

CRITICAL TERMS- PART I

Unit Structure

- 1.0. Objectives
- 1.1. Introduction
- 1.2. Simile
- 1.3. Imagery
- 1.4. Symbol
- 1.5. Let's Sum Up
- 1.6. Questions
- 1.7. References

1.0. OBJECTIVES

In this unit, the students will be acquainted with the significance of literary language and figures of speech. Further, they will be able to understand three figures of speech namely, Simile, Imagery and Symbols. After studying this unit, the students will be able to identify Simile, Imagery and Symbols from the literary texts.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Figure of speech is a kind of departure from standard usage. It is not primarily in the meaning of the words but in the order or syntactical pattern of words. It is an expression that is generally not a part of common, ordinary language, but a marked feature of a creative work. It represents the use of words in ways different from their ordinary, literal use and are employed by creative writers to produce figurative meaning, thus lending verve, vivacity and force to their writings. It is a different kind of creative use of language that adds beauty to literary works. There are various figures of speech. In this unit, Simile, Images and Symbols are discussed as follows:

1.2. SIMILE

As far as a simile figure of speech is concerned, there is comparison between two distinctly different or dissimilar things, objects and it explicitly expressed by using the word “like” or “as” to present an effective word-picture.

Let's consider the fine examples of similes in the various genres of literature in the work of art creative writers. William Shakespeare's beautiful sonnet

‘When I consider Everything That Grow’ in which the second stanza is the finest example of a simile figure of speech.

When I perceive that men as plants increase,
Cheered and checked even by the self-same sky;
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory.

In these lines William Shakespeare compares men with plants that men grow similarly plants also grow. Like plants, men also begin to decline after having reached their prime. The poet focuses on the similarity between these two different things: that beauty and charm of men subsequently fade away and are forgotten just as the beauty of the plants and flowers forgotten after they have faded away.

P. B. Shelley, highly imaginative and genius poet who has dexterously used similes in his excellent ode ‘Ode to a Skylark’. Here are some examples:

i. Higher still and higher

From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still does soar, and ever singest.

ii. Thou dost float and run;

Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

iii. Like a glow-worm golden

In a dell of
Scattering unbeholden
Its areal hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it
from the view.

This ode by Shelley is remarkable for its prolific use of similes each of which is a picture itself. The qualities of skylark are compared with number of beautiful things in these stanza such as the skylark climbs higher and higher in the sky like a cloud of fire, it floats and run like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun, The skylark is compared with glow-worm because the skylark is unseen in the same way a glow-worm invisibly scattering its light among the flowers and grass.

These examples of similes are unsurpassed for their romantic charm and beauty and each simile brings a separate picture in front of the mind. Actually, these examples of similes impart a rich feast for the senses.

Along with these examples, there are multiple examples such as: ‘My love is like a red, red rose’, ‘My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun’, ‘Love

is like war, easy to begin but hard to stop', and 'Life without love is like tree without blossom or fruit etc.

Simile, as a literary device functions as a means of creating an equivalent comparison or establishing similarity between two seemingly different things. Simile from a reader's point of view is very influential and useful because it can create an association between two unlike or different entities or ideas that enhance the meaning of both.

The creative writers get benefitted by incorporating similes into their work of art. There is no need for a poet to give excessive description or explanation if he uses finest examples of similes. Instead, by creating similarity or resemblance through comparing two different things, an image is created for the reader for better meaning and understanding. Through similes the poet generates thoughts on the part of the reader regarding the logic or truth by comparing two dissimilar things. These thoughts, in turn, can evoke emotion in the reader through the realization that the comparison is perfect and reflects a level of truth they may not have understood before. Similes are especially effective in poetry as a means of portraying truths in a lyrical yet concise manner.

1.3. IMAGERY

Imagery is a literary device that refers to the use of figurative language to evoke a sensory experience or create a picture with words for a reader. By utilizing effective descriptive language and figures of speech, writers appeal to a reader's senses of sight, taste, smell, touch, and sound, as well as internal emotion and feelings. Therefore, imagery is not limited to visual representations or mental images, but also includes physical sensations and internal emotions. The term imagery is one of the most common in criticism, and one of the most variable in meaning. The applications of it range all the from the "mental pictures", which it is sometimes claimed, are experienced by the reader of poem, to the totality of the components which make up a poem. The well-known poet, C. Day Lewis' states in his "Poetic Image" that an image "is a picture made out of words," and that "a poem may itself be an image composed from a multiplicity of images". There are three ways that imagery is used to make poetry concrete than abstract.

- i. "Imagery" is used to denote all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a poem or other genres of literature, whether by literal description, by allusion, or in the vehicles of similes and metaphors. William Wordsworth's poem 'She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways' in this regard. The term 'image' should not be taken to imply a virtual reproduction of the object denoted; some readers some readers of the passage experience visual images and some do not; and among those who do, the explicitness and details of the pictures vary greatly. Also, 'imagery' in this usage includes not only visual sense qualities but also qualities that are auditory, tactile (touch), thermal (heat and cold), olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste), and kinesthetic (sensations of movement). Tennyson's poem 'In Memoriam', number 101, for instance, in which the poet's imagery

encompasses not only things that are visible but also qualities that are smelled, tasted, or heard, together with a suggestion, in the adjective “summer” of warmth:

Unloved, that beech will gather brown....
And many a rose-carnation, feed
With summer spice the humming air.....

- ii. Imagery is used, more narrowly, to signify only specific descriptions of visible objects and scenes, especially if the description is vivid and particularized.
- iii. In many uses, “imagery” signifies figurative language, especially the vehicles of metaphor and similes. The new critics after 1930s went far beyond earlier commentators in stressing imagery, in this sense, as the essential component in poetry and as a major factor in poetic meaning, structure, and effect. Some new critics held that the implicit interactions of the imagery - in distinction from explicit statements by the author or the overt speeches and actions of the characters – were the way that the controlling literary subject, or theme, worked itself out in many plays, poems and novels.

Many good examples of imagery and figurative language can be found in “Sinners in the hands of an Angry God”, a sermon delivered by the puritan minister Jonathan Edwards, for instance, Edwards creates a powerful image by means of figurative language when he says:

‘We find it easy to tread on and crush a worm
that we see crawling on the earth; so it is easy
for God, when he pleases, to cast his enemies
down to hell.’

The image Edwards creates here is the vivid mental picture of someone crushing a worm. Edwards is also using figurative language because he compares the ease with which God can “cast his enemies down to hell” with the ease of our rushing a worm beneath our feet. The point he is making is that human beings are as small and powerless in the eyes of God as worms are to us; just as a worm is at our mercies for its existence, so we are at God’s for our existence. The most important reason to analyze a writer’s usage of imagery and figurative is to recognize how it contributes to the point he is trying to make or the effect he is attempting to create.

1.4. SYMBOL

A symbol is anything which suggests or signifies something else; in this sense all words are symbols. As far as literature is concerned the term ‘symbol’ is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something; or suggests a range of reference, beyond itself. Actually, every word, sign, sound is a symbol because it

stands for something. The signs such as \$, @, +, -, & etc. we use in our day to day life. In literature symbols are often characters, settings, images, or other motifs that stand in for its suggestive meaning than its literal meanings.

Symbols add layers of meanings to a story, poem or any other genre of creative work. They enable an author to give an idea or message within a narrative, a message on multiple levels. Some symbols are “conventional” or “public”: thus “the cross”, “the Red, White and Blue” and “the Good Shepherd” are terms that refer to symbolic objects of which the further significance is determinate within a particular culture. Major poets use such conventional symbols; on the other hand, there is other category of poets who use “private” or “personal” symbols”.

The poets often do so by exploiting widely shared associations between an object or event or action and a particular concept. For instance, the general association of a peacock with pride and of an eagle with heroic endeavour, the rising sun with birth and setting sun with death, or climbing with efforts or progress and descent with surrender or failure. Some poets however, repeatedly use symbols whose significance they largely generate themselves, and they pose a more difficult problem in the interpretation. The modern short story writer Katherine Mansfield has used symbols very beautifully to convey the implied meanings and emotions than its literal meanings. Mansfield’s story ‘Bliss’ in which she has used two symbols such as ‘the pear tree’ and ‘the moon’. The first symbol the pear tree provides a kind of objectives co-relative to the principal character of this story, Bertha’s desire for relationship based on “understanding” and communion. It explores the sexual implications inherent in the pear tree, bisexual by nature, through an understanding of its botanical significance. Its flowers contain both male and female organs, therefore, it can self-fertilize. Bertha not only unintentionally dresses to look like the tree, ‘A white dress, a string of jade beads, green shoes and stockings’, she also associates the tree as a ‘symbol of her own life.’ Bertha is identifying with the bisexuality of the tree, and these images of dual sexuality are developed further as ‘womb-phallus’ symbols. They begin with Bertha arranging the fruit for the party, and although the fruits themselves are all round, representative of the womb – tangerines, apples, grapes, pears – she arranges them in ‘two pyramids of... bright, round shapes’. Significantly, the shape of the pear itself symbolises duality, as it is both long, and therefore phallic, as well as ovate, and womb-like. This ‘womb-phallic’ image is revoked later, when Bertha and Pearl are observing the ‘slender, flowering tree’ that seems to ‘stretch, to point... to grow taller and taller... almost touch the rim of the round, silver moon.’ We can observe, therefore, the unity of the two sexual images, male and female, and the bisexual implications become clear.

Additionally, if the pear-tree is representative of Bertha and her sexual duality, then the moon is the symbolic image of Pearl Fulton. As soon as she arrives, she is ‘all in silver, with a silver fillet binding her pale, blonde hair’, and again, ‘silver as Miss Fulton... her slender fingers that were so pale a light seemed to come from them.’ There is also the symbolic significance of the moon as a representation of femininity. Due to its

twenty-eight day cycles, the image of the moon is closely related to that of the female menstrual cycle, and therefore, femininity. As Bertha's homosexual urges heighten, she identifies with the phallic image of the pear-tree that is so desperately growing 'taller and taller' in order to touch the rim of the pale, silver moon. It is through Bertha that we witness the symbolic union of the phallic pear-tree and the feminine moon, representative of the sexual union Bertha desires to have with Pearl. In short, the writers use symbols to convey their implied meaning indirectly.

1.5. LET'S SUM UP

Simile is an important figure of speech which compares two dissimilar objects for their common properties and the words such as "as...as, so...as, like" are used in the example of simile.

Imagery is a kind of vivid description the poet uses to evoke the reader's five senses and make the text lively.

And symbols is an object or action used to represent another thing or action. It is used in such a way that the poet conveys deeper meaning in lesser words.

