain much description which the poet comments on or from which he draws conclusions. Sometimes, these conclusions are directly stated and sometimes implied.

3) **Narrative**: These types of poems narrate a story, incident etc. They are longer than other types of poems. They are easy to understand the poet's intention.

4) **Lyric**: The lyric is a short poem like a song and usually it is the expression of a mood or feeling.

5) **Sonnet**: It is a poem of fourteen lines. It follows a very strict rhyme pattern. According to L. G. Alexander there are three types of sonnets -

   i) Petrarchan
   ii) Shakespearean
   iii) Miltonic.

The structure of the Petrarchan and the Miltonic Sonnet is almost the same. There are two stanzas, the first one is of eight lines (octave) and the second one is of six lines (sestet). The rhyme scheme of both of them is also the same. The only difference is that after the octave in the Petrarchan type, there is a break in thought whereas in the Miltonic type there is not such a break and the same thought is continued in the sestet too. The Shakespearean sonnet contains three stanzas of four lines each. They are called quatrains. The last two lines are called 'a rhyming couplet'.

Linguistic approach also, is useful and helpful for appreciating a poem. According
to it a close and systematic study of the elements of language and the principles of
governing their combination and organization that go to constitute any utterance. The
study of phonemes, morphemes, words, cohesion, parallel grammatical structures,
repetitions, etc. help a lot to understand mood, feeling and intention of the poet.

8.5 Check Your Progress

I) Choose the correct option.

1) The prime purpose of critical appreciation of a poem is ..........  
   a) a proper judgement.  
   b) to point out the mistakes of the poet.  
   c) to praise the poet  
   d) proper interpretation of a poem.  

2) While appreciating poetry, the second difficulty is ..........  
   a) making out the plain sense  
   b) sensuous apprehension  
   c) mnemonic irrelevances  
   d) imagery

3) I. A. Richards had taken the term 'Practical Criticism' from .........  
   a) Wordsworth  
   b) Coleridge  
   c) Shelley  
   d) Keats

4) Melody of a poem is generally based on ........  
   a) metaphor  
   b) simile  
   c) personification  
   d) rhythm

5) Onomatopoeia is a ........ device.  
   a) sound  
   b) structural  
   c) sense  
   d) syntactic
II) Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each.

1) What may be called 'Critical Appreciation'?
2) What does 'General Critical Preconception' mean?
3) Give the names of three types of sonnets.
4) How many types of devices are suggested by L. G. Alexander?
5) What does figurative language include?

8.6 Practising critical appreciation

While appreciating a poem students must read the poem minutely. They should try to understand properly the theme, meaning and figures of speech in the poem. In order to help the students short questions are given below the poem. They would help students to know the type and structure of the poem, symbols and images used by the poet, and even his use of language.

But answering these short questions separately is not the correct appreciation. These questions are only indicators which would bring unity in the appreciation. Therefore, there should be proper unified presentation of an answer.

Let's now practise the critical appreciation of some poems.

1) **On His Blindness**
   - John Milton

   When I consider how my light is spent,
   Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
   And that one Talent which is death to hide
   Lodg'd with me useless, though my Soul more bent
   To serve therewith my Maker, and present
   My true account, lest he returning chide,
   Doth God exact day - labour, light deny'd,
   I fondly ask ; But Patience, to prevent
   That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need
   Either man's work or his own gifts, who best
   Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best, his State
Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait.

Glossary
- **spent**: used up
- **lodged**: remaining
- **bent**: inclined
- **therewith**: with this
- **chide**: rebuke, scold
- **exact**: demand
- **yoke**: burden
- **bidding**: command
- **post**: travel hastily
- **o'er**: over

Questions
1) What is the theme of the poem?
2) Explain the term 'Talent'.
3) What type of a poem is this?
4) Give an example of personification.
5) What does the poet say about the God's power?
6) What is the rhyme - scheme of the poem?

Appreciation

The present poem is a beautiful sonnet. It is one of the highly personal and best poems of John Milton. He was a great reader of literature. He wrote different types of poems, for example, odes, sonnets, elegies, epics and some long poems. Paradise Lost is his most famous epic. His hard work of reading and writing made him blind in 1652 and this sonnet was written in 1655.

