



**Centre for Distance and Online Education  
Punjabi University, Patiala**

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**Class : B.A. I**

**Semester : 1**

**Paper : English Literature (Elective)**

**Unit : 1**

**(An Introduction to the study of Prose Literature)**

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***Lesson No.***

- 1.1 : I. What is Literature ?  
II. Why do we study Literature**
- 1.2 : I. Literature and Society  
II. Value of Literature**
- 1.3 : Various Genres**
- 1.4 : Study of Prose**
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**B.A. Part-I**  
**Semester-I**

**English Literature (Elective)**  
**An Introduction to the Study of**  
**Prose Literature**

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**Lesson No. 1.1**

**Converted in SLM by Ms.Paramjeet Kaur**

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Last updated October, 2023

### **Some Theoretical Concepts**

- 1.1.1 Objectives
- 1.1.2 Introduction
- 1.1.3 What is Literature?
- 1.1.4 Why do we study Literature?
- 1.1.5 Summary
- 1.1.6 Long Questions
- 1.1.7 Short Questions
- 1.1.8 Suggested Readings

#### **1.1.1 Objectives**

- To familiarize the students with the term literature.
- To create an awareness of the value and pleasure of reading good literary works.
- To learn the importance and qualities of literature.
- To build reading skills, create connections, promote empathy, foster appreciation and provide leisure to readers and students.

#### **1.1.2 Introduction**

Literature is a method of recording, preserving, and transmitting knowledge and entertainment and can also have a social, psychological, spiritual, or political role. It is a product of someone's imagination, originality, thought, feelings, emotions, ideas etc. It is a mirror of the society, human nature and reality. As an art form, it can also include works in various non-fiction genres, such as biography, diaries, memoir, letters and essays.

#### **Dear Student,**

All of us are familiar, to some extent, with the word "literature". Yet it is difficult

\* Terms literature, poetry, art and fiction have been used synonymously in this lesson. Students should not get confused.

to define it. However, if an attempt is made, **the minimal and the broadest definition of literature describes it as verbal material intended for the public or of interest to the public.** Ezra Pound defined literature as "**language charged with meaning.**" In literature, the primary literary aim is to produce a **structure of words for its own sake.** But this broad definition will also include non-imaginative literature such as private letters and diaries of important persons, poems or stories written for the author's own amusement or for the enjoyment of a small group of friends and so on. This definition will also include the phrases like "literature of medicine," "literature of sociology" "literature of mathematics", etc.

### 1.1.3 What is Literature?

**The word "literature" came into use in English language in the fourteenth century,** following French and Latin precedents; its root is Latin *Littera*, a letter of the alphabet. "*Literature*, in the common early spelling was then in effect a condition of reading, of being able to read and of having read." The normal adjective associated with literature was *literate*. For example, see how Francis Bacon, one of the famous seventeenth century essayists, uses the term "literature," "learned in all literature and erudition, divine and humane" or how the word is used by Dr. Johnson, "he had probably more than common literature, he is addressed in one of the most elaborate Latin poems." Literature, then, was a category of use and condition rather than of production. In its first extended sense, beyond the bare sense of "literary", it was a definition of "polite" or "humane" learning and thus specified a particular social distinction. By the eighteenth century, the word acquired a generalized social connotation, expressing a certain level of educational achievement. This carried with it a potential and eventually revised alternative definition of *literature* as "printed books" : "the objects in and through which this achievement was demonstrated." Within the terms of this development 'literature' normally included all printed books. There was no necessary specialisation to "imaginative literature". Literature was still primary reading ability and reading experience and this included philosophy, history and essays as well as poems. One obvious limitation of this interpretation was to categorise drama or novel. If literature was reading, could a mode of written or spoken performance be said to be "literature" and if not, where was Shakespeare? Hence, a distinction has to be made between the *imaginative and non-imaginative* literature.

*Non-imaginative* literature attempts primarily historical, scientific or philosophical accuracy even though it may have sufficient stylistic grace or broadly humanistic relevance to give literary pleasure. Whereas the *imaginative literature* deals with

events which are fictive or deal with actual events, in a way literal that accuracy may not be chiefly relevant but pleasure remains the basic principle. It may be relevant to quote Northrop Frye here : "In literature, questions of fact or truth are subordinated to the primary literary aim of producing a structure of words for its own sake, and the sign values of the symbols are subordinated to their importance as a structure of interconnected motives. Wherever we have autonomous verbal structure of this kind, we have "literature".

From Renaissance onwards, we see that there is an increasing tendency for specialisation of literature to "creative" or "imaginative" works. It has come to be seen over the times that there is a shift from learning to "taste" and "sensitivity" as a criterion for defining the literary quality of any work. From what we have said so far it becomes clear that literature forms an important and valuable part of the linguistic material in the study of a particular language and in the study of mankind's use of the faculty of language. This use of language is also aesthetically valuable and the utterances of literature are worthy of preservation and have been preserved in all languages and cultures. That is one reason why *Oral literature* is as distinct a component of any culture as written literature.

Arthur Koestler has rightly pointed out :

Literature begins with the telling of a tale. The tale represents certain events by means of auditory and visual signs. The events thus represented are mental events in the narrator's mind. His motive is the urge to communicate these events to others, to make them relieve his thoughts and emotions; the *urge to share*. The audience may be physically present, or an imagined one; the narrator may address himself to a single person or to his god alone; but his basic need remains the same, he must share his experience, make others participate in them, and thus overcome the isolation of the self.

To achieve this aim, the narrator must provide patterns of stimuli as substitutes for the original stimuli which caused the experience to occur. This obviously is not an easy task, for he is asking his audience to react to things which are not there such as the smell of grass on a summer morning. Since the dawn of civilisation, bards and story-tellers have produced bags of tricks to provide such *ersatz* (inferior to original) stimuli. The sum of these tricks is called the art of literature.

The two definitions given so far (one by Northrop Frye and the other by Koestler) compel us to infer that literature is any kind of verbal material written in prose or verse which has for its purpose the telling of a story, which is imaginatively intended

and aims to give pleasure. "Pleasure" may refer to the sensory delight that a descriptive or strongly rhythmic passage gives the intellectual satisfaction we feel when we discover in a work **"what oft was thought, but never so well expressed"** or when we discover a set of values that we never before have conceived of, the enjoyment of word play or the aesthetic pleasure that comes with the completion of a form; or even paradoxically the pleasure that comes from living vicariously through the agony of a tragic hero. Even works that have been written chiefly for practical use may be literature in one sense if they give us pleasure. Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* was published in 1621 as a technical psychological treatise, but its style, its wit, its elegance and its general observation on human nature make it a pleasure to read. Apart from its dated scientific subject, it is literature in a restricted sense.

Two crucial points which surface from our discussion so far are (i) truth in literature which more or less is related to the question of realism (reflection of reality in part), (ii) utility/value of literature which is related to the relationship of art to morality. When we take up the issue of reality we have to concede that in the process of creation, an artist may falsify reality because it is an acknowledged fact that the literary artist creates by imitation through the help of his imagination of the natural objects. In the process, he distorts reality. Art, because it is fictive, may belittle the motive to probe. Plato, the Greek philosopher banished the artist from the ideal state, *The Republic*. Plato contends imitation is bad. All art is imitative, therefore, all art is bad. Plato further argues that art makes us content with appearance, and by playing magically with particular images, it steals the educational wonder of the world away from philosophy and confuses our sense of direction towards reality and our motives for discerning it.

Form of art, according to Plato, is the enemy of true Knowledge. Art, Plato contends, is dangerous. The description of the artists in Book X of Plato's *Republic* presents artist as a false plausible know-all who can 'imitate doctor's talk'. The artist begins indeed to look like a special sort of a liar who tries to direct our attention to particulars which he presents as intuitively knowable. The artistic imitation whether in painting or in literature is far removed from the truth and makes people content with images. The poet does not deal calmly or wisely, with the essential truth of things but excitedly with their changing surfaces. It springs from improper knowledge and harms by nourishing the passions, which ought to be controlled and disciplined. Plato's injunctions about the integrity of art are praiseworthy no doubt. The issue

of adherence to reality and the relationship between art, life and morality has vexed not only the philosophers and puritans but also the creative artists and theoreticians. Any defence of poetry sustaining the charges levelled by Plato and other moralists will have to prove that the poetic gift derives from a uniquely significant human faculty and finally demonstrates that the self-indulged emotion is not inferior but is good or valuable.

Plotinus in his *Enneads* declared :

Still the arts are not to be slighted on the ground that they create by imitation of natural objects, for we must recognise that they give no bare reproduction of the thing seen but go back to the ideas from which nature itself derives, and furthermore that much of their work is all their own; they are moulders of beauty and add where nature is lacking. Thus Phaedias wrought Zeus upon no model among things of sense but by apprehending what form Zeus must take if he chose to become manifest to sight.

So far as the question of 'reality' is concerned it has been believed that art is an intensification of reality. It is a continuous process of concretion. Of course, it does not inquire into the qualities of causes of things, it gives us the intuition of the form of things. It is a true and genuine discovery. "The artist is just as much a discoverer of the forms of nature as the scientist is a discoverer of facts or natural laws", says Ernst Cassirer.

#### **1.1.4 Why do we study Literature?**

The world created by the literary artist is complete, real and autonomous. In this world most of the statements about experience are made not by logical propositions but by presenting the experience itself so that the reader can sense its meanings directly as precepts.

Plato's objections, notwithstanding, there is no doubt that literature has a therapeutic function to perform. It delights, it instructs and it elevates. Dr. Samuel Johnson declared that "the end of writing is to instruct, the end of poetry is to instruct, by pleasing". Every author undertakes either to instruct or please, or to mingle pleasure with instruction: "Poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reason". Literature can never be 'aesthetically pure' or abstractly contemplative. There can be no such thing as "abstract literature" as there is such a thing as abstract painting. By its nature because its medium, language is used by almost everybody in all sorts of everyday situations; and because it tries both to say, and to be literature is an art which invites impurities. We might call it the most 'creaturely' of the arts. Perhaps this is also a source of

strength. No other art, no way of exploring human experience, bodies out so wholly and many dimensionally "the felt sense of life", makes us feel first of all that the experience must have been just like that; that desire and will and thought would all have been caught up with those gestures, those smells, those sounds. It's not reality : it is a mirroring but it mirrors more nearly than any other imaginative or intellectual activity, the *whole* sense of an experience.

Aristotle was the first to examine the nature and differentiating qualities of imaginative literature with a view to demonstrating that it is true, serious and useful. Aristotle took an unequivocally opposite position to that of his master. Both Plato and Aristotle believed that tragedy generates in the audience emotions of pity and fear. A mind heavily charged with these emotions is thereby unfit for practical life. Plato at once concludes that tragedy is detrimental to the practical life of its audience. However, Aristotle observes that emotions generated by tragedy are not in fact allowed to remain burdening the mind of the audience. They are discharged in the experience of watching the tragedy. The emotional purging leaves the audience's mind after the tragedy is over, not loaded with pity and fear but lightened of them. The effect is thus the opposite of what Plato had supposed. Aristotle further contends that art is more philosophical and more serious because it deals with the universals rather than with the particulars.

Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poetry* (1595), in line with Aristotle, argued that the poet does not imitate or represent or discuss things which already exist : he invents new things and the world invented or created by the poet is a better world than the real one. It is not the mere exercise of his imagination that justifies the poet but exercise of his imagination in order to create this better world.

For Plato, the poet's world was a second-hand imitation of reality and therefore of no value. According to Aristotle, the poet could by the proper selection and organisation of incident, achieve a reality more profound than that represented by the casual surface of things which we meet in ordinary experience. For Philip Sidney, the poet created a world morally better than the real world. As a matter of fact, ever since imaginative literature has come to be written and read and enjoyed, there have been witnessed two main reactions. The Puritans allege that art is immoral, debilitating, lying, provocative of debauchery and there are others who argue that all great art is moral. It seeks to improve life and not debase it. Art is essentially serious and beneficial. The *Illiad*, The *Odyssey*, the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dante's *Divina Commedia*, the plays of William Shakespeare and Jean Racine; the novels of Leo Tolstoy,

Herman Melville, Thomas Mann, James Joyce-such works and all true works of art can exert their civilising influence century after century, long after the centuries that produced them have decayed because literature is a form of knowledge which informs the reader in a lively and agreeable way, of what human nature is like. It is valuable for its illustration and illumination of human behaviour, its hidden motives and compulsions. Richard Hoggart rightly remarks :

Literature is both in time and outside time. It is in time because it works best when it creates a sense of a certain time and place and of particular persons, when it works through (and recreates) identifiable life and manners: Tom Jones hiding in a particular copse with Molly Seagrim, Andrew Marvell lying in a certain garden, Dimitri Karamazov in that prison cell, Tess baptising her baby in that cottage bedroom.

It is outside time in two ways; First, in a sense we are all used to : if it is rooted in time and place and is imaginatively penetrating, it will go beyond particular time and place, and speak about our common humanity, will become as we used to say more readily universal". (Richard Hoggart, *The Critical Movement*). A vast bulk of critical opinion has upheld that fiction carries a greater amount of truth in solution than the volumes which purport to be all true.

"A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth", said Shelley. In his *A Defence of Poetry*, Shelley further contends, "Poetry acts in another and diviner manner. It awakens and enlarges the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations of thought. Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world and makes familiar objects to be as if they were not familiar.

Tolstoy believed that art should be defined not through the pleasure it may give but through the purpose it may serve. There is no denying that the moral art holds up, models of decent behaviour, for example, characters in fiction, drama and film whose basic goodness and struggle against confusion, error and evil in themselves and in others give firm, intellectual and emotional support to our own struggle. A brilliantly imagined novel about a rapist or murderer can be more enlightening than a thousand psycho-sociological studies. True art clarifies life, establishes models of human action, casts nets toward the future carefully, judges our right and wrong directions. A work of art is a moral example. According to Iris Murdoch, one of the most celebrated living novelists in England:

Art, especially literature, is a great hall of reflection where we can all meet and where everything under the sun can be examined and considered. For this reason,



it is feared and attacked by dictators, and by authoritarian moralists. The artist is a great informant, at least a gossip, at best a sage, and much loved in both roles. He lends to the elusive particular a local habitation and a name. He sets the world in order and gives us hypothetical hierarchies and intermediate images: like the dialectician he mediates between the one and the many; and he may awfully confuse us, on the whole he instructs us. Art is by far the most educational thing we have, far more so than its rivals, philosophy, theology, and science. The pierced nature of the work of art, its limitless connection with ordinary life, even its defencelessness against its client, are part of its characteristic availability and freedom. The demands of science and philosophy and ultimately of religion are extremely rigorous. It is just as well that there is a high substitute for the spiritual and speculative life : that few get to the top, morally or intellectually, is no less than the truth. Art is a great international human language, it is for all.