All these devices are important tools in the hands of writers in general and poets in particular. The students can analyse examples from your reading and see how these are used by the writers.

1.6. QUESTIONS:

Write short note on the following:

- I. Simile
- II. Imagery
- III. Symbols

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CRITICAL TERMS - PART II

Unit Structure

- 2.0. Objectives
- 2.1. Introduction
- 2.2. Paradox
- 2.3. Ambiguity
- 2.4. Myth
- 2.5. Let's Sum Up
- 2.6. Questions
- 2.7. References

2.0. OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, the students will be able to understand the meaning, usage and significance of Paradox, Ambiguity and Myth in enriching the literary works. They will also be familiarised with the prominent examples of each figure of speech from the literature so that the students can identify more such literary devices and interpret them.

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Figure of speech is a literary language which is distinct from ordinary speech. The proper use of figurative language makes the text more persuasive and convincing. That also keeps the readers engaged in the discourse or message the writers are trying to convey. In this unit, Paradox, Myth and Ambiguity will be discussed.

2.2. PARADOX

As a figure of speech a paradox is an apparently self-contradictory statement which is nevertheless found to be true. A paradoxical situation contains contradictory elements that put together make sense. The purpose of a paradox is to arrest attention and provoke fresh thought. This literary device is commonly used to engage a reader to discover an underlying logic in a seemingly self-contradictory statement or phrase. As a result, paradox permits readers to understand concepts in a different and even non-traditional way. The beautiful example of it is of the great dramatist G. B. Shaw who famously stated the paradox that “youth is wasted on the young”. At first, it is contradictory in the sense that the “young” are the ones that embody “youth”, so therefore it cannot be “wasted” on them. However, this

paradox makes sense upon reflection. It illuminates the idea that young people may not have the perspective of older people as far as what is truly important or valuable.

Youth, in this case, implies a vibrancy and energy that can be put towards those very actions that are important and valuable, yet young people may not recognize what they are. Whereas older people, who may recognize which actions have importance or value, often don't feel such vitality or willingness to take risks to do them. As a result, the very group who would benefit from youth due to their perspective are the ones who, by definition, aren't youthful.

The concluding lines of John Donne's sonnet "Death, Be Not Proud" is also beautiful example of paradox:

One short sleep past, we wake eternally,

And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

The paradox is used occasionally by almost all poets but was a persistent and central device in the seventeenth-century metaphysical poetry, in both its religious and secular forms. "The Canonization," for instance, by John Donne is organized as an extended proof, full of local paradoxes, of the paradoxical thesis that sexual lovers are saints.

In George Orwell's anti-utopian satire 'Animal Farm' (1945), the first commandment of the animals' commune is revised into a witty paradox: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." Paradox has a function in poetry, however, that goes beyond mere wit or attention-getting. Modern critics view it as a device, integral to poetic language, encompassing the tensions of error and truth simultaneously, not necessarily by startling juxtapositions but by subtle and continuous qualifications of the ordinary meaning of words.

If the paradoxical utterance conjoins two terms that in ordinary usage are contraries, it is called an oxymoron. The fine example of it is Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "O Death in life, the days that are no more." The oxymoron was a familiar type of Petrarchan conceit in Elizabethan love poetry, in phrases like "pleasing pains," "I burn and freeze," and "loving hate."

Paradox was a prominent concern of many New Critics, who extended the terms from its limited application to a type of figurative language so as to encompass all surprising deviations from, or qualifications of, common perceptions or commonplace opinions. It is in this expanded sense that Cleanth Brooks is able to claim, with some plausibility, that, "the language of poetry is the language of paradox," in 'The well Wrought Urn'.

In short, paradox is a statement or phrase which appears to be self-contradicting but on closer inspection contains some sort of truth. It is used frequently in both written works and in day to day conversations in order to convey an idea. A paradox is the juxtaposition of two phrases which contradict one another but reveal a truth.

2.3. AMBIGUITY

Ambiguity is a kind of sentence which provides more than one meaning. It leads to vagueness and confusion of meaning. It sometimes creates humor too. For example, "Rakesh rode a black horse in red pajamas." is ambiguous for two reasons/ meanings; one, Rakesh is in red pyjamas who rode a horse, and two, Rakesh rode a black horse which is wearing red pyjamas. The present example yields ambiguity due to the structure of the sentence. Similarly, ambiguity can be created by using a word with multiple meanings. For example, "Radhika is at the bank." The statement has more than one meaning due to the word "bank" which means office/building of bank and bank of the river. In such cases, it is the context that helps to get the appropriate meaning.

Let's look at two other funny examples of ambiguity. In the sentence, Foreigners are hunting dogs. It is not clear whether dogs were being hunted, or the foreigners are being referred to as dogs. Similarly, in the sentence, "She loves her dog more than her husband", it is unclear whether her love towards dog is greater than her love towards her husband, or both her husband and she love their dog but her love towards dog is greater than her husband's love towards dog.

Ambiguity enhances the literary text by giving it a deeper meaning. It also gives liberty to the readers to explore multiple meanings and thus makes the readers actively participate in the process of deriving meanings from the literary texts.

William Empson, one of the new critics, has written a seminal work called Seven Types of Ambiguity. Let's see the four important types of ambiguities: semantic ambiguity, syntactic/ structural ambiguity, Lexical ambiguity, and narrative ambiguity. Semantic Ambiguity arises out of the semantics of a word or phrase when it is interpreted out of its context. Syntactic Ambiguity also known as Structural Ambiguity occurs when a word or phrase has two or more possible meanings in the given sentence. Lexical Ambiguity takes place when a word or phrase has two or more possible meanings or there are two words having the same forms such as homonymy, homophony, or polysemy. Lastly, Narrative Ambiguity occurs in the plot due to unclarity about the actions of the characters or events or situations or even conflict .in other words, this is when a plotline could mean several things; the storyteller doesn't let you know explicitly. For example, a relationship between two characters could be ambiguous if it's not clear whether or not they like each other.

Thus ambiguity is one of the important tools of creative writers to write literary work full of multiple meanings.

2.4. MYTH

In classical Greek, "mythos" signified any story or plot, whether true or invented. A myth is a classic or legendry story that usually focuses on a particular hero or event, and explains mysteries of nature, existence, or the

universe with no true basis in fact. Myth exists in every culture. But the most well known in Western culture and literature are part of Greek and Roman mythology. The characters in myth – usually gods, Goddesses, warriors, and heroes – are often responsible for the creation and maintenance of elements of nature as well as physical, emotional, and practical aspects of human existence. For example, Zeus; the god of the sky and the earth and the father of the god and men, and Aphrodite; the goddess of love and fertility. A culture's collective myth make up its mythology, a term that predates the word "myth" by centuries. The term myth stems from the ancient Greek 'mythos,' meaning a speech, story, rumour, and fable etc.

Most myths are related to social rituals -set forms and procedures in sacred and pious ceremonies – but anthropologists disagree as to whether rituals generated myths or myths generated rituals. If the protagonist is a human being rather than a supernatural being, the traditional story is usually called not myth but a legend. If the hereditary story concerns supernatural beings who are not gods and the story is not a part of a systematic mythology, it is usually classified as a folktale.

It can be said that a mythology is a religion which we do not believe. Poets, however, after ceased to believe them, have persisted in using the myths of Jupiter, Venus, Prometheus, Adam and Eve, and Jonah for their plots, episodes, allusions; as Coleridge, "Still doth the old instinct bring back the old names." The term "myth" has also been extended to denote supernatural tales that are deliberately invented by their authors. The German Romantic authors F. W. J. Schelling and Friedrich Schlegel proposed that to write great literature, modern poets must develop a new unifying mythology which will synthesize the insights of the myths of the Western past with the new discoveries of philosophy and physical sciences. In the same period in England William Blake, who felt "I must create a system or be enslaved by another man's," incorporated in his poems a system of mythology he had himself created by fusing hereditary myths, biblical history and prophecy, and his own intuitions, visions and intellection. A number of modern writers have also asserted that an integrative mythology, whether inherited or invented, is essential to literature. For example, James Joyce in 'Ulysses', T. S. Eliot in 'The Waste Land', and O'Neill in 'Mourning Becomes Electra' and many other writers have deliberately woven their modern materials on the pattern of ancient myths. W. B. Yeats like Blake undertook to construct his own systematic mythology, which he expounded in 'A Vision' and embodied in a number of remarkable lyric poems such as "The second Coming" and "Byzantium".

As far as the main functions of myth is to teach moral lessons and explain historical events. Authors of great literary works have often taken stories and themes from myths. Myths and their mythical symbols lead to creativity in literary works. We can understand a culture more deeply, and in a much better way, by knowing and appreciating its stories, dreams, and myths. Myths came before religions, and all religious stories are, in fact, retellings of global mythical themes. Besides literature, myths also play a great role in science, psychology, and philosophy.

In conclusion, myths are legendary stories that have been a fundamental part of man's culture, history, and even religion for thousands years. They have been utilized, adapted and retold by writer's since the beginning of storytelling - in other words for the majority of human existence.

2.5. LET'S SUM UP

The Paradox is 'something said which seems contrary to common sense and yet might be true.' It is something that contradicts what we would expect or assume. It aims to arrest attention and provoke fresh thought.

Ambiguity is something that yields more than one possible meaning. There are different kinds of Ambiguity.

Myth is a tale told to explain why the natural phenomenon, event or person is the way he/she/it is. The fables, fairy tales, folktales, sagas, epics, legends, and etiologic tales are considered to be forms or examples of myths.

Thus the Paradox, Ambiguity and myth not only increases the richness and subtlety of language but also makes the readers derive multiple meanings from the specific structures of words.

2.6. QUESTIONS

Write short notes on the following:

- I. Paradox
- II. Ambiguity
- III. Myth

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NATURE AND FUNCTION OF LITERATURE - I

Unit Structure

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Literature as Imitation (Plato-Aristotle debate)

3.1.1 Aristotle and Plato: Differences and Similarities

3.1.2 Art as an Imitation by Plato

3.1.3 The idea and the concept of imitation between Plato and Aristotle.

3.1.4 Objection from Education, Philosophical and Moral point of view

3.1.5 Theory of Imitation by Plato and Aristotle

3.2. Literature and Imagination (the romantic idea of the Imagination)

3.2.1 Literature and Imagination

3.2.2 Literature, Imagination and Literary Creation

3.2.3 The Romantic Movement

3.2.4 Role of Imagination in Literature

3.2.5 Important aspects of the Romantic Movement

3.3 Let's Sum up

3.4 Important Questions

3.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will make the students aware with:

- The important critical terms
- The nature and function of literature and criticism
- The technique of close reading of literary texts
- The various literary theories and critical approaches
- The tenets of practical criticism.