The theme of the poem is Milton's becoming blind. He was frightened because of his blindness. He thought he would be unable to serve God due to his blindness.
It is a Miltonic sonnet, and hence there is no break in thought after the octave. The octave deals with Milton’s doubts and regret regarding his inability to utilize his gift of poetic expression, given to him by God. He describes God as a strict task master. As he has stopped writing poems due to his blindness, he thinks, God would be angry with him for not using his talent. There is a Biblical reference to ‘Talent’. One meaning of ‘Talent’ is a coin and other is gift of the art of writing poetry, given by God. There is a parable in the Bible. There was a lord who gave some talents (coins) to his three servants before going on a journey. When he came back, one of the servants told him that he had kept the coins safe but unused. The lord became angry with him for not using them. Like that, Milton thinks his talent (poetic art) will remain unused after his becoming blind.

But this mood of fear and regret is driven away in the sestet. 'Patience' is personified in the poem. 'Patience' tells Milton that God never expects or takes back his own gifts given to man. He doesn't need any help / service from man. He is like a King. There are thousands of angels waiting for his order. Patience points out that those who work hard and wait for God's order, they also get God's grace. Milton here reaffirms his faith in God. His regret over the loss of his eyesight is converted into God's kindness.

The poem expresses noble and lofty thoughts of Milton. It has a well - knit structure. There is a fine rhyme - scheme - abba, abba, cde, cde. No doubt it became highly personal, passionate and remarkable poem of Milton.

2) Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind.

- William Shakespeare

BLOW, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude ;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,

Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh - ho ! sing, heigh - ho ! unto the green holly :
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.

Then heigh - ho ! the holly !
This life is most jolly.
Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot;
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remember'd not.

High - ho ! sing, heigh - ho ! unto the green holly ;
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.

Then heigh - ho ! the holly !
This life is most jolly.

Glossary
- unkind : unnatural
- Heigh - ho : shout of joy
- feigning : insincere, deceptive
- This life : a free, open - air life
- jolly : full of gaiety
- bitter : bitterly cold
- warp : 'to throw, cast and hence, to twist out of shape'

Questions
1) What type of poem is this ?
2) What is the theme of the poem ?
3) How does the poet make use of the refrain here ?
4) Why does the poet say 'Most friendship if feigning' ?
5) Comment on the musical quality of the poem ?

Appreciation
The poem is a beautiful song. It is written by the world famous poet - dramatist William Shakespeare. He wrote comedies, tragedies, tragi - comedies, romances, historical plays and many beautiful songs and sonnets. His tragedies like 'Hamlet', 'King Lear', 'Macbeth' made his name immortal in English drama.
The present song is taken from his one of the best comedies 'As You Like It'. It is sung by the character Amiens, in scene vii act II of the play. He is living with his master Senior Duke who has been banished by his own younger brother Frederick. They all are living in the forest of Arden - in exile.

There is a universal theme in this song. It is man's ingratitude and faithlessness. It describes how friends turn into enemies. The Senior Duke and his wellwishers who are living with him are facing difficulties after difficulties. Even the nature / wind is also against them. Hence Amiens addresses here to winter wind and asks the wind to blow. Though the wind is very bitter / biting, man's ingratitude is more biting than the wind. He welcomes the nature, green bushes. He says that most friendship is hypocritical and pretending. Love is nothing but a mistake. He feels that bitterness of the frozen sky is better than the friends who have forgotten everything. Even then, their life in the forest is happier and more interesting than anything else.

It is a very simple song. As it is a song, it has fine musical quality. It is melodious. The use of refrain "Heigh - ho ! ........ folly". adds to the beauty and musicality of the song. There is a wonderful rhythm throughout the poem. The song tries to point out the contrast in the Senior Duke's life in the court and life in the forest. A. W. Verity says, "The appropriateness of this famous song to its context and the skilful manner of its presentation scarcely need comment."