Iris Murdoch's statement indicates one significant value of literature. Honore de Balzac always took pride in calling himself the secretary of the society. Friedrich Engels once admitted that he had learnt more from Balzac about French society than from all the professional historians, economists and statisticians of the period put together. Sigmund Freud also once declared that Aeschylus, Sophocles and Shakespeare had discovered the unconscious before he himself could bring out this revolutionary discovery.

We learn more from great works of literature about men and manners, about people and societies than from other academic sources. Henry Fielding's sprawling pictures of 18th century give us a vivid and lucid account of the manners of the society. *Great Expectations* is the perfect expression of a phase of English society : it is a statement to be taken as it stands, of what money can do, good and bad, of how it can change and make distinctions of class; how it can pervert virtue, sweeten manners, open up new fields of enjoyment and suspicion. It will be no exaggeration to say that it is towards art that modern mind will have to turn, not only for the most perfect expression of transcendent emotion, but for an inspiration by which to live. Matthew Arnold rightly says :

More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry our science will appear incomplete and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry.

### Self Check Exercise

- 1 Discuss the various genres of literature.
- 2 "Literature is a reflection of the society" Discuss.

**1.1.5 Summary**

Literature is a method of recording, preserving, and transmitting knowledge and entertainment and can also have a social, psychological, spiritual, or political role. It is a product of someone's imagination, originality, thought, feelings, emotions, ideas etc. It is a mirror of the society, human nature and reality. As an art form, it can also include works in various non-fiction genres, such as biography, diaries, memoir, letters and essays.

**1.1.6 Long Questions**

- 1 Define literature and highlight some of its basic characteristics.
- 2 Do we study literature merely for entertainment, or does it have some deeper aim. Give a reasoned answer.
- 3 Discuss the views of Plato and Aristotle about literature in your own words.

**1.1.7 Short Questions**

- 1 What is the purpose of Literature?
- 2 What do you understand by non-fiction?

**1.1.8 Suggested Readings**

- 1 *English Social History* by G.M. Trevelyan.
- 2 *History of English Literature* by Edward Albert.
- 3 *A Critical History of English Literature* by David Daiches.
- 4 *History of English Literature* by Legouis and Cazamian.
- 5 *A Glossary of Literary terms* by M.H. Abrahams.

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**B.A. Part-I**  
**Semester-I**

**English Literature (Elective)**  
**An Introduction to the Study of**  
**Prose Literature**

**Lesson No. 1.2**

**Converted in SLM by Ms.Paramjeet Kaur**

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### **Some Theoretical Concepts**

- 1.2.1 Objectives
- 1.2.2 Introduction
- 1.2.3 Literature and Society
- 1.2.4 Value of Literature
- 1.2.5 Summary
- 1.2.6 Long Questions
- 1.2.7 Short Questions
- 1.2.8 Suggested Readings

#### **1.2.1 Objectives**

- To introduce the term literature to students.
- To acquaint the student with various forms, genres of literature.
- To teach students the relationship between literature and society.
- To engage students by promoting their interest in literature and its contribution to society.

#### **1.2.2 Introduction**

Literature is a mirror of the society we live in. It evokes imaginative worlds through the conscious arrangements of words that tell a story. These stories are taught through various genres, or types of literature, like novels, short stories, poetry, drama and the essay. Each genre has certain pre-defined conventions.

### 1.2.3 Literature and Society.

Literature is a creative process. The basic fact about literature is that the creative individual is indispensable. Without the individual talent there can be no creation. The artist possesses a specific creative gift that enables him to use language according to his individual genius. After all, this is how masterpieces are created. A creative artist like any ordinary individual perceives the reality but sensitive as he is, he stimulates that reality and imaginatively transforms it into something new which we call **a work of art**. The basic question is **for whom does the artist write**. A writer may want to share a common experience, which he finds valuable, or he may write for aesthetic appreciation, or even for commercial benefits. In all these cases, the essential need is the interaction with the society. A writer needs the society, as much as the society might respond to his work. However gifted a writer might be, no work of art can possibly be created or appreciated in isolation. A writer's work is not merely an activity of the body or his sensuous nature. It is undoubtedly an activity of his consciousness. A writer may claim to create art out of his own imaginative vision. He may assert that he is confined strictly to its aesthetic aspects, and writes only to satisfy his creative instincts. Yet the fact remains that even to the most individualistic writer, the ideas come only through an experience with life. Even the most escapist writer can create an imaginary world only after experiencing the realities of the world around him. The work of an artistic creation is not a work performed in an exclusive or complete fashion in the mind of the person, who may be addressed as a writer. The idea that comes to the artist's mind may be a delusion bred of individualistic psychology, together with a false view of the relation, not so much between body and mind, as between experience at the physical level and experience at the level of thought. The aesthetic activity is an activity of thought in the form of consciousness converting into imagination, an experience which is sensuous. The good writer uses his skill aesthetically in such a manner as to give form to his work, so that the work is enjoyed not only by a literary and an intellectual reader, but also understood by a society in general. After all, art is a fusion of literary scholarship and emotions. It ought to cater to both, the brain that comprehends, and the heart that feels. The aim of a constructive writer is to use his creative ability, both to please as well as to instruct. The gifted writer uses his skill to express his innermost experience. Yet, even the language that he uses is also a social and cultural construct.

This debate establishes the fact, that the age, the period, and the society, in which

the individual creates, have an essential role to play in any creative process. Literature as an expression of an artist's sensitivity can only find fulfilment in the social and cultural set up. No literature is written in a vacuum, it needs a referent, and a background. No art can grow out of the sole attempt of a writer. The activity of writing is a corporate activity belonging not only to any one human being, but to a community. It is performed not only by a man who is individualistically called 'a writer', but partly by all the other writers to whom one speaks as influencing him where one really means by collaborating with him. The activity of artistic creation is not complete without the society, whose function is not merely a receptive one, but a collaborative one too. The writer and his work thus stand in a collaborative relation with the entire social and cultural background. By recognising these relationships and counting upon them in his work, he strengthens and enriches the work and by denying it, he only impoverishes literature, which he produces. The most recommended theory for the writer is to realize one's place as an integral part of a collective embodiment. The writer is both a mediator and an individual, he is a product of a culture and also a recipient of its literary and intellectual heritage. Keeping in view this aspect, it is obvious that all literature is rooted in the age. Each work of art is the creation of innumerable processes of consciousness, in which, history, culture, and art play a significant role in the development of each other. Thus, the basic notion that underlines the relationship between literature and society is the fact that art in every form is a communal effort. A writer's world has its roots in the lived reality. He is a medium, who takes in, responds and gives. According to F.R. Leavis :

The individual writer has to be aware that his work is of the society, to which it belongs, and not merely added externally to it. A literature, that is, must be thought of as essentially something more than an accumulation of separate work, it has organic form, or constitutes an organic order, in relation to which the individual writer has his significance and his being.

A writer must be aware that the mind of his country, a mind, which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind, is a mind, which changes. So his mind is a part of a larger phenomenon, termed as society. All literature has deep-rooted impressions of the age of its creation.

It is to be noted that under the spell of individualistic prejudices, the writer may deny the topical influences on his work, but intentionally or unintentionally, the writer is bound to reflect his age and society. Literature promotes the social sharing

of highly valued emotional experiences and it recalls to men their cultural ideas. The most valuable works of art so often carry an implication about the society that they are written for. Literature has played an important role in projecting the features of every age. In spite of the universality of Shakespeare's plays, it is easy to discern the Elizabethan characteristics in his works. The entire Elizabethan theatre was itself a mirror, which had been formed at the centre of the culture of its time and at the centre of life and awareness of the community. The dramatic art of Shakespeare and even that of Sophocles, were developed in theatres which focused at the centre of the life of the community and the complimentary insights of culture.

The relationship between literature and society cannot be more emphasised than in the works of the writers of the Augustan Age (1700-1745). The leading writers of this period, (such as Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, Joseph Addison, Richard Steele and John Dryden) greatly admired the Roman Augustans, and deliberately imitated their literary forms and subjects. Their emphasis, however, was on the immediate social concerns, and their ideals of moderation, decorum and urbanity made the literature of this period leave a heavy stress on the social aspects. The insistence, that man is a social being, was such as to mean in effect that all his activities, inner as well as outer, the literature took cognizance of, were to belong to an overtly social context. Even the finest expressions of the spirit were to be in resonance with a code of good form, for with such a code the essential modes and idioms of Augustan culture were intimately associated. The characteristic movements and dictions of the eighteenth century, in verse as well as in prose, convey a suggestion of social deportment and company manners. An age in which such a tradition gets itself established is clearly an age in which the writer feels himself very much at one with the society. The writer belonging to such a tradition, projects the truth of the contemporary society, whether he satirizes it, condemns it, or displays its flaws and blemishes, exposes its reality, or even tries to uplift the culture. In so doing, the literature produced by such a writer turns out to be completely a reflection of the age. Likewise, the contemporary life of the 18th century became the sole subject of the writers of the Augustan Period.

Though the Romantic poets of the 19th century were rather subjective and introvert in dealing with the things natural (William Wordsworth) and supernatural (Samuel Taylor Coleridge), they did not exist outside the society. They did belong to a particular society and their interaction among themselves, hints at their dependence upon each other, and life around them. Even if a poet like William Blake claimed :

"It is I who see and feel. I see what I see and feel what I feel. My experience is mine, and in its specific quality lies its significance", yet the fact remains that the language that Blake used was English language and not one of his own invention. It is the language that he learnt through an interaction with his society. Moreover, even if Blake did not expect much of a readership (he gave up publishing in a serious way, at a very early stage) the subjects of his poetry, in spite of his mysticism, have a complexion of the life around him. Unlike the Augustans, these Romantic poets did not seem to have the society, as a sole objective of their writings. In any case, their poetry, which comes more or less as a reaction to the Neo-classical writers even in a drift from the immediate surroundings, did not dwell outside the realm of human realities. Even though Wordsworth's theory of poetry stated : "Poetry is a spontaneous overflow of feelings, recollected in tranquillity". This great worshipper of nature did write about the "Solitary Reaper", "Lucy Gray" and "An Idiot Boy". These are memorable figures picked out of human life that Wordsworth experienced sensitively and emotionally. Moreover, Wordsworth came even more close to society, because he always aimed to have his readership among the common people. Even John Keats, whose dejection and despondency led him to escape into a world of imagination could not keep himself removed from the life that he had left behind. Keats returned to the world of reality as a changed man, but he returned anyway. P.B. Shelley, the rebel, experienced the world and reacted in a rebellion, yet, what he rebelled against was the world, where he was born and bred. The tendency to construct an ivory tower of one's own and to live in a world of one's own devising, cut off, not only from the ordinary world of common people, but even from the corresponding world of the other artists is neither fruitful for the poet, nor the society, to which he belongs.

If the Romantic poets of the 19th century spoke of their experience as mystics and spiritualists, for the Victorian writers, the 19th century English society once again became the main concern. Unlike the Neo-Classicalists, the Victorian writers not merely ridiculed or satirized the vices of society. They did not aim only to instruct through amusement. More philosophic in their approach towards life, writers like Thomas Hardy, George Eliot, Browning and Tennyson, dealt with the social problems as reformers. In the 19th century England, several changes occurred, shaking the society to its foundations and leaving people in a state of mental turmoil. Old beliefs and convictions were undermined and people were groping for a life-line in the chaos around them. At this crucial stage, literary men acted as beacon of light. Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* is a perfect expression of this phase of English

society. It is a statement to be taken as it stands, of what money can do, good and bad, how it can change, make distinction of a class, how it can prevent virtue, sweeten manners, open up new fields of enjoyment and suspicion. The mood of the book represents the true reality of the age.

Other novelists of this age described in their works the mammonism and squalor in the society, and highlighted the need for love, understanding and companionship, rejecting materialistic values. Charlotte Bronte in her works, realistically focused direct attention on men and women and their conditions. The literature produced by these writers is a manifestation of the conditions prevailing in the contemporary society.

While discussing this deep rooted alliance between literature and society, the important factor to be noted is that though Literature reflects the age and deals with life at all levels, it may not be construed as just a documentation. An artist, a writer, after all is not merely a chronicler. What he gives is surely an imaginative recording of the facts. A crucial debate that has engaged many literary critics is the position of an artist as a creator and as an imitator. But the end result of such discussions and debates, is clearly the fact that even though an artist may be considered to be a God, a creator, who gives form through his skill as a writer yet this form obviously takes an initiative from the life around him. A true artist, as the conscience of the race, tries to use his genius as a writer in such a way that human race finds proper nourishment in his work. Even the literature of the twentieth century holds the position of informing, instructing and guiding the contemporary life characterised by complete disorder and chaos. The writers of the present century like T.S. Eliot, have dealt enthusiastically with the modern sensibility. T.S. Eliot has dexterously delineated the picture of the modern waste land, depicting the structure of feelings of isolation, meaninglessness of life and the consequent frustrations. But it is in the writings of the literary artists, that man actually comes to view reality and at the same time finds the underlying hope and a note of affirmation. It is the poet who helps an ordinary man to understand his real situation and learn to struggle with the reality, and find means of survival.

The relationship between literature and society to which the writer belongs and for whom he writes, can thus be concluded by what Pope said. When Pope wrote that the poet's business was to say "what oft was thought, but never so well expressed", we may interpret his words as meaning that the poet's difference from his readers lies in the fact that, though both do exactly the same thing, namely express a particular emotion in particular words, the poet is a man, who can solve for himself



the problem of expressing it, whereas the readers can express it only when the poet has shown them how to do so. The poet is not singular either in his having that emotion or in his power of expressing it; he is singular only in his ability to take the initiative in expressing what all feel, and all may want to express. If writers are really to express what all have felt, they ought to share emotions of all. Their experience, the general attitude they express towards life, must be of the same kind as that of the persons, among whom they hope to find a readership. If they form themselves into a special clique, the emotions they express will be the emotions only of that clique. The writer, if he wants to produce healthy and fruitful literature ought to step out of his own subjectivity and isolation and the most essential theory prescribed for a writer, who writes with a serious purpose is to realize one's place as an integral part of a collective embodiment.