With this knowledge the students will be able to use some important critical terms and will become aware with the nature and function of literature and criticism. Students will also be able to impart the technique of close reading of literary texts and understand the various literary theories and critical approaches.

3.1. LITERATURE AS IMITATION (PLATO-ARISTOTLE DEBATE)

3.1.1 Aristotle and Plato: Differences and Similarities

The eminent Greek philosopher Plato, was the most significant literary critic before Aristotle. Plato was a teacher and he founded the Platonist school of thought and the Academy, which was considered as the first institution higher learning in the Western world. Aristotle was the biggest disciple of Plato, and so Aristotle took up the challenge to exhibit that poetry was not only amiable and pleasurable but also beneficial for man and society.

- **Differences between Aristotle and Plato**

- Plato, was the eminent Greek philosopher and was a transcendentalist, whereas Aristotle was the greatest philosopher, and was the first genuine scientist in history, also a biologist, and an experimenter.
- Plato was an idealist whereas for Aristotle reality was concrete, and further states that reality does not make sense or exist till the mind process it.
- Plato's language is poetic hence he adopted a poetic language while Aristotle's language is dogmatic.
- It was Plato who first used the word 'imitation' in connection with poetry, however Aristotle breathed a new life and soul into it.
- For Plato, poetry imitates only superficial appearance like a painter. Although, Aristotle believed that poetry not only imitates the external emotions but also the internal emotions.
- Plato condemned poetry on three essential grounds i.e. moral, intellectual and emotional grounds. Whereas Aristotle justifies poetry on moral, intellectual and emotional grounds.
- Plato defended philosophy, while for Aristotle poetry is not just a mimicry or photographic representation of phenomenal world so he defended poetry.
- For Plato emotions were undesirable and so advocated it as repression. Whereas, Aristotle stresses the need of emotional outlets. And he was the first person to use the word Catharsis in his seminal work on Greek theatre titled, Poetics.

- **Similarities between Plato and Aristotle**

Apart from are few dissimilarities, the ancient Greece philosophers Plato and Aristotle do have some similarities. Following are some of the similarities between Plato and Aristotle;

- Plato and Aristotle believe that poetry is an imitative art.
- According to Plato and Aristotle poetry arouses and entices emotions.
- They both feel that poetry gives pleasure, delight and happiness.
- They believe that poetry affects personality, traits, and emotional behaviour and approach.
- Both Plato and Aristotle considered poetry from practical and realistic view.

3.1.2 Art as an Imitation by Plato

Plato in his theory of Mimesis, exhibits that all art is mimetic by nature, he says that art is an imitation of life. For Plato 'idea' is the ultimate reality. He believes that art imitates idea and hence, it is imitation of reality. He very beautifully gives the example of a carpenter and a chair. He says that the idea of 'chair' first came in the mind of carpenter. Then the carpenter gave physical shape to his idea out of wood and then he created a chair. The painter imitated the chair of the carpenter in his picture of chair. Therefore, the painter's chair is twice removed from reality. Thus, Plato believes that the art is twice removed from reality. For Aristotle philosophy is much more important, and hence he gives first importance to philosophy, because philosophy deals with the ideas, while the poetry deals with illusion – things which are twice removed from reality.

3.1.3 The idea and the concept of imitation between Plato and Aristotle.

The great philosophers Plato and Aristotle argue and contend that artist (Demiurge) and the poet imitate nature, therefore, a work of art is a reflection of nature. Even though, both Plato and Aristotle have different perspective and outlook on the functions of imitation in art and literature. Plato believes in the existence of the ideal world, and for him, a work of art, that reflects nature, is twice represented from the reality. Whereas Aristotle does not deal with the ideal world, in lieu, he scrutinizes nature. Aristotle further argues that a work of art does not imitate nature as the way it should. Both Plato and Aristotle ascribe diverse meanings to the term Mimesis. Plato considers and acknowledge 'mimesis' in ethical and political context, whereas Aristotle on the other hand sees 'mimesis' as an aesthetic phenomenon. Plato and Aristotle agree and accept that that poetry is mimetic, however, they both have different idea and perception about poetry and mimesis.

Plato uses the term Mimesis with diverse meanings and connotations in the dialogues and change the meaning and significance of the term according to the context in which he uses it. Plato uses the term 'mimesis' in the context of the education of the youth. Plato talks about the function of 'mimesis' as likening oneself to another in speech and bodily behaviour, and while addressing the lower part of man's soul. Plato also refers to the epistemology and metaphysics of the concept. He uses the word Mimesis with pedagogic aspects and hence, uses it in educational and ethical context

when he says, guardians of an ideal state should be educated to imitate only what is appropriate, relevant and useful. Plato in his third book of the Republic, for example, bring forth further definitions and descriptions of Mimesis. He centres on the relation and connection between Mimesis and Poetry, Mimesis and Education and Poetry and Education.

3.1.3 Objection from Education, Philosophical and Moral point of view

- **Objection from Education Point of View**

- Plato in The Republic, Book II, condemns and criticize poetry as encouraging bad habits, sins and vices in children. Homer's epics were part of studies. Heroes of epics were not instances of sound or ideal morality. In fact, they were robust, lusty, devious, cruel and vicious-war mongers.

Hence, Plato objected on the ground that poetry does not develop and propagate good habits and morals among children.

- **Objection from Philosophical Point of View**

- Plato in The Republic Book X says that, poetry does not lead to, rather drives us away from the realization of the ultimate reality – the Truth.
- Plato says that Philosophy is better than poetry, for the reason that Philosophy deals with idea and poetry is twice removed from original idea.
- Plato says: "The imitator or maker of the image knows nothing of true existence; he knows appearance only The imitative art is an inferior who marries an inferior and has inferior offspring.

- **Objection from the Moral Point of View**

- Plato in the book 'The Republic' says that: Soul of man has higher principles of reason (which is the essence of its being) along with the lower constituted of baser impulses and emotions. Whatever emboldens and strengthens the rational principle is good, and emotional is bad.

Poetry waters, cherish and nourishes the baser impulses of men – i.e. emotional, sentimental, poignant and sorrowful, mournful and painful

3.1.5 Theory of Imitation by Plato and Aristotle

It was not Aristotle who invented the term "imitation", but it was Plato who first use the word 'imitation' in terms with poetry, though Aristotle breathed into it a new definite meaning. Hence, poetic imitation is no longer considered mimicry, instead, it is regarded as an act of imaginative creation by which the poet, drawing his material from the phenomenal and

astounding world, makes something new out of it. Aristotle asserts that all human actions are mimetic in such a way that men learn through imitation. Particularly, Mimesis is the distinctive quality of an artist.

From Aristotle's perspective, it is the principle of imitation that unites poetry with other fine arts and it is this common basis of all the fine arts. In this way, it distinguishes the fine arts from the other category of arts. Plato equated and compared poetry with painting, whereas Aristotle equates poetry with music. It is not any more a subservient and grovelling portrayal of the appearance of things, rather it becomes a representation of the passions, affections and emotions of men which are also imitated by music. Therefore, Aristotle by his theory expanded and intensified the scope of imitation. He says that the poet imitates not the surface of things but also the reality entrenched within. Aristotle, in the very first chapter of his *Poetics*, lists different kinds of poetry; Epic poetry, Tragedy, Comedy, Dithyrambic poetry, also the music of the flute and the lyre playing in most of their forms, which are in their general conception modes of imitation. However, they vary from one another in three aspects, first being, their medium, then second, the objects and third, the manner or mode of imitation, in each case being disparate from each other.

The medium and mode of the poet and the painter are different. One imitates through the form and colour, whereas the other imitates through language, rhythm, peace and harmony. The musician imitates through rhythm and harmony. Hence, poetry is more related and connected to music. In addition, the way and manner of a poet may be purely and merely narrative, as in the Epic, or portrayal through action or movement, as that in drama. On a par, dramatic poetry is differentiated into tragedy and comedy consequently as it imitates man as better or worse.

Aristotle exhibits that the objects of poetic imitation are nothing but "men in action". He further says that, the poet represents men as worse than they actually are. He can represent men in a much more-better way, than in real life which is based on material supplied by history and legend, moderately than by any living figure. The poet selects and orders his material and recreates reality. He brings order out of Chaos. The irrational or accidental is removed from it and attention is focused on the lasting and the significant. In this way, he gives a truth of an ideal kind. The poet's mind is not tied to reality; It is not the function of the poet to relate what has happened, rather what may happen – according to the laws of probability or necessity.

Aristotle says that Poetry tends to assert the universal, and history the particular. In such a manner, he expresses the superiority of poetry over history. The poet is liberated and discharged from the tyranny and despotism of facts, takes a larger or general perspective of things, represents the universal in the particular and hence, shares the philosopher's quest and search for ultimate truth. Aristotle therefore, equates poetry with philosophy and exhibits that both are means to a higher truth. By using the word 'universal' Aristotle indicates; how a person of a certain nature or type will, on a several occasion, speak or act, in accordance with the law of probability or necessity.

Aristotle exhibits that, "Art imitates Nature". By 'Nature, Aristotle does not mean the outer world of created things, he rather meant "the creative force, and the productive principle of the universe." Art reproduces for the most part an inward process, a physical energy working outwards, acts, events, incidents, situation, being included under it so far as these spring from an inward, act of will, or draw some activity of thought or feeling.

Aristotle by his theory of imitation exhibits that the poetry is an imitation of "shadow of shadows", and it is thrice removed from truth, and that the poet entice and fools us with the lies. Plato condemned poetry that in the very nature of things poets have no idea of truth. The phenomenal world is not the reality but a copy of the reality in the mind of the Supreme. The poet imitates the objects and phenomena of the world, which are shadowy, hazy and for most part unreal. Poetry is, thus, "the mother of lies".

Aristotle, further, tells us that art imitates not only the mere shows of things, but the 'ideal reality' manifested and personified in the very object of the world. He says that the process of nature is a 'creative process'; and in all around in 'nature there is a never-ending and upward progress' in everything, and the poet imitates this upward movement of nature. Hence, art moves in a world of images, and reproduces the external, according to the idea or image that he has in his mind. Therefore, the poet does not copy the external world, but rather he creates according to his 'idea' of it. Poetry therefore, imitates the ideal and the universal; it is an "idealized representation of character, emotion, and action. Furthermore, he says that, poetic truth, therefore, is higher than historical truth. Hence, Poetry is more philosophical, more favourable, helpful and useful to understanding than Philosophy itself.