8.7 Summary

Appreciation of a poem is a difficult job. The language, image, symbols, figures of speech etc. make this job difficult. Many times it goes beyond the reach of students. Proper interpretation of the poem is the prime purpose of appreciation. Students should keep in mind the difficulties generally faced by students. They are

1) difficulty of making out the plain sense.
2) sensuous apprehension
3) imagery
4) mnemonic irrelevances
5) sentimentality
6) effects of technical presuppositions
7) general critical preconceptions
8) stock responses.
It was I. A. Richards, who first brought a particular method / technique for appreciation. While appreciating a poem, one must remember -

1) sense, feeling, tone and intention.
2) figurative language / devices
3) melody

L. G. Alexander suggests three devices

1) Structural
2) Sound
3) Sense

Moreover, he writes about various types of poems like descriptive, reflective, narrative, lyric, sonnet etc. A linguistic approach is also helpful in the process of appreciation.

8.8 Answers to check your progress.

I) 1) d
2) b
3) b
4) d
5) a

II) 1) Judging a poem with proper explanation and justification.
2) Prior demand made upon poetry as a result of theories about its nature and value.
3) The Shakespearean, the Petrarchan, the Miltonic.
4) Three
5) Symbols, images, figures of speech etc.
8.9 Exercises

Write critical appreciation of the following poems:

1) The Good Morrow

- John Donne

I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I
Did, till we lov'd? were we not wean'd till then?
But suck'd on countrey pleasures, childishly?
Or. snorted we in the seaven sleepers den?
T'was so; But this, all pleasures fancies bee.
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desir'd, and got, t'was but a dreame of thee.

And now good morrow to our waking soules.
Which watch not one another out of feare;
For love, all love of other sights controules.
And makes one little roome, an every where.
Let sea - discoverers to new worlds have gone.
Let Maps to other, worlds on worlds have showne.
Let us possesse one world, each hath one, and is one.

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appeares.
And true plaine hearts doe in the faces rest,
Where can we finde two better hemispheres.
Without sharpe North, without declining West?
What ever dyes, was not mixt equally;
If our two loves be one, or thou and I
Love so alike, that none doe slacken, none can die.
Questions

1) What is the theme of the poem?
2) What type of poem is this?
3) Comment on the similes and metaphors in the poem.
4) Comment on the imagery in the poem.
5) Which Biblical reference do you find in the poem?

2) Ganga

   - Nissim Ezekiel

   We pride ourselves
   on generosity
   
   to servants. The woman
   who washes up, suspected
   
   of prostitution,
   is not dismissed.

   She always gets
   a cup of tea
   
   preserved for her
   from the previous evening,

   and a chapati, stale
   but in good condition.

   Once a year, an old
   sari, and a blouse

   for which we could
   easily exchange a plate
or a cup and saucer
Besides, she borrows
small coins for 
pan
or a sweet for her child.

She brings a smell with her
and leaves it behind her,

but we are used to it.
These people never learn.

Questions
1) What type of poem is this?
2) What is the theme of this poem?
3) Comment on the use of Indian English vocabulary of the poem?
4) Write a word - sketch of Ganga.
5) What is the financial condition of Ganga?

3) The Marriage of True Minds
   - William Shakespeare

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments ; love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no, it is an ever - fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken ;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheecks
Within his bending sickle's compass come ;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Questions
1) What type of poem is this?
2) What is the theme of the poem?
3) Give the examples of personification.
4) Comment on the last two lines of the poem.
5) Comment on the rhyme scheme of the poem.

4) My Grandmother's House
- Kamala Das

There is house now - far away where once
I received love ........ That woman died,
The house withdrew into silence, snakes moved.
Among books I was then too young
To read, and, my blood turned cold like the moon
How often I think of going
There, to peer through blind eyes of windows or
Just listen to the frozen air,
Or in wild despair, pick an armful of
Darkness to bring it here to lie
Behind my bedroom door like a brooding
dog........ you cannot believe, darling.
Can you, that I lived in such a house and
Was proud, and loved ........ I who have lost
My way and beg now at strangers' doors to
Receive love, at least in small change?
Questions

1) What is the theme of the poem?
2) Which type of feeling/mood is found in the poem?
3) Find out the examples of alliteration in the poem.
4) Comment on the title of the poem.
5) Explain the meaning of 'The house withdrew into silence.....'.

8.10 Reference For Further Study


6) Prasad, B (reprint 1996) : *A Background to the Study of English Literature*, Macmillan India Ltd, Madras