If the contemporary literary scenario is suffering a setback, it is only because of the characterized break between the self and the community. The impasse has grown out of the split between the human ego and the universe. This break is an expression of a unique human being's attempt to create himself in his own image and his attempt to claim the primacy of the human ego. In no way can the isolated artist create fruitful art out of his unique self. Man in his art, as in everything else, is a finite being. Everything that he does is done in relation to others like himself. As artist, he uses certain language and writes a certain word, and this language, he has learned from the world to which he belongs. Even the most precocious of the poets learns and reads poetry before he writes.

Moreover, just as every artist stands in relation to the other artists, from whom he has acquired his art, so he stands in relation to the society for which he writes it.

The theories of Plato and Aristotle still stand more valid than the theories that profess the significance of art only for art's sake. Such art can be understood by a distinguished class of poets, who believe themselves to be poets, removed from reality.

#### **1.2.4 Value of Literature**

Literature is a complex phenomenon. The value of literature has been recognized in different ages, with varied emphasis on many of its aspects. The basic point remains that literature is undoubtedly serious and beneficial, and not written without any objective. Each work of art is created with some motive. The artist may write only to please his own self. In this case the artist creates in isolation, and in absolute aloofness from the world around him. Such an artist considers himself to be a self-contained

personality. The emotions that he expresses are his personal emotions and the expressions are the personal expressions. The art of such an artist does not aim to instruct the society. It only exhibits the skill of the writer. Those writers who create only for the aesthetic value of art, fall in with the theory of art for art's sake. Such art can only be evaluated aesthetically. Its value lies in its beauty, and it can only aim to please. The ingenuity of such a work of art can create an atmosphere of appreciation, but in its admiration the hearts never beat passionately.

All fruitful art needs to be a fusion of artistic skill as well as a more emphasized moralistic need. Though art needs to have a palpable design, the artist, in any case should enforce his vision into the world, where it might be finally experienced. The artist's work, even if it needs essentially to be aesthetic in quality, should be able to deal with the human soul, which even while it is caught in the stampede of time is capable of sustaining it. A writer creates through his experience and interaction with life. There is a tradition that guides him and a cultural consciousness that supports him. The art in such a case, is not a single mind's exertion, it is a process that goes on from age to age, and culture to culture. This art promotes the social sharing of highly valued emotional experiences, and it also recalls men to their cultural ideas. The objectives of literature, in this case are more elaborate and extended than the literature produced only for its aesthetic achievements. In order to grasp the significance of a social problem, and then render it as an authentic experience, an artist, in the process, has to transcend his own self. He has to rise above his own prejudices and sentiments. Any work of art that aims to capture the messiness of life in its truest form, has to go beyond the 'self' of the artist. Serious and purposeful art aims to bring coherence in all that is discordant and unruly.

Literature is basically illustrative and instructive. It has the capacity to bring a change in human thought and feeling. Equipped with the capacity, literature caters to the society at more than one level. At the intellectual level, it helps to bring about a change in the realm of knowledge. It exposes the reader to the literary world. The value of Literature in this sense lies in its bringing an awareness and awakening. Joseph Addison proposed to draw knowledge out of its formal confines and place it at the disposal of the ordinary readers. His *Periodical Essays* served the purpose of exposing his readers to the knowledge of the literary world. Likewise, much of literature has been written with an aim to bring in a literary consciousness.

It is true that the term "literature" is often applied to graceful and effective descriptions, expositions and arguments, whose purpose is to explain, instruct or persuade. Literature, anyhow, is properly reserved for expressions in which the

aesthetic aim outweighs the scientific or philosophical. This is a way of asserting that the grace, beauty and symmetry of art are more than ornaments or a sugar-coating for the pill of fact or concept. In a basic sense, the scientist appeals to our sense of fact; the philosopher to our intellectual being, to our powers of logic and conceptualizing; and the artist to our emotional being, to our inner selves. On a simple level of language, science employs words for their denotations, giving them verifiable but general referents in the words of things; philosophy deals with abstract terms, being concerned with the conceptualizing of experience, art deals with concrete terms, that are tangible, particular and specific. In I.A. Richards's distinction, art uses "emotive language" which is employed for the effects it produces in emotion and attitude, as contrasted to science which uses "referential language" that is used for the sake of the reference it produces. To insist upon this emotional quality of literature, is not to deny it other kinds of meaning and value, but it is to insist that literature conveys these other meanings and values in the uniquely "emotive language" of art. Contemporary criticism has interested itself deeply in the emotional aspect of literature, with the assertion that there is an aspect of knowledge which can be conveyed by no other means than through the language and form of art.

In its capability to appeal to our emotional beings, i.e., to our inner selves, literature places much emphasis on interior characterization, subtle motives, and internal action that springs or develops from external action. Literature is not content to state what happens, but goes on to explain the why, and the where of this action. On this psychological level, literature deals with the invisible life. Writers of the most ancient literary tradition have concentrated on the repercussions of the external events, on the psyches of the characters. Shakespeare's plays can easily be studied as psychological drama. Some of his renowned plays, such as, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are good examples of psychological interpretation of the inner life of the characters. In the middle of the nineteenth century, a group of writers wrote, what was termed as "psychological novel". Mrs. Gaskell, George Eliot, and George Meredith were the chief writers of this group. Even Thackeray and Dickens were interested enough in motives and details that led to the actions and reactions of their characters. Thomas Hardy and Joseph Conrad were equally interested in picturing the interior motive and psychological effect. Henry James, with his intense concern for the psychological life of his characters and with his development of a novelistic technique, that centred itself in the representation of the effect produced in the inner self by external events, may be said to have created the base for modern psychological literature. Thus literature at one level records the inner experience of characters,

reported by an author, as Henry James tends to do, at the other level it aims to utilize the interior monologue to recount the non-verbalized and subconscious life of a character, as is done in the works of James Joyce and William Faulkner. At another level, psychological writing is also produced with an aim for the writer to shed his own sickness. This therapeutic treatment is well conducted by literature at the psychological level.

Considering the value of literature at various levels, it is essential to view the social function that literature assigns to itself. A writer of good literature acts as the conscience of the race. The value of literature can be considered most effectively, when its social function is taken into consideration. Literature has always had its roots in the society, and it has in all ages taken its duty to serve the society, from where it emerges. Just as it is essential to know the age and the cultural atmosphere in order to understand a work of art, similarly we learn about different ages through literature produced during that time. In every age, writers have made attempts to criticise, expose, and instruct the society through their work.

The sensitivity of an artist's nature compels him to capture the details of the world around him. Sometimes the world is portrayed in its stark reality and at others, by shading it with various literary devices. In this case, the writer burdens himself with great responsibilities. In spite of all his skill and techniques used, the main objective of the writer remains to be true to the authenticity of life. True art can help the individuals to rise above the situations of complete social havoc. A writer creates art, which by its imaginative strength helps to make this world a better place to live in. An aesthetic emotion partakes of the experience of personal emotion and the experience thus absorbed is assimilated and translated into the art work. A serious writer insists upon the sanctity of the work. He articulates the worst, and forces up into the consciousness, the most perverse and terrifying postulates of the epic, so that one does not merely fear them, but is able to deal with them. Hence, while fulfilling a constructive capability of art, a serious artist transforms the society.

The major issue that concerns the artist is that he should be faithful to his own imagination or to the reality of life. A true artist removes his own sufferance from his art and helps in celebrating life, in spite of its grimness and hopelessness. The artist's original role was one of affirmation, of imitation and of instruction. According to the pedagogical view of Plato, a poet's function is to convey a lesson and promote a culture. Plato had no objection to children being told untrue stories, if they were edifying. This does not mean that all stories ought to impose a moral-a-top-a-tale, but true value of art lies in its conveying a moral. Art, after all, is not a work of a

visionary. Instead of vague mysticism and pretentious philosophies, it deals with the lived experience, showing means to transcend the crucial realities of life. Art, therefore, is a sacred activity, it has above all transcendental functions, whereby it helps the individual to transcend not only the external crisis, but also the inner turmoil. All good literature carries within itself a note of affirmation. It celebrates life in spite of all its degeneration.

All great literature has had a moral base and has ultimately affirmed human values. True art is moral and it always seeks to improve life. It seeks to hold off all the evil influences that ruin the prosperity of making. To maintain that true art is moral, it is necessary to think of the fictions that have lasted through the ages. The *Illiad* and the *Odyssey*, the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripedes, Virgil's *Aenead*, Dante's *Divina Commedia*, the plays of Shakespeare and Racine, the novels of Tolstoy, Melville, Thomas Mann, James Joyce, all these masterpieces are true works of art and they can exert their civilizing influence, even long after the cultures that produced them have decayed. These works have not only catered to the societies of their own life time, but to the societies of all times to come. Literature has come through the ages to serve mankind. In the present utilitarian age, when materialistic tensions have reached an extreme, literature still continues to resolve these tensions. Literature in its fictional role projects imaginative solutions. Even while it deals with the reality of life, it helps to inspire mankind to face this reality and learn to live with it.

On a spiritual level, it also projects means of rising higher than this life. In every age we have had mystic writers, whose creations helped human beings to rise above the physical realities of human existence and enter into a realm where they can have the experience of oneness with the transcendental reality.

### Self Check Exercise

- 1 How i literature and society connected?
- 2 What is the value of literature?

### 1.2.5 Summary

Literature is a mirror of the society we live in. It evokes imaginative worlds through the conscious arrangements of words that tell a story. These stories are taught through various genres, or types of literature, like novels, short stories, poetry, drama and the essay. Each genre has certain pre-defined conventions. Literature is

a creative process. The basic fact about literature is that the creative individual is indispensable. Without the individual talent there can be no creation. The artist possesses a specific creative gift that enables him to use language according to his individual genius.

**1.2.6 Long Questions**

- 1 Critically evaluate the statement : "art is moral."
- 2 Discuss with instances that " art is a social construct."
- 3 Discuss the role of subjectivity and imagination in the creation of literature.

**1.2.7 Short Questions**

- 1 Name a few romantic poets.
- 2 How does literature has a social function?
- 3 "True art is mortal". Comment.

**1.2.8 Suggested Readings**

- 1 *English Social History* by G.M. Trevelyan.
- 2 *History of English Literature* by Edward Albert.
- 3 *A Critical History of English Literature* by David Daiches.
- 4 *History of English Literature* by Legouis and Cazamian.
- 5 *A Glossary of Literary terms* by M.H. Abrahams.

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**Some Theoretical Concepts**

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**1.3.1 Objectives**

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**1.3.2 Introduction****1.3.3 Various Genres****1.3.4 Summary****1.3.5 Long Questions****1.3.6 Short Questions****1.3.7 Suggested Readings****1.3.1 Objectives**

- To introduce students to the concept of literature and enable them learn the function of literature in any given society.
- To teach students various genres of literature.
- To introduce various literary terms, forms and devices to students.

**1.3.2 Introduction**

Literary works are written in various genres. The term 'genre' is a French word which is used in literature and literary criticism to signify a literary species or a literary form, type or kind. A literary genre is recognisable and established category of written works which employ such common conventions that help prevent the readers from mistaking it for any other kind.

**1.3.3 Various Genres**

Dear Students,

When you begin your study of English literature, you are told by the teachers or you read in the books that such and such work is a poem, drama, novel, a short story, an essay, etc. The literary works are written in the above mentioned forms or many others. These broader categories into which literary works are divided are called genres/types/forms/kinds/species, etc.

The term "**genre**" is a French word which is used in literature and literary criticism to signify a literary species or a literary form, type or kind. There are many "formal distinctions" in different types of works. Literary works of various kinds have generally been defined and differentiated according to setting, subject, style, time,

theme, attitude, content, structure, origin, history, purpose, occasion, psychology, or sociology.

A literary genre is a recognisable and established category of written works which employ such common conventions as will prevent the readers from mistaking it for any other kind. The genres into which literary works have been classified are many and the criteria for their classification has also been varying but there are most common names such as tragedy, comedy, epic, satire, lyric, essay, novel, biography, etc.

From the Renaissance through the eighteenth century, the various genres were widely thought to be fixed artistic types, and these were rigorously distinguished and were governed by certain sets of rules, which a writer was expected to follow, while creating a work of art in a particular form. Categories of genres were also limited. A number of critics applied certain rules which specified the proper subject matter, structure, style and the effect in each kind. At that time, the genres were also ranked in a hierarchy in which epic and tragedy were put at the top and the short lyric, epigram and other minor types at the bottom. But since the middle of the eighteenth century there has been a development of new literary forms such as the novel and the miscellaneous poems that combined description, philosophy and narrative e.g., James Thompson's *The Seasons*, a short lyric poem. Since the romantic period, many new genres have been added to the existing ones. The criticism concerning the study of genres, too has become less directly prescriptive, and less concerned with distinction among the genres, though they are still considered useful for the understanding of literary works. In fact, in the twentieth century work one finds new genres coming up, hence making it difficult to categorise new work into the already existing generic framework.

*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* has observed in this connection :

Much of the confusion surrounding the term arises from the fact that it is used simultaneously for the most basic modes of literary art (lyric, narrative, dramatic), for the broadest categories of composition (poetry, prose, fiction), and for more specialised sub-categories, which are defined according to several different criteria including formal structure (sonnet, picaresque novel), length (novella, epigram), intention (satire), effect (comedy), origin (folktale), and subject matter (pastoral, science fiction), while some genres, such as pastoral elegy or melodrama, have numerous conventions governing subject, style and form, others like the novel have no agreed rules, although they may include several more limited sub-genres.



So far as the definition of various literary kinds is considered, it is very difficult to give an authoritative definition of literary kinds. According to a critic : "Scholars are fairly well agreed today that there is no one definition of a kind of literature." But literary kinds work on some basis of some principles or theory and a writer expresses himself through those models and also brings modifications and developments in them. This means that "specific" works with particular subject matter, form, structure or organisation can be called belonging to one "genre" or other. Genres never remain fixed, organisation can be called belonging to one "genre" or the other. Genres never remain fixed, rather with the addition to every new work, the categorisations and classifications shift.

Thus we can say in general that literary kinds or genres are the structures, a form or a particular kind of framework. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in their book *Theory of Literature*, remark, "The literary kind is not a mere name for the aesthetic convention in which a work participates, shapes its character. Literary kinds may be regarded as institutional imperatives which both coerce and in turn are coerced by the writer." They further say, "The literary kind is an "institution" as Church, University or State is an institution. It exists not as an animal exists or even as a building, chapel, library or capital but as an institution exists. One can work through, create new ones, or get on, so far as possible without sharing in politics or rituals. One can also join, but then reshape institutions."