To conclude, Mimesis has since the antiquity been discussed to refer to the relation between reality and representation. So, the concept of Mimesis as a theory of art changes according to the person who discusses the term and the way he deals with the term. Plato agrees that reality cannot be represented, therefore he says that Mimesis is misrepresentation of truth whereas, Aristotle becomes the defender of Mimesis against Plato and develops a theory of art with reference to Mimesis and claims and asserts that the art (mimetic art) is superior to philosophy and history.

3.2 LITERATURE AND IMAGINATION (THE ROMANTIC IDEA OF THE IMAGINATION)

3.2.1 Literature and Imagination

The significance and the impact of imagination on the creation and critique of literature alters between and within distinct and disparate artistic eras. It was originally and basically portrayed as a deviant function of the mind, and imagination was greatly and intensely compliant to the powers of reason and order. Art intricated a mere replication of the real, a craft, instead, a unique act of creation. To begin with, as early as that of Aristotle, howbeit, the human imagination has been linked and associated to the power and value of art.

Imagination is nothing but a natural structure of the mind which ought to be trained, instructed or attuned to comprehend the greatness and eminence of art, to develop a significant standard of taste. Imagination is seen as both the key and the impediment to Johnson's moral vision of art. Therefore, in order to inspire and embolden an audience towards goodness, an artist should acquire a productive, abundant and an ever expanding imagination. Imagination is good and acceptable when its powers are given the direction, and moral purpose. Johnson to some extent, assumes and believes in a utilitarian attitude towards imagination. He says that the value of imagination is reliant on its usefulness in achieving or supporting others to accomplish and acquire virtue. Imaginative freedom should only exist within the confines of an imminently rational moral code.

3.2.2 Literature, Imagination and Literary Creation

It was from the 18th century when the relationship between invention and the imagination took place. Meyer Howard Abrams, the American literary critic, best known for his works on romanticism, in his book *The Mirror and the Lamp*, which was published in 1953 claims that during this period, the poet's invention and imagination were made dependent for their materials. The ideas and images on the external universe and the literary models the poet had. He exhibits that until the romantics, literature was usually and mostly understood as a mirror, which was reflecting the real worlds in some kind of mimesis. while for the Romantics, writing was more like a lamp as if, the light of the writer's inner soul spilled out to illuminate and brighten the world. However, by the end of the 18th century, writers and the philosophers presented and proposed the idea that the combination of the elements which are taken from nature might be assembled in new ways, in order to create something new, which would possibly overtake or even transcend nature.

3.2.3 The Romantic Movement

1. The Romanticism was a literary movement in the arts and literature that originated in the late 18th century, and ending around the middle of the 19th century, accentuating inspiration, subjectivity, and the greater importance of the individual, although its influence continues even to this day. Marked by a focus on the individual (and the unique perspective of a person, generally guided by irrational, emotional impulses), a respect for nature and the primeval, and a celebration of the common man, Romanticism can be viewed as a reaction to the great and extensive changes in society that took place during this period, along with the revolutions that burned through countries like France and the United States, ushering in grand experiments in democracy. The poet hence, obtains and achieves a particular power: his or her imagination becomes the rival of nature.

3.2.4 Role of Imagination in Literature

Much of the prose fictions are based on imaginary events, whereas some are based on the events of real life for instance, historical or auto-biographical events, but for the most part they are based on the fictitious stories which

are based on the imagination of the writer. Imagination is nothing but a cognitive process which is based on life experiences, trajectory of life, moods or altogether and entirely new invented ideas and concepts through which a writer creates scenes, people, animals etc. which is much more different from the experiencing of the five senses, for instance Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem, 'Kubla Khan' or the 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and in fiction such as 'Vanity Fair' and 'Jude and Obscure'. Imagination plays an important and essential role in any piece of literature.

This is nothing but the aspect and essence of imagination through which a writer makes his characters and scenes more alluring, enticing and pleasing. It can even make the dead things alive, for instance, the ghosts in Shakespeare's plays or characters in allegories. It can make an impossible thing possible, for instance, the characters and events in Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift, and in 'Utopia' by Thomas More. Imagination can give beautiful, graceful and alluring shape to what is grotesque and abhorrent, for example, in John Keats' poem, 'Ode to Autumn'. Thus, it is the power and influence of imagination that develops the readers interests and suspense in the work of art.

According to the English poet, literary critic, philosopher and a theologian, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, there are two types of imagination. In his book titled, 'Biographia Literaria' he has discussed about the two types of imagination, the first being Primary imagination and the second secondary imagination. In primary imagination, every human being has faculty of developing images, scenes and ideas and give it an order. Whereas, the secondary imagination is related with the unconscious ability and is not being possessed by every human being but only by the genius poets. In fact, it is the refined and polished aspect of primary imagination. Through secondary imagination, a writer not only creates picture, scenes, people etc. and give it a particular shape, but also through those pictures and scenes, the poet creates a new world. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in the same book, 'Biographia Literaria' also makes a distinction between Fancy and imagination. He calls Fancy the lowest form of imagination. Particularly, he says that an ordinary man has fancy, while on the contrary a literary minded person has imagination. He also relates Fancy to the mechanical combination of literary devices like simile, metaphors and Oxymoron etc. by the poet in order to make an opinion.

3.2.5 Important aspects of the Romantic Movement

There are six basic and essential characteristics of the Romantic literature: celebration of nature, focus on the individual and spirituality, celebration of isolation and melancholy, interest in the common man, idealization of women, and personification and pathetic fallacy.

- **Imagination**

For the Romantic writers, man's highest, and the most spiritual aspect was his imagination. The English Romantics believed that, it was imagination, through which the man can access not only his most creative thoughts, but also his connection to the divine. Poetry and

other literature of that time emboldened and inspired the reader to use the words as a way to access his own imaginative faculties, thereupon connecting with his own personal sense of the divine. Even the artists and musicians of the Romantic period used the visual and aural facets of their works as an incentive and motive to the viewer or listener to access his personal imaginative powers.

- **Nature**

Romantic writers saw nature as a source of infinite beauty which was imbued with the divine. They used common and day-today natural elements such as flowers, stones, trees, leaves, sunlight and the weather to be delineated as though they carried a bit of God within them. In keeping with the move away from rational thinking towards dependence upon the imagination, Romanticism and the romantic movement emboldened a perspective of nature that inspired and encouraged the artists of the time, to use their own subjective perception and approach, while rendering and interpreting the sights and sounds they found in the natural world. Hence, art, in such a manner, moved away from the rational compositions of the Classical and Baroque and towards the subjective characteristics and features which were found in the paintings of the Impressionists and symphonies of 19th-century composers. The most famous and notable work of the Romanticism is John Keats poem, 'To Autumn' which was composed in the year 1819 and was published in 1820. In this three eleven- line stanza poem, John Keats personifies a progress through the season and follows its progression from the initial arrival after summer, through the harvest season, and finally to autumn's end as winter takes its place.

- **View of Self**

Romantic writers admired and cherished self-directed and complacent action and stepped to the beat of one's personal drummer. The Romantic human ideal was the artist, creator, thinker or philosopher who took a stance for personal opinion and belief at the peril of social exile and banishment. For the English Romantic writers, the needs of the one outweighs the needs of the many. The concepts of self-esteem and self-expression, venerated today as two of our very important invaluable human birth rights, are handed down to us from the ideals of the Romantic period. The Romantics believed that the human being was born pure and divine and it was a direct contrast to the "born in sin" concept of many previous Christian teachings.

- **Rejection of Modern Life**

Even though the world moved into the Industrial age of factory labour, steam power, and mechanization, the Romantic writers reacted by refuting this industrial age of mechanization and lived more simply, and more closely connected and associated with the natural world. Though the Industrial Revolution of the early 19th century took hold, the Romantic writers clung and adhered more

strongly and powerfully to their veneration of the significance of the individual's creative life and dignity. The American naturalist, essayist, poet and philosopher Henry David Thoreau, presents an example of the Romantic rejection of modern society's industrialism through his commitment to simple living (and recording his perceptions) at Walden Pond. Henry David Thoreau was also one among the many English Romantics who rejected the modern society's laws through acts of civil disobedience that accentuated the rights of the individual over the laws of the government.

- **Focus on the Individual and Spirituality**

Romantics turned inbound, valuing the individual experience above all. Which eventually led to heightened sense of spirituality in Romantic work, and the addition of mysterious, secret and supernatural elements. Edgar Allan Poe is the best example. Poe's work epitomizes this attribute of the movement; for instance, Allen Poe's the narrative poem, 'The Raven' is generally marked for its musicality, stylized language and supernatural atmosphere. It tells the story of a man grieving for his dead love (an idealized woman in the Romantic tradition) when a seemingly conscious Raven arrives and afflicts him, which can be interpreted literally or can be seen as a manifestation and indication of his mental instability

- **Celebration of Isolation and Melancholy**

The American essayist, lecturer, philosopher, abolitionist and a poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson was a very famous and influential writer in Romanticism. Emerson's books of essays marked and scrutinized many of the themes of the literary movement and established them. 'Self-Reliance' an 1841 essay, written by the American transcendentalist philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson is a seminal work of Romantic writing in which he emphasizes the importance of individualism, and its effect on an individual's satisfaction in life. In this essay Emerson centres on the apparently insignificant details, by explaining how life is 'learning and forgetting and learning again'.

- **Personification and Pathetic Fallacy**

Romantic literature's fascination and obsession on nature is characterized by the hefty use of both personification and pathetic fallacy. The English novelist, Mary Shelley used these techniques to great extent in her gothic novel, Frankenstein.

- **Interest in the Common Man**

The English Romantic poet, William Wordsworth was one of the first poets to embrace the concept of writing that could be read, enjoyed, and understood by anyone. Wordsworth eschewed overly stylized language and references to classical works in favour of emotional imagery conveyed and expressed in simple, elegant language, as in his most memorable and remarkable poem titled, 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud'.

3.3 LET'S SUM UP

The unit extensively studies the Literature and Imitation with reference to Plato Aristotle, and in their debate on literature and imagination, Aristotle successfully and finally refuted the charge of Plato and provided a defence of poetry which has ever since been used by lovers of poetry in justification of their Muse. He breathed new life and soul into the concept of poetic imitation and showed that it is, in reality, a creative process. Whereas in Literature and Imagination we have studied the importance and influence of imagination on the creation and critique of literature. We have also seen how imagination act as a source of creativity, and allows us to see what is not immediately apparent.

With this knowledge the students will be able to use some important critical terms and will become aware with the nature and function of literature and criticism.

3.4 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

- What is the difference between Plato's approach and Aristotle's approach to imitation?
- How does Aristotle refute Plato's view on art and imitation?
- How does Aristotle use Plato's theory of mimesis to support literature?
- Why does Aristotle believe that imitation is good?
- What is the role of imagination in literature?
- What were the aspects of the Romantic Movement?
- What is literary imagination?
- What were the main ideas of the Romantic Movement?