For the first time in the history of English literary criticism the attempt was made by Aristotle in his *Poetics*, to differentiate major forms of literature from one another. He also made distinction between three basic genres, i.e. drama, epic and lyric. Since the time of Aristotle and the distinctions made by him, there have emerged many genre theories in different ages, and many developments and new conceptions have also come up to interpret Aristotle's poetic method in different ways, adding new genres either by using or rejecting his method.

Now we find many kinds of literary works and many genres prevailing. We shall discuss the basic characteristics and principles of some of the major genres. There are four major areas or genres of English Literature i.e., *Poetry, Drama, Novel* and *Prose*. Let us begin with the definition of a poem and then discuss the genres and sub-genres of poetry.

### **1.3.3.1 Poem :**

Poem is broadly defined as a composition in which rhythmical, and usually metaphorical language is used to create an aesthetic experience and to make a

statement which cannot be fully paraphrased in prose. Though such elements as metre, rhyme, etc. are usually there but these are not necessarily present.

In order to understand the difference between poetry and prose, we find that poetry and prose have much in common, as the poet, and the writer of prose both put words together to create meaning, to convey thoughts and feelings. We cannot say that poetry differs from prose, only in having metre and rhyme. Prose also may have metre and all the poems may not use metre. Sometimes prose also employs rhyme. Broadly speaking, we can say that poetry differs from prose in the way it uses language. Poetry is more concise, more concentrated, more concrete, and more figurative and metaphorical in the use of language.

There are many kinds of poems. Let us discuss these briefly.

### **Epic-or Heroic Poem :**

The epic or heroic poem is one of the most ancient and dignified of poetic types. The term epic is applied to a work that has at least the following ingredients "It is a long narrative poem on a great and serious subject, related in an elevated *style*, and centred on a heroic or quasi-divine figure on whose actions depends the fate of a tribe, a nation, or the human race", says M.H. Abrams. There have been traditional epics also called primary epics or folk epics like Homer's *Illiad* and *Odyssey*, and Anglo Saxon epic *Beowulf*. These traditional epics were shaped by literary artists from historical and legendary materials which had developed in the oral tradition of the writer's nation during a period of expansion and warfare.

There have also been "literary" and "secondary" epics which were composed in deliberate imitation of traditional form e.g. Virgil's *The Aeneid*, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Keats's *Hyperion*, William Blake's several epics or "prophetic books" e.g. *The Four Zoas*, Milton, *Jerusalem*.

Whereas Aristotle ranked epic second to tragedy, renaissance critics considered it the highest genre of all. Not many literary epics have been written. These are highly conventional poems which commonly share some features (derived basically from the traditional epics of Homer), e.g., the heroic figure of much national or even cosmic importance. The setting of the poem is very large in scale. It may be world wide or even larger. The action also involves superhuman deeds in battle. In these great actions, gods and other supernatural beings take an extensive or active part (called supernatural machinery in neo-classical age). The style of the narrative is very ceremonial and much different from ordinary speech. An ample use of heroic similes is made. There are wide ranging allusions. The epic poem begins with an

invocation. The narrative starts in the middle of the things, at a critical point in the action. There are also dialogues of some of the principal characters introduced in formal detail, and these characters are often given set speeches, which reveal their different temperaments.

Another kind of epic called mock epic became popular in the neo-classical literature. In the mock-epic, various components of the classical epic are used for satiric purposes. The gap between the grandeur and nobility suggested by the epic connections and trivial actions of the ordinary human beings in the mock-epic, invites a comparison of the time of the heroes with the times of the lesser men.

### **Lyrics :**

In Greek literature, the lyric was identified as a song rendered to the accompaniment of a lyric. Now this term is used for any short and non-narrative poem which presents a single speaker who expresses a state of mind or a process of thought and feeling. In a lyric, the speaker may be musing in solitude, but in a dramatic lyric, the speaker is represented in a particular situation addressing him to another person, for example in John Donne's "The Canonization", and Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey". No doubt, the lyric is uttered in the first person but the speaker cannot always be identified with the poet, because in many lyrics, the speaker of the lyric is a person, an invented character who is very different from the actual poet. A lyric can also be a brief expression of a mood or a state of feeling, e.g., Shelley's "To Night". In different types of love-lyrics, the process of observation, thought, memory and feeling may be organised in different ways as in many lyrics of Robert Burns, Ben Jonson, Andrew Marvell, John Milton, Wordsworth and W.B. Yeats.

There are many sub-classes of the lyric, like Dramatic Monologue, Elegy, Ode and Sonnet.

**Dramatic Monologue** is a poem consisting of the words of a single character who in his speech reveals his own nature and the dramatic situation. Robert Browning called this form "a dramatic lyric" and brought it to its highest development. A dramatic monologue has the following characteristics :

1. It is uttered by a single person not by the poet, in a specific situation at a critical moment.
2. The speaker addresses and interacts with one or more people but the presence of the listener is not shown in the form of his talking and reacting. What the listener/listeners say and do is known only from the clues in the discourse of the single speaker. The organisation of the monologue is such that the speaker

unintentionally reveals his psychology, temperament and character at a significant moment.

**ODE :** It is a lyric poem of some length, serious in subject and dignified in style. Originally the term had reference to the Greek poet Pindar, and it was a choral song sung and danced at a public occasion, such as the celebration of a victory in the Olympic games. The stanzas were arranged in groups of three. But with the later developments in ode, irregular stanzaic structures were added which altered freely in accordance with shifts in subjects and mood, for example, Wordsworth's "Ode, Intimations of Immortality". Romantic poets achieved perfection in the personal ode of description and passionate meditation, which is stimulated by an aspect of the outer scene and turns on the attempt to solve either a private problem or a generally human one, e.g., Wordsworth's "Intimations Ode", Coleridge's "Dejection-an Ode", Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind".

Another type of ode called Horatian ode was originally modelled on the matter, tone and form of the order of the Roman Poet, Horace. Whereas in Pindaric Ode, there is passion and visionary boldness, Horatian Odes are calm, meditative and restrained, e.g., Keats' "Ode to Autumn".

**Sonnet :** Sonnet is a lyric poem of fourteen lines written in single stanza, usually in iambic pentameter, lines linked by an intricate rhyme scheme. The sonnet developed in Italy in the early 13th century and was one of the most favourite forms of Dante and Petrarch. Many Elizabethan poets like Spenser, Sidney, Drayton and Shakespeare developed it in their poetic compositions. Milton and the Romantic poets also used this form of poetry.

The Petrarchan or Italian Sonnet begins with an octave or eight line section which asks a question, poses a problem, states a difficulty or conveys a mood and the sestet concludes the mood. The typical rhyme-scheme of the octave is a-b-b a-a-b-b-a, and the rhyme scheme of sestet is c-d-e-c-d-e or c-d-c-d-c-d.

A Shakespearean or an English sonnet is composed of three quatrains (four line units) rhyming, usually a-b-b-a, c-d-d-c, e-f-f-e or a-b-a-b-c-d-c-d-e-f-e-e.

Though originally sonnet was concerned almost exclusively with love-now there is no restriction on the subject matter of the sonnet.

**Elegy :** In Greek and Roman literature any poem using the elegiac couplet often on such subjects as love and war as well as death was called Elegy. But since the 16th century the term "Elegy" has designated a dignified poem mourning the death of an individual, e.g. W.H. Auden's "In Memory of W.B. Yeats," or of all men, e.g. Thomas

Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard."

A specific sub-type of Elegy is the pastoral elegy which originated with the Sicilian Greek poets Theocritus, Bion and Moschus, and in English it is exemplified by such poems as Milton's "Lycidas", and Shelley's "Adonais". The poet and his subjects are spoken of as shepherds or goatherds, and the setting is the classical pastoral world. The nymphs, shepherds and other inhabitants of this world join in mourning, but the poem usually ends peacefully or even joyfully. Other shorter and less elaborate versions of the elegy are Dirge, Threnody, Monody and Lament.

**Dirge** is a lyrical poem or song of lament originally composed in commemoration of the dead and chanted in Roman funeral processions or banquets. Dirges are intended to be sung, e.g. Shakespeare's "Full Fathom Five Thy Father Lies." Threnody is songlike, but it is not necessarily intended for musical accompaniment.

**Monody** is sung by a single person. Milton describes his "Lycidas", in the subtitle as a "Monody", in which "the author bewails a learned friend" and Matthew Arnold called his elegy on A.H. Clough, "Thyrsis: A Monody".

**Lament** refers to any song expressing deep sorrow.

**Ballad** : Ballad is a narrative poem, designed to be sung, transmitted orally, and it tells a story. Ballads often begin abruptly, imply the previous action, use simple language, tell the story tersely through dialogue and describe action and make use of refrains.

The folk ballad which reached its height in England in the 16th and 17th centuries was composed anonymously and handed down orally often in several different versions. The literary ballad is consciously created by a poet in imitation of the folk ballad, makes use of many of its devices and conventions, sometimes with considerable freedom. Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" are literary ballads.

#### (a) Folk Songs :

In literature, we also find traditional verbal materials and social rituals that have been handed down slowly, at least primarily by word of mouth and by example rather than in the written form. These are called folk-lore, which include legends, superstitions, songs, tales, proverbs, riddles, nursery rhymes, etc.

*Folk Poems* and songs include love songs, Christmas cards, work songs, sea chanties, religious songs, drinking songs, children's game songs and many other types. However, their most important form remains the narrative song or traditional ballad.

**Drama :**

Another major literary form is drama which is written and designed for the theatre, and where actors take the roles of characters, perform the indicated action and utter the written dialogue. The writer of the drama has to follow certain stage conventions and he has to be realistic in the creation of situations, characters and dialogues. A written drama is meant for reading and watching by the audience. Hence accuracy of settings, and atmosphere and costume have to be realistic. Dramas have been written in prose and in poetry. In poetic drama the dialogue is written in verse, usually blank verse.

The Heroic dramas of the Restoration Period were written in heroic couplets (iambic pentameter lines rhyming in pairs). A *Closet Drama* is written in the form of a drama but it is intended to be read rather than performed in the theatre. Milton's "Samson Agonistes", Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound" and George Gordon Byron's "Manfred" are some of the examples of the closet drama.

No doubt, reading a play is not very different from reading a short story, a novel or a poem. A play like a short story or a novel also tells a story. Characters, whom we come to know through their speeches, their thoughts, and their actions are important in a play, as they are in short stories and novels. Diction and imagery also may be almost as important in a play as in poetry. Like poetry and novel and other forms of literature, a play is also unified. It has a subject and a theme or perhaps several inter-related subjects and themes. But there are some differences between a play and other literary forms. The main difference is that plays are not rendered for a reader, but for an audience in a theatre. The effect of a play is visual and auditory. It appeals to the eye of the spectator with costumes and scenery, with real people in seemingly real places. It appeals to the ear with the varied voices of the actors and with sound effects. Instead of reading the words of a play, we hear them delivered by actors who help us by means of gestures, facial expression and tone of voice to grasp quickly the nature of the characters of the play.

In brief, a drama is different from a poem and a novel, in the sense that it is not a narrative and the characters interact with each other in the form of the dialogues and there is no intervention of the author, though he may give directions for setting, costumes or stage entries. Drama is the most objective of the literary types.

On the basis of subject matter, there are mainly two types of drama-Tragedy and Comedy, but there have been many overlappings and intermixing in these two

genres of drama. We shall now discuss the chief genres or types of drama and make an attempt to broadly define them.

### 1.3.3.2 Tragedy :

It is a work of art that usually ends on a sad note. The action and thoughts are mainly serious which turn out disastrously for the chief character, i.e., the protagonist. Aristotle, for the first time, defined tragedy in his *Poetics* on the basis of the examples available to him of the tragedies of Greek dramatists such as Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripedes. His famous definition of tragedy runs like this :

"Tragedy is the imitation of an action that is serious and also as having magnitude, complete in itself, in the medium of poetic language and in the manner of dramatic rather than narrative presentation, incorporating incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish the catharsis of such emotions".

Though since Aristotle's time to the present many artistically effective types of serious plots ending in a disaster have been developed with the changes in socio-economic scenario, yet Aristotle's concepts apply in some part to many tragic plots. The central character who meets the catastrophe is called the tragic hero and he evokes in the audience, the emotions of pity and fear, and he is neither thoroughly good nor thoroughly evil but a mixture of both. In the plot structure, the events develop through complication to a catastrophe in which we find a sudden reversal in the hero's fortunes from happiness to disaster.

**1.3.3.3 Melodrama :** Melodrama is related to tragedy as farce is related to comedy. In Greek, the term melodrama was originally applied to all musical plays, including opera. In the early 19th century London, many plays were staged which used musical accompaniment to heighten the emotional tone of the various scenes. In this kind of drama, there is generally a sad ending, a pile of corpses or screaming lunatics. The distinction between a tragedy and melodrama is that in the latter the characters are flat types, who are either extremely good or evil, hence improbable and not realistic. There is also a lack of real psychological thought and the plot revolves around violent action to produce horror and sensation and great excitements. The credibility of plot and character is sacrificed for violent effect and emotional opportunism. Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* are the two early examples of melodrama. Now the adjective "melodrama" is applied to any work or episode that depends on improbable events and sensational action.

#### 1.3.3.4 The Heroic Play :

There is another form of drama, a type of exaggerated tragedy which was mainly popular in the Restoration period at the time of Dryden. Dryden defined this type of drama : "An heroic play ought to be imitation, in little, of an heroic poem and consequently love and valour ought to be the subject of it." A noble hero and heroine are presented here in a situation in which their passionate love comes in conflict with the demands of honour and the hero's patriotic duty to his country. If the conflict ends in disaster, the play is called an heroic tragedy. The best examples of this kind of drama are Dryden's *The Conquest of Granada*, *Don Sebastian*, and William Congreve's *The Mourning Bridge*.

**1.3.3.5 Comedy :** In a comedy, the subject matter is selected and arranged mainly in order to interest and amuse us. The characters and their actions engage our delightful attention, rather than our profound concern as in a tragedy. Here no great disaster occurs to the characters and the action turns out happily for the chief characters. The amusement here can range from quiet smile to the peals of laughter. There are many sub-types of comedy.