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NATURE AND FUNCTION OF LITERATURE - II

Unit Structure

4.0 Objectives

4.1 Literature as an Expression of the Writer's Personality

4.1.1. Classification of Literary Theories

4.1.2 Romantic Theory of Literature

4.2 Function of Literature (Aesthetic, Moral and Cognitive Functions)

4.3 Conclusion

4.4 Suggested Questions

4.5 References

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit the learners will be able to:

1. Understand the concept that literature is an expression of the writer's personality
2. Explain the broad categories of the traditional and modern literary theories
3. Examine the contribution of the romantic English poet-critics to the expressive criticism
4. Recognize various functions of literature

4.1 LITERATURE AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE WRITER'S PERSONALITY

Though many literary scholars have attempted to define literature, contemporary critics and theorists are of the opinion that it cannot be defined so they simply propose that literature means any use of language. There have been varied literary theories developed since antiquity which attempted to grapple with the questions like what is literature and what is the nature and function of literature etc. Following broad classification may help us to understand them in a better way.

4.1.1. Classification of Literary Theories

M. H. Abrams in his 'A Glossary of literary Terms' classifies all the critical theories right from classical to the modern times into four type i.e. mimetic theories, pragmatic theories, expressive theories and modern theories of

criticism with reference to their predominant orientation towards the external world, the reader, the author and the assumption that a literary work is an independent entity.

1. **Mimetic theory of criticism:** Mimetic theory conceives of literature as an imitation of nature and the basic criterion applied to literary work is the 'truth' and 'adequacy' of its representation to the matter that it represents or should represent. The critical discourse developed by Plato and Aristotle is still considered as the fundamental mimetic theory of literature.
2. **Pragmatic theory of criticism:** As per the idea of pragmatic criticism a literary work is created in order to achieve a specific effect on its reader, the effect could be aesthetically pleasurable, didactic or emotional in nature, and the work was judged on the basis of its success in achieving that aim. This view of criticism was inaugurated by the Roman poet-critic Horace in his famous work '*Ars Poetica*' which continued to be the major source of inspiration through 18th century. Later this approach was revived as a Rhetorical criticism. Philip Sidney, John Dryden, Alexander Pope, Samuel Johnson, Jeremy Bentham etc., are recognized as the dominant theorists of the pragmatic criticism.
3. **Objective theory of criticism:** According to this view literary work is an independent entity in itself which shares no relationship with the outside world including writer and the reader or audience. Therefore, it must be judged on the basis of its intrinsic criteria such as the interrelation of its constituent elements. The modern theories developed in 1920 such as new criticism and formalism are the dominant critical approaches of objective criticism. The major theorists of this approach are T. S. Eliot, I. A. Richards, Virginia Woolf, W. K. Wimsatt, Monroe Beardsley etc.
4. **Expressive theory of criticism:** The writer and his work of literature are closely associated with one another. The writer is a real man with flesh and blood, as an integral part of society he writes about his experiences, perceptions, difficulties and issues in order to satisfy his desires and solve problems and that of the others; therefore, evaluation of his literary work becomes important endeavor for us. The Victorian poet-critic Matthew Arnold believes that the poetry is a criticism of life. The most valuable thing we acquire from literature is the sense of instant connection with its creator. The language in literature as a medium of expression embodies both object of representation and the author's feelings. Expressive criticism views poetry as a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquility" or it is the result of poet's imagination working on his knowledge, thoughts and emotions. This critical approach attempts to evaluate the literary work on the basis of poet's expression of sincere attitude, vision and temperament. It tries to find in the poet's work the evidences of his conscious or unconscious efforts to represent himself. These practices have been developed by the 19th century romantic English writers and

critics especially in the writings of psychological and psychoanalytical writers of the modern period.

4.1.2 Romantic Theory of Literature

The Romantic English criticism is predominantly associated with the Wordsworth's *Preface* to the 'Lyrical Ballads' (1800) and S. T. Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*. Wordsworth's famous definition of poetry as a 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling' breaks the earlier notion of the neoclassical age that the literary is the reflection of reality or imitation of nature and establishes a new formula that the artist and his relation with the work is the center of attention. Thus, literature was now considered as an expression of the poet's mind and not the mimetic art. For romantic critics the poet is an inspired genius stands above the society, a prophetic and visionary figure who is uncontrolled by the past and the guide of the future.

The revolutionary nature of the romantic age prompted contemporary poet-critics to propose new ideas about the nature and function of poetry. The romantic theory of poetry was in direct opposition to the 18th century neoclassical theories which were imitative of human life and nature. The romantics strongly held that the poetic stimulus lies within the nature and poets mind and spontaneous emotional reaction. Therefore, their poetry exhibits the poet's internal state of consciousness, it made ordinary things or objects look miraculous and natural look supernatural with the help of heightened sense of their power of imagination. Romantic poets and critics gave more importance to the poet's emotions than his logical reasoning. The poetic persona of their works was directly connected with the poet's self for instance autobiographical works such as Wordsworth's 'The Prelude', 'Tintern Abbey', Lord Byron's 'Child Harold', odes of Keats etc.

S. T. Coleridge was one of the greatest English poet-critics who believed that in order to find the truth there must exist both the knower as well as the known in other words presence of the self and the nature as their interaction and synthesis creates the literary work. The created work, however, is neither the self nor the nature but the different entity of its own and that is governed by its own laws. Coleridge is known for his contribution to the theory of imagination. In his 'Biographia Literaria' (1817) he distinguishes between the primary imagination and secondary imagination. For him primary imagination is a mental faculty common to all which helps us to understand the outside world however, secondary imagination is a creative force possessed by the gifted ones. Further he proposes that in literature there is a fusion of elements like poet's emotions and thoughts that is imagination, combination of the universal and the particular, the objective and the subjective, and the general and the specific.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) in his famous 'A Defense of poetry' (1821) claims that poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world who create high ideals and employ poetry to achieve the platonic world of utopia. He believed that human mind consists of two faculties i.e. the reason and the imagination. His reasoning mind replaces Coleridge's primary imagination and claims that the imagination has a soothing power which

pacifies the people and makes them moral beings. According to him poetry as a product of imagination gives aesthetic pleasure and strengthens human morality therefore imagination is both creative and pragmatic. According to him the poets create a good civil society and hence, he places them on the high pedestal of honor.

John Keats (1795-1823) was another notable poet-critic of the expressive criticism whose letters (published posthumously in 1848) especially are of immense importance for they consist of his famous critical term 'negative capability'. According to him negative capability is the state of being in which we are "capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason... being content with half knowledge". Later he proclaimed that he was "certain of nothing but the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of imagination – What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth – whether it existed before or not – for I have the same idea of all our Passions as of Love they are all in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty". (Wikipedia) Thus, John Keats strongly believes in the imaginative faculty of the human mind which creates truthful world of beauty.

During the 19th century romantic age there were many other significant literary critics who helped shape the critical ideas of the expressive criticism such as Charles Lamb, John Ruskin, William Godwin, William Hazlitt etc. Thus, the view that literature as the expression of the writer's personality was the dominant perspective of the 19th century romantic English literature which along with other modern critical approaches continues to influence the present literary writers.

4.2 FUNCTION OF LITERATURE (AESTHETIC, MORAL AND COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS)

Literature plays a very significant role in our day to day life. As discussed above there are various views on the nature and function of literature. According to the classical philosophers literature is the mirror held up towards the life or nature and therefore truthful portrayal of life is the main objective of the artist or creative writer. For sociological or Marxist scholars literature is an expression of social consciousness. Thus, literature depicts the mankind, their interactions, ambitions, frailties, suffering, happiness, and emotions. We read literature for its values of entertainment and instruction. And as romantic poet Shelley maintains that the literature helps create good civil society. In fact in our day to day life we read literature for various reasons such as – to achieve sheer entertainment and pleasure, to simply pass the time, to acquire knowledge about the different places and cultures, to get aesthetic pleasure out of beautiful literary styles and imagery, to find solutions to our problems, to escape into the imaginary world of fiction so on and so forth. On the basis of these varied functions literary critics have broadly deduced the following values of literature such as aesthetic, moral and cognitive.

1. **Aesthetic Value of Literature:** Aesthetic values are deeply rooted in literature one has to skillfully identify them with the help of specific literary techniques of reading which transform the work into aesthetic symbols. 19th century expressive criticism of English literature emphasizes on the aesthetic value of literature as Jon Keats proclaims that the thing of beauty is joy forever. "Aesthetics, in literature, is the inclusion of references to artistic elements or expressions within a textual work. It's a method used to promote or educate readers about important artistic expression in the society". (Study.com)
2. **Moral Value of Literature:** With reference to morality the classical Greeks attempted to offer thoughtful account of the necessary human activities so that one can understand the underlying principle in pursuing them. The classical discourse on morality consists of many ideas such as virtues, happiness and the soul. It has been believed that the values of our life are closely connected with our behavior, traditions, customs and mannerism. Literature teaches us what is good and bad and helps nourish the good habits, thoughts and moral values in our life. Morality determines goodness or badness of an individual's thoughts or actions. Moral values emerge from individual's consciousness that helps develop his own self and that of his society. The representation of moral values in literary works can guide us to live meaningful life. Moral characters in the literary work influence our behavior, thoughts and actions positively whereas antagonistic characters bring us on the right path of life. For instance, the tragic characters in Shakespeare's tragedies have a cathartic impact on our mind. When we watch his plays the feelings of pity and fear are generated at a time and our mind gets purgated from bad emotions and passions that is because we as audience or reader tend to relate ourselves with his tragic characters.
3. **Cognitive Value of Literature:** Literature develops our cognitive faculty of mind in other words it is a source of our intellectual development. The literature plays very vital role in our life because it develops our understanding, imparts new knowledge and insights into various matters of concern and teaches us good human values. The cognitive ability of an individual helps him/her to identify what are good or rewarding in literature, how he can learn them and pass on to others. It has been psychologically proven that reading fiction can have cognitive as well as emotive effects on our personality. The fiction alleviates our beliefs, fosters our empathy and emotional understanding, and helps us experience and understand the intricacies of our real life more clearly. Our reading habits and choices can also help the psychoanalysts to determine our unconscious traits of mind thereby leading him to treat our neurotic disorders.