##### (a) Comedy of Errors :

In this type of comedy, the plot consists of series of mistakes of identity or fact, or misrepresentation of action or character which results in cross purposes. The source of hilarious laughter is when husbands and wives, parents and children, pairs of friends and of sweethearts fail to recognise each other because of some disguise or a mask, e.g. a boy's clothes on a girl and vice versa. The best examples of this kind are Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* and Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops To Conquer*.

##### (b) Comedy of Manners or Restoration Comedy :

This form of comedy deals with the relations and intrigues of gentlemen and ladies, fops, dandies in a posh and sophisticated society. The laughter is aroused mainly from the current foibles or minor social abuse, or recognised social types. For the comic effect, this type of comedy relies on the wit and sparkle of the dialogue and repartee-a witty conversational give and take which constitutes a kind of fencing match. The best examples of this kind of comedy are Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, Congreve's *The Way of The World*, and John Wycherley's *The Country Wife*.

##### (c) Comedy of Humours :

This type of comedy was specialised by Ben Jonson, the Jacobean playwright. This



comedy is based on the physiological theory of humours. The humours were held to be the four primary fluids-blood, phlegm, cholar (or yellow bile) and melancholy (or black bile) whose mixture determined both a man's physical state and his character type. An imbalance of one or another humour was said to produce four kinds of disposition, whose names have survived the underlying theory-Sanguine, Phlegmatic, Choleric and Melancholic. In Johnson's *Comedy of Humours* each of the major characters instead of being a well balanced individual, has a dominant humour that gives him a characteristic distortion or eccentricity of disposition. Ben Jonson in the "Prologue" to *Everyman in his Humour* has given his theory of comedy of humours.

**Farce :** This type of comedy is designed to provoke the audience to simple and hearty laugh and for this purpose, it generally employs highly exaggerated and caricatured character types, who are put into very improbable and ludicrous situations. There is free use of broad verbal humour and physical horse play. Farce is also called "Custard Pie Comedy" and in this kind of comedy, coincidences and exaggerations abound, and probability is not much regarded.

### **High Comedy or Low Comedy :**

A distinction is made between high and low comedy. Whereas high comedy evokes intellectual and thoughtful laughter from spectators, low comedy makes little or no intellectual appeal. It undertakes to arouse laughter by jokes, by slapstick, humour or boisterous or clownish physical activity as is done in Farce.

### **Tragi-Comedy :**

In a play where there is a mixture of tragic and comic elements is called tragi-comedy. Much of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama combined the subject matter as well as the form of traditional tragedy and comedy. For the tragic purposes it included the people of high degree i.e. upper classes, and for comic purposes the people of low degree i.e. members of lower classes were included. Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* is the finest example of a tragi-comedy.

These are the chief genres of drama and some minor genres of drama are also there.

### **1.3.3.6 The History Play, The Episodic Play, The Chronicle Play :**

These plays are the dramatic renderings of the historical materials available in the English *Chronicles* by Raphael Holinshed and others. In the early chronicle plays, a loosely knit series of events/episodes were presented, and the unity of the play

is found in the logical sequence of a succession of episodes rather than in the Aristotelian unities.

### **Miracle Plays, Morality Plays and Interludes :**

These were the types of late medieval drama written in a variety of verse forms.

**MIRACLE PLAY** had as its subject a story from the Scriptures, or from the life and martyrdom of a saint.

**MORALITY PLAYS** were dramatized allegories of the life of a man, his temptation and sinning, his quest for salvation and his confrontation with death. Among the best examples of morality plays are *Everyman*, *The Castle of Perseverance* and Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*.

**Interlude** meaning "between the play" is a term applied to a variety of short entertainments, including secular forces and witty dialogues with a religious and political point. In the late 15th and early 16th century these little dramas were performed by bands of professional actors and they were performed in between the courses of a feast or between the acts of a longer play.

#### **1.3.3.7 Symbolic Drama : Expressionistic Drama**

In this type of drama, the characters are not human beings in the ordinary sense, but personifications of a single concept of human characteristic. This was the convention in the early morality plays. In the recent times the expressionistic drama represents the inner life of human beings by various symbols and special conventions. In this type of drama, scenery, incidental music, special costume, masks, special lighting effects and other devices are symbolically used to produce important effects.

#### **1.3.3.8 Novel :**

The basic essence of this genre is that it is an extended fictional narrative whereas the epic, the medieval romance, and later the short prose-tales provided readers with entertaining stories. Now the extended prose narratives have become more popular.

Some novels are very short, like novella. Some are non-fictional and some have been written in verse and some even do not tell a story. All this shows that the novel as a literary genre is itself exceptional and it disregards constraints that govern literary forms, and acknowledges no obligatory structure, style or subject matter.

Because of this openness and flexibility, the novel has become the most important literary genre of the modern age. It has superseded the epic, the romance, and

other narrative forms. Novels can be distinguished from short stories and novellas by their greater length, which permits fuller and subtler development of characters and themes. The novel differs from the prose romance as in it a greater degree of realism is expected. It also tends to describe a recognisable secular social world, often in a sceptical and prosaic manner inappropriate to the marvels of romance.

The novel has frequently incorporated the structures and languages of non-fictional prose forms (history, autobiography, journalism, travel writing) even to the degree that sometimes the non-fictional element outweighs the fictional. A novel should have at least one character and preferably several characters shown in the process of change and social relationship. A plot or some arrangement of narrated events is another normal requirement. Special sub genres of the novel have grown up around particular kinds of character, e.g. (the spy novels), setting (the historical novel, the campus novel), and plot (the detective novel), while other kinds of novels are distinguished either by their structure ("the epistolary novel", "the picaresque novel"), or by special emphasis on character (the Bildungsroman), or ideas. In the twentieth century, other forms of novel like stream of consciousness novel and anti novel have also come up. Now we shall discuss these sub genres of novel in brief.

**Romance :** Romance is a fictional story in verse or prose that relates improbable adventures of idealized characters in some remote or enchanted setting, or, more generally denotes a tendency in fiction opposed to that of realism. This term now is associated with many forms of fiction from the Gothic novel and the popular love story to the scientific romances of H.G. Wells. The novels of Sir Walter Scott are also called romances.

**The Picaresque Novel** in the strict sense is a novel with "a picaresque", a Spanish term used for a rogue or scoundrel, as its hero or heroine. In a picaresque novel, the hero and his companions move from one adventure to another and one set of characters to another so that one episode ends and another begins and the journey is completed by the central character. Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* are the best examples of this type of novel.

**The Epistolary Novel :** It is a novel written in the form of a series of letters exchanged among the characters. This form of the novel creates problem of points of view because the letter writers have to be in a position to know enough to keep the reader informed. At the same time they should not know so much that they make suspense, anticipation and verisimilitude impossible. This form of narrative was often used in English and French novels of the 18th century. Richardson's

*Pamela* (1740-41) and *Clarissa* (1747-48) are the best known examples.

**The Lyrical Novel :** This novel is characterised by a poetic use of language and it often subordinates action, characterization and verisimilitude to mood and setting. Roderick Hudson's *Green Mansions* and Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* are the best examples of lyrical novel.

**The Symbolic Novel :**

Very close to the lyrical novel in stylistic features, this novel emphasises a meaningful pattern of symbols rather than such conventional aspects as characterization and story. Herman Hesse's *Steppenwolf* is a symbolic novel.

**Realistic Novel** aims to show life as it is and for its subject matter it takes the average, the common place and everyday life of the contemporary scene. In the literary manner also the writer presents the subject matter in such a way as to give the reader the illusion of actual experience. The realistic novel is very much near to the actual life. William Dean Howells's *The Rise of Silas Lapham* and Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* are the best examples of this type of novel.

**Naturalistic Novel :** No doubt naturalistic novel gives a more accurate picture of life than a realistic novel but there is special selection of subject matter and a special literary manner. This mode of fiction was developed by a school of writers according to the philosophical thesis that man belongs entirely in the order of nature and does not have a soul or any other connection with a religious or spiritual world beyond nature. The French novelist Emile Zola and other naturalistic writers presented their subject matter with an objective scientific attitude and with elaborate documentation.

**The Sociological Novel :** In this novel the social, economic and political conditions of the period which are contemporary or nearly contemporary with the life of the author, are presented.

**The Regional Novel :** In this kind of novel the setting, speech and customs of a particular locality are emphasized not merely as local colour but also as important conditions affecting the temperament of the characters and their ways of thinking and feeling, such as Malgudi in R.K. Narayan's novels, Wessex in Hardy's novels and Yoknapatawpha county and Mississippi in Faulkner's novels.

**Sentimental Novel** is also called novel of sentiment or novel of sensibility which is an emotionally extravagant novel that became popular in Europe in the late 18th century. In this novel, the novelist aims to improve mankind by showing an admirable

protagonist being subjected to indignities but coming out victorious through these. Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* is a popular sentimental novel.

**Historical Novel :** In this novel the action takes place during a specific historical period well before the time of writing, often one or two generations before, sometimes several generations before, and in which some attempt is made to depict accurately the customs and mentality of the period. The central character-real or imagined is usually subject to divided loyalties within a larger historical conflict of which readers know the outcome. Sir Walter Scott was the pioneer of this genre.

**Gothic Novel or Gothic Romance** is a story of terror and suspense usually set in a gloomy old castle or monastery. The term Gothic is applied to medieval architecture and thus associated in the 18th century with superstition. The central conflict in this novel is between a genteel but courageous young man and the forces of evil which are often aided by supernatural forces. Following the appearance of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) the Gothic novel flourished in Britain from the 1790s to the 1820s dominated by Ann Radcliff whose *Mysteries of Udolpho* had many imitators.

**Science Fiction :** It is popular branch of prose fiction that explores the probable consequence of some improbable and impossible transformation of the basic conditions of human or intelligent non-human existence. The transformation need not be brought about by a technological invention, but may involve some mutation of known biological or physical reality, e.g. time, travel, extra terrestrial invasion, ecological catastrophe. Science fiction is a form of literary fantasy or romance that often draws upon earlier kind of utopian or apocalyptic writing. H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* are the examples of science fiction.

**The Detective Novel :** In these novels the central character solves certain mysteries pertaining to thefts, murders etc. Sherlock Holmes of Arthur Conan Doyle is a famous practitioner of this type.

**Utopian Novel** depicts an ideal society in which the contemporary problems and vices are minimised, and contemporary potentialities and virtues are fully realised. In these highly imaginative novels, the societies are shown nearly perfect and there is a minimum of conflict and a minimum of action. In this novel, the interest is not so much in characterisation as in the features that make the utopian society desirable. Sir Thomas Moore in his Latin work *Utopia* (1516) coined these words.

**Dystopia** is a modern term invented as opposite of Utopia, and applied to any alarmingly unpleasant imaginary world usually of the projected future. The fictional

works depicting such worlds are called dystopic novels. It is a significant form of modern fiction and of modern satire. George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949), H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1890) and Russel Hoban's *Riddly Walker* (1980) are the examples of dystopic novels.

**The Psychological Novel :** In this modern form of novel, the novelist explores the inner world of character. Instead of narrating the outside reality, the novelist here shows the inner conflict and movement in the mind of the character. In place of the straight narrative, and the chronological plot, the plot construction is deformed and the writer makes use of the stream of consciousness technique and the interior monologue. Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* is the best example.

**Bildungsroman :** Sometimes the psychological novel merges into bildungsroman, the novel of development. The central character in such novels is shown as developing and she/he grows and matures in this process.

#### **Nouveau Roman or the New Novel :**

The French term (New Novel) has been applied since the mid 1950s to the experimental novels by the group of French writers who rejected many of the traditional elements of traditional novel-writing such as the residential plot and the analysis of characters' motives. The leading light of this group was Alain Robbe Grillet, whose essays on the novel are noteworthy.

**The Nouveau Roman** (1963) argues for a neutral registering of sensation and things rather than an interpretation of events or a study of characters, and these principles were put into practice most famously in the anti-novel.

**Anti-Novel :** This is a form of experimental fiction that dispenses with certain traditional elements of novel writing like the analysis of character's states of mind or the unfolding of a sensational plot. The term is usually associated with the French nouveau roman *La Jalousie*. Michall Buter's *La Modification* (1957), Nathalie Sarraute's *Le Plend Trium* (1959) are the famous examples of anti-novel. This novel may deliberately parody novelistic technique or attempt to avoid them altogether. Beckett's *Murphy* is an example of the anti-novel.

**Popular Novel** also has story, plot and characters and arouses our suspense and curiosity. The quality of experience presented here may appeal to the popular taste but may not invite the attention of literary critics. This kind of novel can not persuade us for good taste.

#### **1.3.3.9 Prose :**

Apart from the major literary genres like Poetry, Drama and Novel, there are many types of work written in prose also. By prose we mean the form of written language that is not organized according to the formal patterns of Poetry. Prose has its minimum requirement – some degree of continuous coherence and logic. Prose has also type of language used in short-stories and articles. There are many types of prose writing that have come up which have been distinguished on the basis of the subject matter, style, argumentation, hypothesis etc., like biography, scientific writing, historical writing, travelogue, chronicle and a few others. We shall discuss these genres briefly.

**Essay :** Essay is a short composition written in prose to discuss a subject or propose an argument without claiming to be a complete or thorough exposition. An essay is more relaxed than the formal academic dissertation. The term originally meaning "trying out" was coined by the French writer, Michel de Montaigne in the title of his *Essais* (1580). The first modern example of the form, Francis Bacon's *Essays* (1597), began the tradition of essays in English and the most important examples are the essays of Addison, Steele, Hazlitt, Ralph Waldo Emerson, D.H. Lawrence, and Virginia Woolf, among others. The essays of Pope are written in verse and these are rare exceptions to the Prose essays.

**Travelogue :** It is a writing or lecture describing travels. If a book gives an account of journeys and experiences, it is also called travelogue. Travelogue is broadly a truthful record of an actual travel and it aims at satisfying human curiosity about lands and civilizations different from the one in which the reader himself lives. Such a curiosity was obvious in England in the eighteenth century, which took pride in its scientific temper and will to be enlightened. Thus travel literature became popular in England during the 17th and 18th centuries. A narrative writing dealing with travel has all the characteristics of a good narrative prose, objectivity, concreteness and impersonality, as well as economy and speed. The style used in a travelogue is apparently matter of fact, scientific and precise. About the form of a travelogue, the writer has much freedom as it is a highly loose mode and can include almost any observation, incident or digression that the writer wished to make. In Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, an excellent use of this mode of writing has been made.

**Biography :** An account of the actual lives of individual men is called biography. Dryden defined biography as "the history of particular men's lives". Samuel Johnson wrote lives of many poets.

**Autobiography :** It is a kind of biography in which the writer tells the story of his own life and his developing self. It is distinguished from the memory in which the emphasis is on the people he has known and the events he has witnessed. Autobiography is also different from private diary which is day to day record of the events in a man's life which he writes for his own use and pleasure with little or no thought of publication.

A kind of biography which developed in Europe as a result of Christianity is called Hagiology which contains the record of the lives of Saints written for the purposes of edification.

**Scientific Writing :** A scientific writing describes how things happen and not as they should happen. A scientific description should be possibly impersonal.

**Historical Writing** is a description of events belonging to a particular period. A historian should try to give a semblance of actuality to these events. All characteristics of good narrative prose, viz. concreteness, objectivity, impersonality, economy and speed ought to be there in a historical writing.

**Philosophical Writing :** This form of prose writing deals with truth and reality. Unlike a scientist who confines himself to what he can observe and the inferences he can check from his observations, the philosopher's aim is to explore ultimate truth and find meaning in things. He cannot be indifferent to what he discovers. Hence a philosophical writing must be somewhere between the closely scientific and emotive style.

**Chronicle :** A chronicle is a detailed and continuous record of events in historical order. The best example we have is the *The Chronicles of Jean Froissart* (1337-1410) and these cover period of 1375-1400 dealing with the affairs of France, Flanders, Spain, Portugal and England. The medieval chronicles contained legendary material and these were based on the local records of the analysis and listed the events in place of evaluating them.

These are some of the major genres and their further sub types, that have been discussed in this lesson. There are many more genres and new ones will continue coming up with the writing of new works, and the definitions of these genres will also keep on developing.

### Self Check Exercise

- 1 Define dystopia.
- 2 What is various types of comedy?



- 3 Define tragedy.

### 1.3.4 Summary

Summing up we can say that literary creations have been divided into various types of forms which are called genres. The knowledge of the generic aspect of a literary work, which tells us about the basic elements of a particular type, certainly helps us in understanding a work of art better as a member of a particular literary species. But this should also be kept in mind that generic parameters do not remain fixed. With the social changes and with the creations of new kinds of literary works, changes and development keep coming in literary forms. Hence the effort of the literary critics should not be to fit the old and new creative works into the preconceived literary definitions, rather to study the work of art as a distinct member of its literary family with its unique characteristics. A study of the development and growth of various genres in different literary periods is also a very interesting area of study which assists us in exploring the relationship of one work with its traditional form and its individual status as a work of art. The sub division of a literary work into many genres also leads to study various aspects of pragmatic criticism like form, structure, texture, subject and theme.

### 1.3.5 Long Questions

- 1 Define "genre," and discuss major genres.
- 2 Write short notes on the following :-
  - (i) Tragedy (ii) Epic
  - (iii) Essay (iv) Realistic Novel
  - (v) Ballad (vi) Travelogue
  - (vii) Dystopia
- 3 Write an extended note on novel and its major types.

### 1.3.6 Short Questions

- 1 Define dramatic monologue.
- 2 How do you differentiate between fiction and non-fiction.
- 3 Define the term Sonnet.

### 1.3.7 Suggested Readings

- 1 *English Social History* by G.M. Trevelyan.
- 2 *History of English Literature* by Edward Albert.

- 3     *A Critical History of English Literature* by David Daiches.
- 4     *History of English Literature* by Legouis and Cazamian.
- 5     *A Glossary of Literary terms* by M.H. Abrahams.

## **Study of Prose**

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### **Important Terms Pertaining to Prose**

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- 1.4.1 Objectives
- 1.4.2 Introduction
- 1.4.3 Important Terms Pertaining to Prose
- 1.4.4 Satire
- 1.4.5 Parable
- 1.4.6 Allegory
- 1.4.7 The Chronicle
- 1.4.8 Utopia
- 1.4.9 Scientific Writing :
- 1.4.10 Summary
- 1.4.11 Long Questions
- 1.4.12 Short Questions
- 1.4.13 Suggested Readings

#### **1.4.1 Objectives**

- To introduce prose as a literary expression to students.
- To teach the various types of prose.
- To introduce various literary terms pertaining to prose.

#### **1.4.2 Introduction**

Prose is a literary expression not marked by rhyme or by metrical regularity. It is the sustained use of language as we ordinarily speak of it, as distinguished from language patterned into recurrent units, which we call verse. However, the lack of metre does not mean that the writing of distinguished prose is lesser art than the writing of distinguished verse. In fact, in all literatures, written prose seems to have developed later than written verse. But that should not undermine its distinct status as the type of language used in novels, short stories, articles, etc.

#### **1.4.3 Important Terms Pertaining to Prose**

It should be sufficient to note that the distinction between prose and poetry is not

and can never be a formal one. No minute analysis and definition of feet, no classification of metre, no theory of cadence or quantity, has ever resolved the multiple rhythm of poetry and the multiple rhythms of prose into two distinct and separable camps. The most that can be said is that prose never assumes a regular, even beat.

The rhythm of verse depends on patterns of repetition. In studying a poem, we can find a basic pattern. There may also be patterns of rhyme and sometimes other patterns such as assonance, internal rhythms or alliteration, refrains, symmetries of logic and even musical accompaniment. The rhythm of prose depends on variation. In fact, metrical lines and rhymes are considered a fault in prose style.

The function of words in prose is rather different. In poetry, the words may be used ambiguously, evocatively or purposely connected with rhythm rather than meaning. In prose, words are more likely to be sharply defined, with one meaning at a time and with what might be called a utilitarian function. Clarity is a supreme virtue in prose for most purposes, in poetry it is usually a secondary virtue. Moreover, poetry is generally much more figurative than prose, and especially much more metaphorical. The units of poetry, with the exception of free verse, are the foot, the line, the verse and sometimes the large section such as book, canto or simply a section designed by a number or sub-heading. For prose, however, we take a different set of units : the word, then the sentence (which may itself be analysed into phrases and clauses), then the paragraph and finally the larger unit such as the chapter or sometimes a less defined section. The short story or essay have no unit larger than the paragraph, or may be divisible into several sections where new arguments or matters are introduced. This will depend upon the details of the nature of the piece.

If we study a piece of prose word by word, we shall be able to talk about the choice of vocabulary; if we then study it sentence by sentence, we shall have a thorough grasp of its rhythm, grammatical structure, naturalness, suitability to the subject and clarity. If, then, we study the piece, paragraph by paragraph, we may find out something new about rhythm and shall understand the logical sequence or whatever may be the general purpose of the passage. If we are studying a large piece of prose such as a whole novel, we shall examine it chapter by chapter and so appreciate the whole structure of the story, or test coherence of the argument in an informative or persuasive book.

There is prose, such as some of Thomas Carlyle, Walter Pater, Sir Thomas Browne or Virginia Woolf that has some of the usual properties of poetry, other than metre,

and there is some poetry which begins to approach prose at times. So we have some subsidiary categories such as poetic prose or prose-poem and free verse. But in literature, as in all the arts, there are many borderline cases which do not fit into formal definitions.

The method of analysis, word by word, sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph will fit all prose because it is impossible to have prose that does not consist of these units. Moreover, prose has a number of functions and the function will very largely dictate the style.

We may divide prose into the following types according to their functions :

### **1. Narrative :**

Narrative prose is more popular than any other form of literature. It tells a story, true or invented in such a way as to make it interesting. This may be achieved in a variety of ways from the mere accumulation of exciting incidents as in thriller, to the subtle and detailed portrayal of character and motive as in *War and Peace* or *Pride and Prejudice*. Thus the style may also vary over an enormous range of techniques.

### **2. Argumentative :**

This will generally be more abstract than narrative prose as it is directed towards the intellect. The function of argumentative prose is to persuade the reader to believe something. Good argumentative prose contains sound reasoning and may also include an appeal to emotion. Much argumentative prose aims not so much at convincing, in the spirit of the propagandist as making people think about the problem intelligently. Argumentative prose may range from the very urbane and modest, as in Locke, Newman or Hawelock Ellis, to the violent and dogmatic as in political editorials and election speeches.

### **3. Dramatic :**

A good deal of prose may be found in drama. Important examples of prose drama are the works of Congreve, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Goldsmith, J.M. Synge, Henrik Johann Ibsen, and J.B. Priestly. Strictly realistic drama can be written only in prose. Dramatic prose usually has to resemble ordinary conversation sufficiently close to the day to day speech so as to be acceptable as an imitation of life.

### **4. Informative :**

There is much prose whose sole function is to communicate information. It includes school and college text-books, scientific books, encyclopaedias, books of instruction

in various arts and crafts, and newspaper reports and articles. Such prose may be of considerable literary merit or there may be no literary interest whatever but still satisfactory for conveying information. Some very bad prose is informative, prose written without any sense of style.

## **5. Contemplative :**

Under this heading, we may put the essay, some books of religious meditation, political speculation, or fantasy, and some books of descriptive writing. People with a real sense of style may be able to write prose that is a pleasure to read. Such diverse and promising subjects as sausages, pebbles, mice, herbs, or flying saucers have been rendered in gripping prose. Famous essayists include Francis Bacon, William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, R.L. Stevenson and Robert Lynd.

We may divide prose into the following types according to their style :

### **1.4.4 Satire**

Satire is both a literary genre and a literary manner. As a genre, its poetic form originated in 2nd century B.C. and was used by Roman satirist, Lucilius. It was practised with distinction by his successors, Horace, Persius and Juvenal.

In its more frequent sense, satire is a literary manner in which the follies and foibles or vices or crimes of a person, mankind or an institution are held up to ridicule or scorn, with the intention of correcting them. It is the literary art of diminishing a subject by making it look ridiculous and evoking towards it attitudes of amusement, contempt, indignation or scorn.

The word satire is derived from the Latin *Satura* ("ful plate"; "plate filled with various fruit" - hence a medley). But its origin has often been confused with the satyr play of Greek Drama - the fourth play in the dramatic bill, with a chorus of "goat men" and a coarse, comic manner. It differs from the 'comic' in that comedy evokes laughter as an end in itself, while satire "derides"; that is, it uses laughter as a weapon, and as a butt existing outside the work itself. That butt may be an individual (in "personal satire"), or a type of person, a class, an institution, a nation or even the whole race of man. Thus satire uses laughter for a corrective purpose.

Satire is usually justified as a corrective of human vice and folly. It claims to ridicule the failing rather than the individual and to limit ridicule to corrigible faults, excluding those for which a man is not responsible. Satire occurs as an incidental element in many works whose overall form is not satiric in a certain character, or situation or interpolated passage or ironic commentary on some

aspect of human condition or contemporary milieu. But in many literary achievements, verse or prose, the attempt to diminish a subject by ridicule is the organizing principle of the whole, and these works constitute the formal genre of "satires".

Satire is broadly divided into two types i.e. *formal* (or direct) *satire* and *indirect satire*. In *formal satire* the satiric voice speaks out in the first person; thus "I" may speak either to the reader as in Pope's '*Moral Essays*' or else to a character within the work itself who is called the *adversarius* and whose major function is to elicit and guide the satiric speaker's comments. The simplest and direct form of satire is invective – forthright and abusive language directed against a person or a cause or making a sudden harsh revelation of a damaging truth. Another form of direct satire is exaggeration in which the good characteristics are passed over and the evil or ridiculous ones are emphasized. Caricature is an example. There are two kinds of *formal or direct satires* which take their names from the great Roman satirists, Horace and Juvenal. The types are defined by the character of the 'persona' whom the author presents as his first person satiric speaker and by the attitude and tone that such person manifests towards his subject-matter and audience.

**Horatian Satire** is urbane and in it the character of the speaker is that of an urbane, witty, and tolerant man of the world who is moved more often to wry amusement than to indignation at the spectacle of human folly, pretentiousness and hypocrisy, and who uses a relaxed and informal language to evoke a smile at human follies and absurdities - some times including his own. Alexander Pope is a Horatian satirist and his "*Moral Essays*" and other formal satires for the most part sustain a Horatian stance.

**Juvenalian Satire** is harsh and the character of the speaker is that of a serious moralist who uses a dignified and public style of utterance to decry modes of vice and error which are no less dangerous because they are ridiculous and undertake to evoke contempt, more indignation or an unillusioned sadness at the aberrations of men. Dr. Johnson and Jonathan Swift are juvenalian satirists. Johnson's *London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* and Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* and *Gulliver's Travels* are the types of Juvenalian satire.

**Indirect Satire** takes the form of a narrative instead of direct address and employs a plot in which the objects of satire are characters who make themselves and their opinions ridiculous by their actions or speech. They are sometimes made even more ridiculous by the author's comments and narrative style. Irony, burlesque,

travesty and parody are modes and forms of indirect satire. Typical methods are contrasts between statement and action, allegorical treatment and under-statement. One type of indirect satire is *Manippean Satire* which is named after its Greek originator, the philosophical cynic, Menippus. It is sometimes called *Verronian Satire*, after a Roman imitator, Varro, while Northrop Frye, in *Anatomy of Criticism*, suggests an alternative name. *Anatomy* after Burton's famous English work *Anatomy of Melancholy* is written in prose though with interpolated passages of verse - and is a miscellaneous form often held together by a loosely constructed narrative. Its major feature, however, is a series of extended dialogues and debates (often conducted at a banquet or party) in which a group of immensely loquacious eccentrics, pedants, literary people, and representatives of various professions or philosophical points of views serve to make ludicrous, the intellectual attitude they typify by the arguments they urge in their support. Voltaire's *Candida*, Thomas Love Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey* and Huxley's *Point Counter Point* are examples of this type of satire.

Good English satire has been written in every period beginning with the Middle ages. But it flourished mainly in early eighteenth century. It included Jonathan Swift's harsh attacks on corruption in religion in *A Tale of A Tub* and on mankind in *Gulliver's Travels*, as well as his devastating shorter pieces such as *A Modest Proposal* and other tracts on the plight of the Irish. Gentle satire found a civilized voice in the essays and periodicals particularly Addison and Steele's *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*.