4.3 CONCLUSION

In this unit we have discussed that literature is essentially the expression of the poet's personality and that we cannot study literature in isolation. We cannot define literature since it consists of heterogeneous aspects. Since

antiquity many theories have been developed on the nature and function of criticism however M. H. Abrams identifies four major types of theories on literature and criticism which helps develop our understanding about them in a better way. Literature plays a very significant role in our life as it fosters the cognitive, aesthetic and moral faculties of our personality.

4.4 SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

1. Explain the main types of literary theories.
2. Discuss literature as an expression of the poet's personality
3. Describe the major functions of literature

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NATURE AND FUNCTION OF LITERARY CRITICISM

Unit Structure

5.0 Objectives

5.1 Nature of Literary Criticism

5.2 Functions of Literary Criticism (Explication, Analysis, Interpretation, Evaluation, Theorizing)

5.3 A Survey of the Role of a Critic

5.4 Conclusion

5.5 Suggested Questions

5.6 References

5.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE UNIT:

- i. To make them aware of the nature and function of literature and criticism.
- ii. To make them aware of the role of a critic.

Introduction:

The whole unit is a combination of three sections where students are expected to be able to become aware of the nature and functions of literature and criticism. The first section defines the nature of literary criticism as a tool and art of evaluating. The second section provides the functions of literary criticism, which defines explication, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and theorizing are the main functions of literary criticism. The last section is a survey of the role of a critic, which defines the qualities of a good critic. It is only literary criticism which provides us insights to love any good book because without criticism we fail to know why we love them, and what their good qualities are.

5.1. NATURE OF LITERARY CRITICISM

T. S. Eliot occupies a central position as the most influential poet- critic of the modern age. His views on the nature and function of criticism, the role and qualifications of a critic and his earnest desire to make criticism as an objective and scientific as possible are expressed in The Sacred Wood, his first collection, in "The Function of Criticism" (1923) and "The Frontiers of Criticism" (1956). Eliot says that criticism "is about something other than itself." He found English criticism so far divided between the conflicting

claims of classicism and romanticism, which respectively believed in an outside authority and in individual liberty. In rejecting impressionistic criticism which tends to become too subjective, he answered that the right approach to criticism is the classical. Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon poetry. In initiating a movement against all biographical approaches, Eliot stated, "Criticism must always profess an end in view which, roughly speaking, appears to be the elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste." He strongly believed that criticism is a cooperative labour and critics should come together "in the common pursuit of true judgement." He defined criticism as "the commentation and exposition of works of art by means of written words." True criticism is a scientific inquiry into a work of art to see it as it really is, irrespective of what is outside it, who is the author, what is its social and historical background. He rejects the thesis that the great artist is an unconscious artist. If interpretation is the primary business of criticism, a critic, Eliot says, "must have a very highly developed sense of fact." He goes on to add, "This is by no means a trifling or frequent gift. The sense of fact is something very slow to develop, and its complete development means perhaps the very pinnacle of civilization." In this arduous task of the critic, comparison and analysis are his chief tools. A good critic is objective, his judgement is based on facts, and he is guided by tradition, the accumulated wisdom of ages. In "The Frontiers of Criticism" nearly thirty years later, broadening his viewpoint he says that the aim of criticism is "the promotion of understanding and enjoyment of literature."

Literary criticism is the process of evaluation and interpretation of literature. It means the judgement of any literary art or the work of any author. Literary criticism is the exercise of judgement on works of literature. To examine the merits and demerits and finally to evaluate the artistic worth, is the function of criticism. Thus, literary criticism is the study, discussion, evaluation, and interpretation of literature. Literary criticism asks what literature is, what it does, and what it is worth. Literary criticism helps readers to interpret the literature. Each literary theory gives us a different way of looking at a given literary work, which can ultimately reveal important aspects about it. Literary criticism helps us to understand what is important about a literary text. For example: its structure, its context: social, economic, historical and how the text manipulates the reader. Literary criticism helps us to understand the relationship between authors, readers, and literary texts. The act of literary criticism ultimately enhances the enjoyment of our reading of the literary work. This criticism is possible only if the author leaves his personality and his personal prejudices.

Literary criticism is a way to discover new things in the nature of literature in all its forms that enables us, to begin with and to distinguish between a good book and a bad book. It teaches us through its insights to distinguish for ourselves between a good book and a great one, also it helps us to recognize its literary quality. It opens up for us the whole world of pleasure and imaginative experience and intellectual change, which we may not discover without its help. Socrates was the first person to distinguish between the ability to criticize and the ability to compose literature. If it had suited his purpose, he might have said that the power to enjoy poetry is quite

different from the power to analyze it rationally. Socrates for the first time pointed out that criticism is a distinct species of literary activity and also why it is distinct. This is probably the beginning of a discussion on Literature (in fact, all fine arts), its enjoyment and literary criticism in the western world.

The nature of literary criticism is occupied by the activities of three distinct powers: the power to create, the power to enjoy and the power to criticize. The chief distinction of the power to criticize from the other two is the fact that it can be acquired. Though criticism is an intuitive as well as conscious activity, its process appeals to certain intellectual principles that can be set out, studied and put into practice in an orderly system. But there are no principles that will tell you how to create literature or how to enjoy it. Criticism does not pretend to account for the state of the mind in which literature is created, nor for that in which it is enjoyed. It assumes their existence. That is to say, it assumes the fact that literature exists and then it proceeds to enquire into the nature of literature and to expound it. As soon as a man becomes aware that it would suit his purpose to say something in one way and not the other, criticism begins. In this sense, criticism begins when literature begins. Though criticism begins with vague instinctive preference, it goes on to become a distinct and conscious activity that can be rationally justified; there is always an appeal to intellectual principles in it.

However, criticism helps the creative writer as well as the reader who enjoys literature. It enables the man who has the creative power to make the most intelligent and efficient use of his creative power. Criticism, as distinct from creation and enjoyment, consists in asking and answering rational questions about literature. These are of two kinds: the first proceeds from literature in general to particular pieces of literature and the second proceeds from the particular to the general. In the first kind of enquiry, we start with the general view of literature asking the following type of questions: what is literature? What are the qualities common to all literature? What is the function of literature? The results of such an enquiry can be set out in a system of principles which express our understanding of the nature of literature. These principles are intellectual principles but they are not laid down a priori as prescribing the nature which literature ought to have. The nature of literature is a fact, which exists, whether we investigate it or not. Whether we criticize it or not, literature exists on its own as an objective fact. The nature of criticism is to see the qualities of a good literature, which give some particular work its individuality. Obviously, the mood and the spirit as well as the choice of matter and its technique, and also the use of language are all found the subject of nature of criticism.

5.2. FUNCTIONS OF LITERARY CRITICISM

The function of literary criticism is to examine the merits and demerits or defects of a work of art and finally to evaluate its worth. The chief function of criticism is to enlighten and stimulate. The true critic is the one who is equipped for his task by a sound knowledge of his subject. The true critic

can discover the qualities of power, beauty and depth of significance. A critic can give us a fresh point of view. He is sometimes a path finder, breaking new ground, with a friendly passion. As such the primary functions of literary criticism are interpretation and judgment. Another important factor to note is that the view of criticism is directly related to the critic's own intellectual philosophy or outlook of life. It is determined by the likes, dislikes, and prejudices and this is equally shaped by the socio-political sensibilities of the critic's environment. As such, critical theories are shaped by the spirit of the age.

Literary criticism brings in an expert's opinion to examine a piece of literary work. The expert is a literary critic who uses his talent and training to look into merits and defects of a work in order to pass a judgment upon it. However, criticism is not a mere record of judgements. It includes the whole mass of writing that is written about literature proper. The object of criticism is analysis, interpretation and evaluation of a work of literary art. These functions are different from critic to critic in that they combine one or more of these according to their own viewpoints. Criticism deals with poetry, drama, novel and other literary forms, which deal with life directly. If creative literature is an interpretation of life through various forms of literary expression, criticism is an interpretation of that interpretation as well as of the forms of literature. This does not mean that criticism has nothing to do with life directly. Literature is interested in life and personality is one of the chief facts of life. Criticism, which tries to interpret the personality of a great writer as it is revealed in a literary work of art, truly deals with life as literature does. We all know that a poem does not come out of a hat; it has to come from a head that is human. If a great writer makes us realize the larger sense and meaning of life, a critic makes us realize the larger sense and meaning of literature itself. As we have seen the continuous change in the criticism from the classical to the modern age, a shift from an emphasis on the author to an emphasis on the text. The new critics made use of such distinction to usher in a critical revolution by making the text the centre of attention and not the poet as had been the case with romantic critics like Wordsworth, Hazlitt and Keats etc.

Literary criticism has two major functions to perform, one of interpretation and the other of judgement. The history of criticism shows that these two functions were combined till recent times. The function of a critic is not just to criticize a work but he has to present the facts then only a reader can make his or her own judgement. A majority of critics have used interpretation as a means to reach judgement which they have thought to be the real end of criticism. These two functions have been separated in modern criticism as it is maintained that the critic's duty is not judgement but only interpretation or exposition. A critic should compare different works of art and present everything objectively. The real aim of a critic is to penetrate the heart of a work, to separate its essential qualities of beauty and strength, to distinguish between what is temporary and what is permanent in it and to explain and examine the artistic and moral principles that have guided the writer. In this sense, a critic is expected to make what is implicit in a work of art. If the task of a writer is to conceal his art, that of a critic is to reveal it, to exhibit the interrelations of different parts of a work to bring out the connection of

each to the whole. Thus, explaining, unfolding and illuminating are the tasks of a critic-to reveal all aspects of its content, its art and its design. After this he may evaluate it, justifying his stand. But his primary concern is to know the book and help us know it. In this way only a critic provides the reader the opportunity to develop the aesthetic sense and intellect. He need not pass any definite judgement upon it based on his own taste or on any organized body of critical opinions.

5.3. A SURVEY OF THE ROLE OF A CRITIC

The word critic comes from the Greek word *Kritikos* which means a person who provides judgement on any literary work. A critic always communicates and puts his opinion on various forms of creative works such as art, literature, music, cinema, theater, fashion, architecture, and food. A critic may include a positive or negative personal response in his work, however much principles and criteria may be invoked, and whatever efforts may be made to eliminate the personal factor, all criticism is fundamentally subjective and impressionistic. We as a reader always depend on the critic's point of view which he provides to evaluate the work of any author. When we talk about the characteristics of a good critic he must have or show the ability to speak fluently and coherently. He must preferably use language with a high level of appeal and skill. He must have Sympathy, sensitivity and insight too. A critic must consider all forms, styles and mediums.

A critic must always be impersonal and objective whenever he criticizes any work. He should not be subjective at all. A good or an ideal critic has to undertake only in the light of what we expect of a good critic and what is his role in literary criticism. A good critic functions on the basis of the wide range and depth of his reading of literature and his literary taste as a dependable guide, an interpreter and a judge of literary works. At last he has the general point of view who is able to formulate his own principles of art and literature. A critic can mould the literary taste of his times in front of the reader.