In the nineteenth century W.M. Thackeray produced much satiric prose. The satiric spirit was vigorously present in Oscar Wilde's essays and plays. The twentieth century has had its own share in the satiric drama by G.B. Shaw as also in the essays and fiction by Max Beerbohm and Aldous Huxley. Articles in *Punch* and *The New Yorker* demonstrate that formal essayistic satire, no less than satiric novels and plays still commands a wide audience. However, the Restoration and the eighteenth century loom large in satiric achievement. The greatest age of English and probably of world satire is the century and a half that included Dryden, Samuel Butler, Wycherley, Addison, Pope, Swift, Gray, Fielding, Johnson and Goldsmith. This was also the period of such great satirists as Boileau, La Fontaine and Voltaire in France.

#### 1.4.5 Parable

A parable is a short narrative. It is presented to emphasise the implicit but detailed



analogy between its component parts and a thesis or a lesson that the narrator is trying to bring home to us. Jesus Christ used this method to teach his disciples. His *Parables of the Good Samaritan* and *of the Prodigal Son* speak of his characteristic method.

#### 1.4.6 Allegory

An allegory is a narrative in which the agents and action, and sometimes the setting as well are contrived not only to make sense in themselves, but also to signify a second correlated order of persons, things, concepts or events. It is a method of literary or pictorial composition whereby the author or artist bodies forth immaterial things in correlated tangible images distinct from symbolism. For the symbolism, the material act or object represents an invisible but fuller reality; he moves from the actual to the unseen and intangible. The allegorist starts from the other end, attempting to comprehend and explain immaterial ideas such as passions or states of mind, by giving them concrete and recognizable forms. There are two types of allegory : (1) Historical and political allegory in which the characters and the action represent or allegorize historical personages and events, for example, Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* allegorized a political crisis in contemporary England (2) The Allegory of Ideas, in which the characters represent abstract concepts and the plot serves to communicate a doctrine or thesis. Both types of allegory may either be sustained throughout a work as in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, or exist merely as an episode in a non-allegoric work.

The central device in the typical allegory of ideas is the personification of abstract entities such as virtues, vices, states of mind and types of character; in the more explicit allegories, such reference is specified by the character's name. Thus allegory is a technique of creating or interpreting works of literature and art so that they will convey more than one level of meaning simultaneously. It is a strategy which may be employed in any literary form of genre. The beast fables of Aesop and La Fontaine are simple allegories in which the reader gives human significance to the actions of the animal characters. John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a moral and religious allegory in a prose narrative which on the one level tells the story of a man's journey, while on a second level it conveys the idea that a Christian life is a spiritual pilgrimage. Spenser's *Fairie Queene* fuses moral, religious, historical and political allegory in a verse romance, and third book of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (the voyage to Laputa and Lagado) is an allegorical satire directed primarily against philosophical and scientific pedantry.

Various literary forms may be regarded as special types of allegory, in that they narrate one coherent set of circumstances which signify a second order of correlated meanings. A fable is a short story that exemplifies a moral thesis or a principle of human behaviour; usually in its conclusion either the narrator or one of the characters states the moral in the form of an epigram. Most common is the beast fables in which animals talk and act like the human types they represent.

Allegory was particularly characteristic and popular manner of writing in the middle ages and favoured by the fathers of the Church. It recurred sporadically in modern literature but has never regained its old popularity. It is sometimes used as a cloak for political, social or literary satire as in Swift's *A Tale of Tub* and *Gulliver's Travels*, or Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*. In the twentieth century, allegory has been less frequently used as a literary method. It occasionally reappears in other art forms especially drama and the ballet, but seldom now achieves its original intention of revealing and clarifying the author's meaning.

#### 1.4.7 The Chronicle

Chronicles rendered the national or other important events of the time in prose or in verse. These can be safely declared to be the predecessors of modern "histories". If the chronicles deal with the events year by year they are often called Annals. The most important English chronicles are the Anglo Saxon Chronicle, started by King Alfred in the ninth century and continued until the twelfth century and the Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland (1577-1587) by Raphael Holinshed and other writers. These documents provided rich source material to the Elizabethan dramatists.

#### 1.4.8 Utopia

The term *Utopia* has been derived from two Greek words "Outopia" (no place) and "Eutopia" (good place). The term utopia has come to signify that class of fiction which represents an ideal political state and way of life. The first and the greatest examples of this writing is Plato's *Republic*. There have been many utopias written since *Thomas More* gave impetus to the genre. These include Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1891), and James Hilton's *Lost Horizon* (1933).

We may divide prose into the following types according to their subject matter :

#### 1.4.9 Scientific Writing

The main object of scientific writing is to set out how things happen and not to describe them as they happen. However, scientific description should be as

impersonal, as voiceless as possible. But science is more than description; it is showing the relations of things, and not to other things alone, but to concepts also. Sometimes, it consists altogether of formulating concepts and it is often difficult to distinguish between science and philosophy.

At all events, science today explains in a degree that mere description will not satisfy; it is concerned with hypothesis as much as with fact, and although it will have to do with the 'how' and not the 'why' of things, the moment the mind is concerned with hypothesis, personality enters in, and a tinge of eagerness creeps into the voice. Still, there is some prose free of this slightly higher pitch, prose which can definitely be ranked as scientific, purely expository prose. However, from this scientific prose personality is not excluded because hypothesis is at the basis of the explanation.

However, impersonal science may be, no man can help his attitude towards facts being coloured by his general attitude towards life : man cannot help being a moral being. What one looks for, however, in scientific prose, is the exclusion as far as possible of the writer's attitude towards life, for when this is allowed to enter too much into it, the prose ceases to actually become scientific and appears as something else. In scientific prose, illuminative metaphor is most effectively used to illuminate the thought. In order to make the point or argument clear, good scientific writing makes use of the paragraphs which often appear to be long and compact. This gives the prose that forbidding appearance to solidity which is associated with serious books. Among the classic writers of scientific prose are writers like Jules Verne and H.G. Wells.

### **Historical Writings :**

Historical writing includes all the characteristics of good narrative prose viz. objectivity, concreteness and impersonality as also economy and speed. History is a description of events and a historian should try to give a semblance of actuality to these events. The historian makes no attempt to see the events in their concreteness, but reacts to what he considers the historical significance of these events. We are given, not a narrative of fact, but a contemporaneous philosophy of history - an amalgam of politics, psychology, metaphysics and prejudice. History must examine into and deal with facts and try to connect them together or compare them, like a science. It also aims at imaginative reconstruction involving selection. Thus a historian must have all the gifts of a dramatist. So the manner of writing history, within the limits of the historian's own style will vary with what he wants to do. However, the historians are concerned not only with what happened, but

why it happened, and the way it happened. They have to bring a great number of considerations to bear upon one event: they have to colour it with all the wide knowledge of human beings and illuminate it with imaginative sympathy. The whole thing is presented with the finality and conciseness which goes with statement of fact. The historians have to colour the facts by purely literary means so as to give some idea of the feelings of the time. They have to colour history with their own personalities. Sometimes, a historian allows us to see him getting his facts, unravelling conflicting evidence: then the prose becomes much more scientific and comes near to legal prose. However, the historian ought to be detached and yet not simplify the material too much.

**Philosophical Writing :**

Philosophical writing deals with truth and reality. Whereas the scientist confines himself to what he can observe and with the inferences he can check from his observations, the philosopher aims at ultimate truth, and cannot be indifferent to what he discovers. He tries to find a meaning in things. So a certain quality of emotion is likely to enter into philosophic prose. Philosophical writing leads in the end to a way of life, and people are not as a rule to be reasoned into action or into an outlook on life, but induced to do things by their feelings or prejudices. In philosophical writing the tone is impersonally argumentative with a good deal of emphasis on supposed fact. Moreover, it has to be detached and persuasive so that it appears to have all the cases of legal prose.

Apart from particular purposes or occasions, philosophical writing must be somewhere between the closely scientific and the emotive : the man who writes it is reasoning with his whole self, including a set of feelings which also form a part of the philosophical materials. Philosophical writer should have the tone of a humanist who cares equally for truth and for mankind. He must be detached but not indifferent.

**Travelogue :**

A travelogue is a writing or lecture describing travels or it is a book about journeys and experiences. The travelogue is particularly a truthful record of an actual travel and it aims at satisfying human curiosity about lands and civilizations different from the one in which the reader himself lives. Such a curiosity was evident in England in the eighteenth century which prided itself on its scientific temper and the will to be enlightened. So travel literature was quite popular in England and on the continent during seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The narrative writing dealing with travels has all the characters of a good narrative prose, i.e., objectivity,

concreteness and impersonality as well as economy and speed. A travelogue uses a style which is apparently matter of fact, scientific and precise. The form of travel literature gives its writer immense freedom because it is a highly loose mode and can include almost any observation, incident or digression that the writer wishes to make. Jonathan Swift has made an excellent use of this mode of writing in his *Gulliver's Travels*.

**Essay :**

Essay is a brief composition in prose that undertakes to discuss a matter, express a point of view or persuade us to accept a thesis on any subject whatsoever. The essay is a complete and systematic exposition. It makes full use of devices such as anecdote, striking illustration, and humour to augment its appeal.

A useful distinction is between the formal and informal essay. The formal essay is impersonal, the writer writes as an authority. In *Informal Essay* the author assumes a tone of intimacy with his audience, tends to be concerned with everyday things rather than with public affairs of specialised topics, and writes in a relaxed, self-revolutionary and often whimsical fashion. The genre was given its standard name by Michel de Montaigne's great *French Essais* in 1580. The title signifies "attempt" and was meant to indicate the tentative and "unsystematic" nature of Montaigne's essay, in contrast to formal and technical treatise on the same subject. Francis Bacon, late in the 16th century, inaugurated the English use of the term in his own series of essays most of which are short comments on subjects such as "Of Truth," "Of Adversity" and "Of Marriage and Single life". Addison, Steele, William Hazlitt, Thomas De Quincey and Charles Lamb have been some of the prominent essayists of their times. In the present time, George Orwell, E.M. Forster, James Thurber and E.B. White have excelled themselves in the art of writing informal essay.

**Biography :**

Biography has been defined as the history of the lives of individual men. It may be defined as "the account of an actual life." Late in the seventeenth century, Dryden defined biography as "the history of particular men's lives."

The art of biography is a late development in literature. It presupposes a detached interest in individual human beings which is only found in advanced civilizations. Dr. Johnson wrote in the eighteenth century that "the business of a biography is often to pass slightly over those performances and incidents which produce vulgar greatness, to lead the thoughts to domestic privacies, to display the minute details

of private life, where exterior appendages are cast aside, and men excel each other only by prudence and virtue".

We must distinguish biography not only in terms of its subject matter but also in terms of its technique and intention. The myriad forms of biography include catalogue of achievements, literary narratives and psychological portraits. Each form has been biography to the extent to which it purports to deal with records of an actual life, but each form has been distinct in its author's strategies and purposes.

Biography now connotes a relatively full account of the facts of man's life, involving the attempt to set forth his character, temperament and milieu, as well as his experience and activities. An intimate sympathy with his subject is a great asset for a biographer, but such a sympathy may lead to uncritical adulation found in many of the older biographies.

English biography proper - as distinguished from the generalized chronicles of the deeds of a king or the stylized and pious lives of the Christian saints - appeared in the seventeenth century, an example is Izaak Walton's *Lives of John Donne, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw and Others*, written between 1640 and 1678. In the eighteenth century, both theory and practice of biography as a special literary art were greatly advanced. It was the age of Dr. Johnson's monumental *Lives of English Poets* (1772-1781) and James Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791). In the twentieth century, biography has become one of the most popular literary forms.

*Autobiography* is a kind of biography in which the writer tells the story of his own life, i.e., it is to be distinguished from the memoir in which the emphasis is not on the author's developing self, but on the people he has known and the events he has witnessed and from the private *Diary or Journal*, which is a day-to-day record of the events in a man's life which he writes for his own use and pleasures, with little or no thought of publication. The first fully developed autobiography is also one of the greatest : *Confessions of St. Augustine*, written in the fourth century A.D. Among the notable autobiographies in prose are those by Benjamin Franklin, John Stuart Mill, Anthony Trollope, Henry Adams and Sean O'Casey.

A kind of biography which developed in Europe as a result of the rise of Christianity is called *hagiology* and which contains the record of the lives of saints written for purposes of edification. However, in earlier ages, there were three traditional types of biography - the life of the hero-soldier or statesmen as written by Plutarch; the official or the rules as found in the lives of the Roman emperors; and the life of the

saint or contemplative, with an account of his teachings and miraculous deeds.

**Euphemism :**

Euphemism means to "speak well". In matters of style, it has come to mean the use in place of the blunt term of something disagreeable, terrifying or offensive, or a term that is vague, less direct or less colloquial, e.g., to pass away-for death (or die).

The student may note that *Euphemism* is to be distinguished from *Euphism*. *Euphism* was a formal and elaborate prose style which was greatly in vogue in 1580s. It takes its name from John Lyly's famous work written in 1578 titled *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit*. John Lyly authored another work known as *Euphues and His English* (1580). The style is full of moral maxims, relies constantly on balanced and anti-thetical constructions, reinforces the structural parallels by heavy patterns of *alliteration* and *assonance*, and is addicted to long similes and learned allusions which are often drawn from mythology and habits of legendary animals. To make the point clear an example is being given from Lyly's *Euphues*. One of the characters Philautus is speaking :I see now that as the fish *Scolopidus in the flood*, Araris at the waxing of the Moon is as white as the driven snow, and at the waning as black as the burnt coal, so Euphues which at the first increasing of our familiarity was very zealous, is now at the last cast become most faithless.

**Irony :**

The term irony highlights the difference between what is asserted and what is actually the case. In a work of literary art, irony may operate at various levels. For example, it may operate at the verbal level, or at the level of structure or may be in-built in the very texture itself. See how it operates at various levels.

**Verbal Irony :**

It is a statement in which the implicit meaning intended by the speaker differs from that which he ostensibly asserts. For example, the opening sentence of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen is a remarkable feat of verbal irony.

Some literary works exhibit *Structural Irony*, in that they are persistently, or even totally ironic. In such works, the author instead of using an occasional verbal irony, introduces a structural feature which serves to sustain the duplicity of meaning. This structural feature may be in the form of *native hero or fallible narrator*.

**Socratic Irony :**

When a seemingly serious and philosophic statement actually turns out to be absurd and ill-grounded.

**Dramatic Irony :**

Dramatic irony involves a situation in a play or a narrative in which the audience share with the author knowledge, of which a character is ignorant. The character acts in a way grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances, or expects the opposite of what fate holds in store or says something that anticipates the actual outcome but not at all in the way he means it. Sophocles's *Oedipus* is the most appropriate example of *dramatic* as well as *tragic irony*.

**Cosmic Irony** (or irony of fate) refers to literary works in which God or destiny or the universal process, is represented as though deliberately manipulated to frustrate and mock the protagonist. Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'urburvilles* is a fine example of this kind of irony.

**Romantic Irony :**

It is a slightly difficult concept to understand. The author himself creates an artistic illusion only to break it down by revealing that he as artist is the arbitrary creator and manipulator of his characters and their actions. The concept owes much to Lawrence Sterne's use of self-conscious and wilful narrator in his *Tristram Shandy*. In the modern times the term *irony* has been used in a generally extended sense, as a general criterion of literary values.

The student may also keep in mind that irony can be discriminated from some related uses of language.

**Invective :** Invective is a direct denunciation by the use of derogatory epithets.

**Sarcasm :** When crude and blatant use of apparent praise is actually for dispraise.

**Atmosphere:** The alternative terms for atmosphere are *mood* and *ambience*.

Atmosphere is the totality pervading a literary work, which sets up in the disastrous. For example, in Shakespeare's masterpiece *Hamlet*, the tense and fearful atmosphere is set in the beginning only by the terse and nervous dialogue of the sentinels as they anticipate the appearance of the ghost.

**Connotation :**

In literary usage, the denotation of a word is its primary meaning, such as the dictionary specific. *Connotation* is the range of secondary or accompanying meaning



which it commonly suggests or implies. For example, "home" denotes the place where one lives, but connotes privacy, intimacy and coziness.

**Criticism :** Criticism is the branch of study concerned with defining, classifying, expounding and evaluating works of literature. Works of literature can be interpreted in context of their theoretical concepts or practical norms. Taking clue from this we can say that *theoretical criticism* undertakes to establish, on the basis of general principles, a coherent set of terms, distinctions and categories to be applied to the consideration and interpretation of works of literature as well as the "criteria" by which these works and their writers are to be evaluated. The earliest greatest work of theoretical criticism was Aristotle's *Poetics*. *Practical Criticism or Applied Criticism* concerns itself with the discussion of particular works and writers. In an applied critique, the theoretical principles controlling the analysis and evaluation are left implicit or brought in only when the occasion demands. Among the major works of Applied criticism are Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, Matthew Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*.

Practical criticism is sometimes distinguished in the following categories :

### 1. **Impressionistic Criticism :**

It attempts to represent in words the felt qualities of a particular work, and to express the attitudes and feelingful responses, the impression which the work directly evokes from the critic as an individual. *Judicial Criticism*, on the other hand, attempts not merely to communicate but to analyse and explain the effects of a work in terms of its subject, organisation and techniques, and to base the critic's individual judgement on general standards of literary excellence.

Students should also keep in mind that the types of literary theory or practice can be discriminated according to whether, in explaining and judging a work of literature, they refer the work primarily to the outer world, or to the audience or to the author or else look upon the work as an entity in itself. On the basis of this, tools of criticism can be applied as follows :

**Mimetic Criticism :** It views the literary work as an imitation or reflection or representation of the world and human life. The primary criterion applied to a work is that of the "truth", of its representation to the objects it represents or should represent. Plato and Aristotle considered literature to be a mimetic art.

**Pragmatic Criticism** views the work as something which is constructed in order to achieve certain effects on the audience (effects such as aesthetic pleasure, instruction or special feelings) and it tends to judge the value of the work according

to its success in achieving that aim. Practised ever since Roman times, this approach has come to be recognised as *Rhetorical Criticism* in modern times.

**Expressive Criticism** regards the work primarily in relation to the author himself. It defines the work as an expression, or overflow, or utterance of feeling, or as the product of the poet's imagination operating on his perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. Such views were developed by the Romantic Critics.

**Objective Criticism** approaches the work as something which stands free from poet, audience, and the envioning world. It describes the literary product as a self-sufficient object or as a world in itself, which is to be analysed and judged by "intrinsic" criteria, such as complexity, coherence, equilibrium, integrity and the interrelations of its component elements. The *New Critics* and *The Chicago School of Critics* evaluate the literary works on these principles.

**Textual Criticism :** Its basic aim is to establish as closely as possible what an author actually wrote by assaying and correcting the sources or error and confusion in various printings of a work.

It is also common to distinguish types of criticism which bring to bear upon literature various special areas of knowledge and theory in the attempt to explain the influences which determined the particular characteristics of a literary work. Accordingly we have *Historical Criticism*, *Biographical Criticism*, *Sociological Criticism*, *Psychological Criticism*, *Archetypal Criticism* and many others.

#### Self Check Exercise

- 1 Explain different types of irony.
- 2 Discuss various types of criticism.

#### 1.4.10 Summary

Summing up, Prose is a literary expression not marked by rhyme or by metrical regularity. It is the sustained use of language as we ordinarily speak of it, as distinguished from language patterned into recurrent units, which we call verse. However, the lack of metre does not mean that the writing of distinguished prose is lesser art than the writing of distinguished verse. In fact, in all literatures, written prose seems to have developed later than written verse. But that should not undermine its distinct status as the type of language used in novels, short stories, articles, etc.

Note : The definitions have been taken from : *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (3rd edition) by M.H. Abrams.

**1.4.11 Long Questions**

- 1      (a)    Trace major differences between prose and verse  
         (b)    List and explain main types of prose ?
2.    Explain the following :
  - (a)    Satire
  - (b)    Allegory
  - (c)    Biography
  - (d)    Scientific Writing
  - (e)    Criticism
- 3      (a)    Explain major types of satire.  
         (b)    Elucidate prominent forms of irony.

**1.4.12 Short Questions**

- 1      Euphemism
- 2      Define Parable
- 3      Horatian Satire

**1.4.13 Suggested Readings**

- 1      *English Social History* by G.M. Trevelyan.
- 2      *History of English Literature* by Edward Albert.
- 3      *A Critical History of English Literature* by David Daiches.
- 4      *History of English Literature* by Legouis and Cazamian.
- 5      *A Glossary of Literary terms* by M.H. Abrahams.

## **LITERATURE IN TODAY'S WORLD**

- 1.5.1 Objectives
- 1.5.2 Introduction
- 1.5.3 Literature in today's world
- 1.5.4 Summary
- 1.5.5 Long Questions
- 1.5.6 Short Questions
- 1.5.7 Suggested Readings

### **1.5.1 Objectives**

- To familiarize the students with the term literature.
- To create an awareness of the value and pleasure of reading good literary works.
- To learn the importance and qualities of literature.
- To build reading skills, create connections, promote empathy, foster appreciation and provide leisure to readers and students.

### **1.5.2 Introduction**

Literature is a term generally used to describe written or spoken material, anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific works, but the term is most commonly used to refer to works of creative imagination including works of poetry, drama, fiction and non-fiction. Infact, literature is beyond this definition. It is more than what we see and perceive. Its boundaries cross our lives, our traditions, culture, social relations, national unity and a lot more.

Literature is a canon which consists of those works in language by which a community defines itself through the course of its history. It includes works primarily artistic and also those whose aesthetic qualities are only secondary. Literature is beyond any definition. It is more than what we see and perceive. The self-defining activity of a community is conducted in the light of the works as its members have come to read them or concretize them.

### **1.5.3 Literature in today's world**

The word literature is derived from the Latin word 'Littera' meaning a letter, while **The Concise Dictionary of Current English** describes it as a "writing"

whose "value lies in the beauty of form or emotional effect". It is referred to as "the matter of imaginative or artistic literature".

Literature is a form of expression which includes writings that are primarily informative, technical, scholarly and journalistic. It is created and recreated through imagination and written in a language that attracts our attention, because it is different from the way we generally use language or express ourselves in our day to day activities or interactions. It is 'a feigned and false story' meant to teach or entertain. Also, it is concerned with general or universal truths about human life and existence anywhere.

Literature is written or oral composition deriving from and mirroring a society and its people. The concept of literature gets beyond any definition. It can be considered as a social order or a manifestation of a man's unconquerable mind. Its forms and modes of operation, its history and its influence can be studied either with the practical purpose of becoming a writer. Literature is a social discourse in which the issues or problems of human society can be x-rayed. Literature is a vital tool of an expression of human activities and experiences geared towards peaceful living and development.

Literature is the foundation of life. It places an emphasis on many topics from human tragedies to tales of the ever popular search for love. Literature enables people to see through the lenses of others, and sometimes even inanimate objects; therefore it becomes a looking glass into the world as others view it. It is a journey that is inscribed in pages and powered by the imagination of the reader. Ultimately, Literature has provided a gateway to teach the reader about life experiences from even the saddest stories to the most joyful ones that will touch their hearts.

Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become.

Literature not only describes reality but also adds to it. Literary works are portrayals of the thinking patterns and social norms prevalent in the society. They are a depiction of the different facets of the common man's life. Classical literary works serve as a food for thought and a tonic for imagination and creativity. Exposing an individual to good literary work is equivalent to providing him/her with the finest of educational opportunities. On the other hand, the lack of exposure to classic literary works is equal to depriving an individual from an opportunity to grow as an individual. Some of the great literary works like The Ramayana and The Mahabharata among others provide society with the guiding principles of life. Ancient poetic works by poets like Homer, Plato, Sappho, Horace and Virgil, Shakespeare's Sonnets and notable poetry by Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson and W.B. Yeats is timeless.

It is through reading such great literary and poetic works, that we understand life. They help a person take a closer look at the different facets of life. In many

ways, it can change one's perspective towards life. Lives of brilliant achievers and individuals who have made a valuable contribution to society are sketched in their biographies. These works give the readers an insight into the lives of these eminent people, while also serving as a bible of 'ideas'.

Literature serves as an enormous information base. Research works by notable scientists often narrate stories of their ground breaking discoveries and inferences. Ongoing developments in the fields of science and technology are documented so that the world can know about them. Several ancient scriptures relating stories of human evolution and narratives of human life in those times have been of tremendous help to mankind. Thus literature has always served as an authentic source of information from all around the world. True languages are the building blocks of literature. But the study of literature cannot be restricted to only studying languages. In fact, literature cannot be confined to an educational curriculum. A degree in language and literature is perhaps unable to provide one, with everything that literature can offer.

Literature is definitely much more than its literary meaning, which defines it as 'an acquaintance to letters'. It lays the foundation of an enriched life, it adds 'life of living'.

When we begin the study of literature, we find it has always two aspects, one of the simple enjoyment and appreciation and the other is analysis and exact description. There is a short story 'The Shell and the Book'. A child and a man were one day walking on the seashore when the child found a little shell and held it to his ear. Suddenly he heard sounds: strange, low, melodious sounds, as if the shell was remembering and repeating to itself the murmurs of its ocean home. The child's face filled with wonder as he listened.

Here in the little shell, apparently, was a voice from another world and he listened with delight to its mystery and music. Then the man came and explained that the child heard nothing strange, the pearly curves of the shell simply caught a multitude of sounds too faint for human ears and filled the glimmering hollows with the murmur of innumerable echoes. It was not a new world, but only the unnoticed harmony of the old that had aroused the child's wonder.

So some such experience as this awaits us when we begin the study of literature with its two aspects of simple enjoyment and appreciation and the other of analysis and exact description. When a song appeals to the ear or a noble book to the heart, we discover a new world for the moment; at least, a completely new world which is very different from our own world and it seems that we are in a place of dreams and magic.

In broader sense, literature means simply written record of the race, including all its history and sciences, as well as its poems and novels. In narrower sense literature is the artistic record of life and most of our writing emanated from it. A history or a science may be a literature sometimes but only when we forget the subject matter and the presentation of facts, in the simple beauty of its

expression. The first significant thing is the artistic quality of all literature. All art is the expression of life in forms of truth and beauty or in another word which exists in this world and which remain unnoticed until brought to our attention by some sensitive human soul, like the delicate curves of the shell reflect sounds and harmonies too faint to be otherwise noticed. In the same pleasing, surprising way, all artistic work must be a kind of revelations. Architecture is probably the oldest creative work of arts and yet we still have many builders but few architects, that is, men whose work in wood or stone suggests some hidden truth and beauty to the human senses.

Another significant quality of literature is its suggestiveness, its appeal to our emotions and imagination rather to our intellect. Literature has got a permanent value. It is a prevalent opinion that literature, like all arts, is mere play of imagination, pleasing enough like a new novel without any serious or practical importance. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Literature preserves the ideals of people and these ideals are love, faith, duty, friendship, freedom and reverence which are part of human life, and most worthy of preservation. Lastly, we can say that literature is the expression of life in words of truth and beauty, it is the written record of man's spirit of his thoughts, emotions, aspirations and it is the history and only the history of the human soul having characteristics of its artistic quality, its suggestiveness and its permanent qualities which will never fade.

"Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect it irrigates the deserts our lives have already become." - C.S. Lewis

This adage appropriately sums up the importance of literature in our times. It reminds us of stories, epics, religious works of all times and serve as guidelines for how to lead our lives. Reading of literature allows us to have a closer look at the different facets of life. In addition to this, literature helps us transcend barriers of time and space helping us to live in past as well as in future; and experiencing life in part of the globe. Bibliotherapy is a term used by thinkers as far back as Aristotle. Perhaps he could foresee the need of such a treatment for the people of our times, suffering from aching souls and minds. Today's fiercely competitive world necessitates reading of literature in order to soothe the nerves.

### **Self Check Exercise**

- 1 Discuss the relevance of literature in today's world.
- 2 Who was Aristotle. Discuss his contribution to literature.

#### **1.5.4 Summary**

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Literature is a form of expression which includes writings that are primarily informative, technical, scholarly and journalistic. It is created and recreated through imagination and written in a language that attracts our attention, because it is different from the way we generally use language or express ourselves in our day to day activities or interactions. It is 'a feigned and false story' meant to teach or entertain. Also, it is concerned with general or universal truths about human life and existence anywhere.

**1.5.5 Long Questions**

- 1 What is literature?
- 2 What is the purpose of literature in today's world?

**1.5.6 Short Questions**

- 1 Define Literature.
- 2 Define Hamartia.

**1.5.7 Suggested Readings**

- 1 *English Social History* by G.M. Trevelyan.
- 2 *History of English Literature* by Edward Albert.
- 3 *A Critical History of English Literature* by David Daiches.
- 4 *History of English Literature* by Legouis and Cazamian.
- 5 *A Glossary of Literary terms* by M.H. Abrahams.



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