Alexander Pope said that critic must be very careful and humble when critiquing any piece of literature. He should not presume himself to be far superior to others. The critic, though he finds a work worth censuring, should restrain his censure, in order to forgive his faults and discover the merits of the reader. A critic must possess a knowledge of both books and humankind. He must study human nature closely. He must praise, where praise is due setting aside class, group, religious prejudices. Criticism as a responsibility should not be abused. Critics must write with fire but judge with coolness because they make more enemy than friends.

Wide and many-sided reading is basic to most of the intrinsic qualifications that a critic should possess. Just as experience helps a person become mature on the path of life, a wide ranging and in-depth reading of literature makes a critic more sound and dependable in his literary responses. Such reading enables a critic to recognize the literary qualities of a genius who makes a departure from literary tradition and conventional writing. A critic has to recognize a genius, or what Eliot calls an individual talent, on first meeting

him in his works. He should be quick in responding to a fresh and virgin sensibility. A proper estimate of an author always takes time, but a good critic comes up with it when he comes across a literary genius for the first time.

A good critic is valuable therefore in evaluating contemporary works - books that have been published recently. Most of the review writers perform this function. A good reviewer should possess the essential qualifications for a good critic to guide readers on the right path. Of course, we would be wrong in restricting the qualities of a good critic within the purview of contemporary literature only. Reassessment of the literature and literary tradition of the past is also a fundamental task of a good critic. Eliot's reassessment of metaphysical poets and Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists which has proved his worth as a good critic is also valuable literary criticism. Revaluation of the past is the built-in ability expected of a critic.

A spirit of detachment has to evolve in a critic so that he would not succumb to the pressures of personal likes and dislikes. The more sincere and honest a critic is in his vocation, the greater will be his objectivity in reviewing works of art. A critic is expected to be a judge, his basic function is to interpret a work of art. An ideal critic does not confine himself to judgement only. He is, first and foremost, an interpreter of literature. As he is endowed with a fine sensibility and an analytical mind, he is able to offer an unprejudiced interpretation of a work of art, and finally it is his interpretive skill that enables him to pass a judgement on that work of art. He, in fact, opens the entire world of imaginative experience of the work in question, enabling us to respond to it and thereby derive aesthetic pleasure from it. G. Wilson Knight's analysis of Shakespeare's language or Caroline Spurgeon's brilliant study of Shakespearean imagery takes us to the heart of his plays. Many scholars considered Shakespeare's last plays as less artistic and neglected them as romances, but it was to the credit of Derek Traversi to prove the artistic merit of the last plays like *The Tempest*. Though their methods of analyses are different, all these critics are good in their own way. Even if the new critics have disapproved of the critical methods used by Prof. Livingstone Lowes in his book on Coleridge entitled *The Road to Xanadu*, the light it throws on Coleridge's poem *Kubla Khan* cannot be ignored. Whatever be a critic's method, it should offer a fresh insight into the work of art.

Besides being an interpreter, a critic has his own theory or philosophy of literature. Rather a critic reaches this stage when he becomes a generalizer after he reaches, through a process of deduction, a set of principles or rules that govern works of art belonging to that form or genre. The first western critic to reach this was Aristotle. His *Poetics* offers a set of rules or principles on the basis of his study of Greek tragic drama of his times. Most of the critics of the classical and the neo-classical era accepted Aristotle's tenets to review drama of later period. A critic always works within the theoretical framework in which he believes. Whether as a judge, or interpreter or generalizer, a critic has to offer a fresh insight into a work of art which readers are generally likely to miss or unlikely to capture.

5.4 CONCLUSION:

It is rather difficult to reconcile the claims of interpretation and judgement as the two are not easy to separate. G. Wilson Knight says, "Criticism is a process of deliberately objectifying works under consideration, the comparison of it with other similar works in order to show in what respect it surpasses or falls short of these works." A critic should avoid the value of judgements, he should not take a moral stand and become a judge. We can say that wide and in-depth reading, openness of mind, a never diligent scholarly approach, analytical mind and an attitude of judicious detachment are among the most important qualifications of a critic. An ideal critic takes his vocation as a journey, forever exploring and propagating the best that is known and thought in the world of literature. A good critic, in short, contributes something of unique value to our appreciation of literature and to our ability to recognize and enjoy the greatest and the most aesthetic quality in literature. He sees aesthetic in all literary work as it really is. To achieve this end the critic requires a capacity to divest himself of all preconceived notions in order to allow the text to speak to him and communicate its message or meaning without the intervention of the critic's passions or prejudices.

5.5 SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:

- 1- What are the chief functions of literary criticism?
- 2- What are the qualities of a good critic?
- 3- What is the nature and functions of literary criticism?
- 4- What are the major functions of criticism?
- 5- How do you describe the nature of criticism?

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SCANSION - I

Unit Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Elements of Poetry
- 6.3 Scansion
- 6.4 Method of Scansion
- 6.5 How to Scan a Poem
- 6.6 Rules of Scansion
- 6.7 References

6.0 OBJECTIVES:

- To introduce students about scansion of a poem and techniques involved in it.
 - To scan poem, identify the base metre (iamb, trochee), variations (pyrrhic, spondee, anapaest, dactyl, cretic, amphibrach, etc.)
 - To identify rhyme scheme, stanza forms, and the metrical peculiarities such as end-stopped lines, run-on lines, elision, caesura and other basic concepts of versification.
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6.1 INTRODUCTION:

Scansion is typically performed on poetry. It helps to analyse and understand various devices and aspects used in the poem. Before moving further, let us understand some of the important and frequently used elements in poetry.

Poetry: Poetry is one of the oldest genres in literature. According to Arp & Perrine (2005:2), the value of poetry is same as the language's value which it has a universal contribution in the human civilization. They believe that poetry have been used and civilized both primitive and civilized people. It has been written and listened by all kinds of people in all ages around the world. While Fabb and Halle (2008:1) said "Poetry is a form of verbal art that has been found in all languages and in all times". Most people use poetry as their media to make an art of language, regardless of what kind of the language they used. It can be denied that poetry is the kind of literary works which the most old than the others. In every single era and period, poetry has been setted itself as the art of verbal language that being an artifact in literature world.

Poems invoke an experience that may consist of event, feeling, mood or emotion and thought. Although poetry is the form of literature that uses less word than other forms, it can explain the complete story through its language. Poets tend to use his own language style to keep the message in his poem that he wants to transfer to his readers. Poetry is a kind of literature that its presentation prioritizes the beauty of the language and the density of meaning as well.

6.2 ELEMENTS OF POETRY:

a. Rhyme

Rhyme is the repetition the identical final syllables of words that may appear in two successive lines, in alternating lines, or at intervals of four, five, or more lines. If rhyming sounds are too far away from each other, they lose their immediacy and effectiveness. The functions of a rhyme are to delight, strengthen a poem's psychological impact, and support memorization of the poem. According to Vendler (2009:72), the simplest rhyme in grammatically speaking is the words that have same position in part of speech: (weigh, neigh) which is two verbs, and (cat, hat) which is two nouns for instance.

In the rhyme perspective, there is a traditional pattern as the continuation of it which called as rhyme scheme. Rhyme scheme is the pattern used at the end rhymes of a poem in a stanza order. There are several rhyme scheme of poetry such as abab, ababcc, aabb, and so forth.

For example, a poem by William Wordsworth which used ababcc pattern as its rhyme scheme is The Daffodils.

I wandered lonely as a <i>cloud</i>	(a)
That floats on high o'er vales and <i>hills</i>	(b)
When all at once i saw a <i>crowd</i>	(a)
A host, of golden <i>daffodils</i>	(b)
Beside the lake, beneath the <i>trees</i>	(c)
Futtering and dancing in the <i>breeze</i>	(c)

This is the first stanza in the daffodils poem by William Wordsworth. We can see in this stanza, Wordsworth used the match ending syllable which make the sound of this poem seems to be harmonic and ear catching to the reader. This is actually the goal of a rhyme in poetry, to create the similar ending line in a stanza organization.

b. Meter

Meter is an ordering of language with a particular set of the character of its own. The order of language in English and several modern languages is syllabic stress. The whole additional aspects of language are gift, in fact they take a main role to the verse's rhythm, but the

meter does not order them. According to Arp & Perrine (2005:77), the meaning of meter is measure. When we want to measure something we need to have the measurement first. The inch, foot, and yard use to measure length; while the second, minute, and hour use to measure the time. The same condition occurs to verse, we need the foot, line and stanza to measure it. The metrical poem is a full package of rhythms, which are composed of strong and weak stresses. Typically, a set of one strong syllable and one or two unstressed syllable known as a foot of verse. It must be stressed that meter is not abstract or theoretical, although sometimes it is talked about as if it were; it is not opposed to rhythm but is a way of organizing rhythm. But while the meter of the poem is something it shares with other poems, rhythm involves many factors besides meter, and is unique to a particular poem.

c. Rhythm

The first and most elementary pleasure in all poetry is rhythm. Rhythm basically is the musicality produced by the poems and which includes the syllables in the line of poem. It is produced by the repetition and emphasis that creates a rhythmic beat. Rhythm is used by all poets and heard by the readers of poetry. Rhythm freely plays with or even against meter.

6.3 SCANSION:

Scansion is the act of scanning a poem to discover how the poem establishes a metrical pattern, which syllables are accented (receive stress) and which are not (receive no stress). Scansion is the method or practice of determining and (usually) graphically representing the metrical pattern of a line of verse. In classical poetry, these patterns are based on the different lengths of each syllable, and in English poetry, they are based on the different levels of stress placed on each syllable. To scan a poem is to give a visual representation of some aspects of its rhythmic movement.

Scansion basically aimed to find out the stress and unstressed syllable, we need to understand what stress it is. Stress or accent refers simply to the prominence some syllables have over others in speech. Stress is the way we pronounce words, which syllables in a word are pronounced more emphatically than others around them, which syllables in a line are stronger than the ones around them.

6.3.1 Elements of Scansion

Scansion can be staged by using two symbols. (/) indicating the syllables with stress (strong syllable) and (x) non-stress syllables (weak syllable). There are some elements in scansion method, they are:

a. Syllable and Stress

Scansion is a portrayal of poetry's rhythm through the fission of the lines into feet, giving the symbols of accented and unaccented

syllables, deals with meter, and calculating the amount of syllables. Typically, scansion is a scanning method of poetry analysis to indicate the weak and strong syllable, hence syllables hold an important role in scansion analysis.

Syllables are the segments of sounds that make up individual words (syllabics); A syllable, however, might be made up of a number of phonemes: *k/a/t* go to make up the single expressed voice of *cat*. Instead of long and short syllables English scansion has come to recognize *stressed* and *unstressed* syllables, with stress often marked / and unstressed x. Technically, from a linguistic point of view, every syllable has at least some stress to it, because we wouldn't be able to hear when it has not. A syllable has its own stress, typically divided into strong or weak stress.

b. Line and Stanza

Because scansion deals with which syllables are stressed and which syllables are unstressed, we can identify every single syllable that are arranged in a row, which are called as lines. Line is the fundamental unit in versification. From the metrical point of view, a line of verse is to be regarded as a row of syllables. To scan a line is to assign the proper metrical value to each syllable, thus showing how the line in question is related to the metrical scheme. The number of lines will depend upon the types of poems. It consists of the text that poet tries to convey through his lyric.

Stanza is a group or set of lines that form the basic form of metrical unit in poems. The original sense of *stanza* in Italian is “stopping-place”, a place to take a stand, and more particularly “room”. These associated senses are exactly appropriate to the established sense of stanza in poetry. A poem in stanzas is one comprising a series of groups of lines shaped in the same way, and usually, although not always of the same length. As each group ends, the poem has a momentary stopping-place.

There are several kinds of stanza, they are: one line form, two lines form, three lines form, four lines form, five lines form, six line form, seven line form, eight line form, nine line form, sonnet (14 lines form), rondeau and rondel (The *rondeau* became a fifteen-line form divided into a *quintet*, a *quatrain* and a *sestet*, and employing just two rhymes. Meanwhile rondel is the 14 lines stanza which consists of two quatrains followed by a quintet stanza.

6.3.2 Metrical Foot and Metrical Lines

Traditionally, scansion is the process of analyzing the rhythm of poetry through its meter in each foot. In English, the accented and unaccented syllables grouped into units called feet. In English, metrical patterns consist of repeated patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables.

a. Metrical Foot

The foot is the basic unit of measurement in a line. While scanning a line, one look for combinations of accented and unaccented syllables and group them into these feet. Syllables are of two types, stressed or accented (/) and unstressed or unaccented (x). If a word is stressed or unstressed depends on how the word is pronounced in the given line.

Major Feet in English:

Foot	Syllable	Stress Pattern	Example
Monosyllabic	1	1 Accented (/)	Know
Iambic	2	1 Unaccented followed by 1 Accented (x/)	Plenty
Trochaic	2	1 Accented followed by 1 Unaccented (/x)	Further
Dactylic	3	1 Accented followed by 2 Unaccented (/xx)	Tenderly
Anapestic	3	1 Unaccented followed by 2 Accented (x//)	Interfere
Spondaic	2	2 Accented (//)	Black Board

Additionally, there are two extra pattern to pointed the additional syllables which typically appeared in the end of the line. They are Masculine and feminine ending.

1. Masculine ending, the end of line which has stressed syllables (/).
2. Feminine ending, the end of line which has unstressed syllable (x).

b. Meter:

Meter is a literary device that works as a structural element in poetry. Essentially, meter is the basic rhythmic structure of a line within a poem. Meter functions as a means of imposing a specific number of syllables and emphasis when it comes to a line of poetry that adds to its musicality. It consists of the number of syllables and the pattern of emphasis on those syllables. In addition, meter governs individual units within a line of poetry, called “feet.” A “foot” of a poetic work features a specific number of syllables and pattern of emphasis.

Perhaps the most famous example of poetic meter is iambic pentameter. An iamb is a metrical foot that consists of one short or unstressed syllable followed by a long or stressed syllable. The structure of iambic pentameter features five iambs per line, or ten total syllables per line. All the even-numbered syllables in this metric form are stressed.

Types of Meter:

Name of Metrical Line	The Number of Feet
Monometer	One foots per line
Dimeter	Two foots per line
Trimeter	Three foots per line
Tetrameter	Four foots per line
Pentameter	Five foots per line
Hexameter	Six foots per line
Heptameter	Seven foots per line
Octameter	Eight foots per line

6.4 METHOD OF SCANSION:

The primary aim of scansion is to show clearly the basic rhythmic structure of a line or group of lines and pointing the syllables that are strong or accented, and the syllables that are weak or unaccented. These syllables show the basic metrical pattern in each line. There are several stages to scan a poem, they are:

- First, read the poem loud to find out a particular rhythm
- Second, mark each syllable. Mark “ / ” over the syllable which has a strong or accented pronunciation or sound, and mark “ x ” over the syllable which has a weak or unaccented pronunciation or sound.
- Third, after identifying a particular pattern, (/ x: / x, for instance), mark a vertical line by using slash (/) between each unit of the pattern to indicate the feet.
- Fourth, identify what kind of metrical feet have been used in the lines of poem, i.e. whether they are iambic, trochaic, anapestic, dactylic, or spondaic.
- Fifth, count the amount of feet in each line to see what kind of metrical line it is, i.e. whether monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter, heptameter, or octameter.

- f. At last, give name to the metrical pattern in each line by combining the metrical foot and the metrical line, “iambic hexameter” for instance.

6.5 HOW TO SCAN A POEM:

Stress: The rhythm of poetry depends on rhythmic elements present in ordinary speech. In English, speakers give more emphasis or stress to some syllables than others. We learned what syllables to stress and what syllables to leave unstressed more or less unconsciously when we learned to speak. *Meter* is, in English, the organization of stressed and unstressed syllables.

How to Scan a Metrical Poem: Almost all English poetry from the Renaissance to the end of the nineteenth century is written in a meter.

There are four possible accentual-syllabic meters in English, based on the possible patternings of stressed and unstressed syllables. Two of them are based on rising rhythms, patterns that come to a stress at the end, and two on falling rhythms, patterns that begin with a stress. The names for them come from Greek. The Greek prosodists called each unit of the pattern a foot, as if the meter walked. Here are the four possible foot types in English:

Rising rhythms:

the iamb, or iambic foot (x /)

the anapest, or anapestic foot (x x /)

Falling rhythms:

the trochee, or trochaic foot (/ x)

the dactyl, or dactylic foot (/ x x)

The Greeks distinguished many other meters based on other patterns of syllables, but as a practical matter, the ear seems to hear all unstressed syllables as organized around one stressed syllable preceding or following it—or at least that's the way writers in English have always thought about it. So there may be these four possible meters. But, in fact, *almost all metrical poetry in English is written in an iambic meter or in a meter that has an iambic base*. In practice, dactylic meters hardly exist because the unstressed syllables are subsumed by the rising rhythm of the next stressed syllable, and the anapest can be thought of as a skipping iamb.

In a line of Shakespeare's iambic pentameter:

When to/ the ses-/sions of/ sweet si-/ lent thought

certain syllables, when, ses-, sweet, si, and thought, receive an accent, but one foot—/sions of/—doesn't contain a lexical stress. Meter supplies it.

How do you know which syllable to stress in /When to/ or /-sions of/? Normally the pattern imposed by the meter tells you—it tells you that /-sions of/ is a metrical foot in an iambic line and so you apply the pattern. Sometimes rhetorical stress tells you. /When to/ is a metrical foot in a line of iambic verse, so you know to consider the two syllables in relation to one another. But the lexical rules tell you that in speech "when," an adverb, receives stress and "to," a monosyllabic preposition, doesn't. What do you

do? The rules of speech rhythm trump the metrical rule. The pattern is iambic, but the foot is trochaic. This way of establishing a pattern and then upending it from time to time is called substitution. It's very common in metrical poetry, but more common in some parts of the line than others.

6.6 RULES OF SCANSION:

1. The first rule of scansion: If you think you hear a meter in a poem, it is probably an iambic meter; the first thing to do is to test this hypothesis by dividing the line into poetic feet.

Note: Ignore punctuation and meaning when you divide the line into feet. All you're trying to do is determine whether or not a pattern applies.

Note 2: Don't arbitrarily chop it into twos. There may be an extra syllable in the form of an anapestic substitution.

You are reading Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" and it sounds metrical to you. So you try to discover the pattern by dividing the first two lines into feet:

Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village, though;

and then you mark the stressed and unstressed syllables to see if Frost was using an iambic meter.

2. The second rule of scansion is that, once you have determined the division into feet, you only compare the level of stress in a syllable with the level of stress of other syllables in the same foot. For example, in the second line, once you have separated the phrase "His house is in" into two feet, /his house/ is in/, you only compare "his" with "house" and "is" with "in." You don't compare "in" with "house." This is to make sure that you are marking the meter and not the rhythm.

Rhythmically, you may hear a line with three strong accentual stresses, followed by another line with three strong accentual stresses, but the stresses are not the meter. The relation of stressed and unstressed syllables is the meter. So even if the rhythm sounds like this to you:

Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village, though;

- the meter looks like this:

x / x / x / x /

/Whose woods/ these are/ I think/ I know./

x / x / x / x /

/His house/ is in/ the vil/ lage, though;/

Often you will hear what feel like strong irregular emphases in metrical poems. The irregularities are strong, because once a pattern is established, you notice departures from the pattern. So, of course, poets learned that one of the best ways to get emphasis is to establish a meter and then vary it. You vary it by changing the iambic pattern to some other pattern. There are three kinds of substitution in iambic verse:

an anapestic foot (x x /)

a trochaic foot (/ x)

a spondaic foot (/ /)

Some people would add a fourth kind of substitution:

a double iamb (x x / /)

This is to accommodate a very common conformation in English, the phrase based on preposition-article-adjective-noun, like "in a dark time" or "on a high peak." This isn't entirely necessary. You may think of "in a dark time"

as a trochee – *in a* – and a spondee – *dark time*, but some poets have felt that the piling up of two strong stresses in the second pair of syllables mutes the effect of any comparative difference in the first pair of syllables and have felt, therefore, that calling this configuration a double iamb reflects something about iambic rhythm in English more accurately.

It is also not uncommon for a line of iambic verse to have a final unaccented syllable. If all the lines have a final unaccented syllable, you are in the presence of a rare poem written in a trochaic meter.

Prohibitions: Contrary to what you might read in some manuals of prosody, there are kinds of substitutions that don't occur in iambic verse. There are no pyrrhic feet—a pair of unaccented syllables—because the pattern will impose relatively more stress on one syllable in any pair in an iambic line. There are no dactylic feet. A three-syllable pattern of stressed-unstressed-unstressed doesn't exist in English because the rising rhythm will always assimilate the third weak syllable to the next stressed syllable rather than to the previous one.

And, though there are single accented syllables sometimes in the first position in a line or an unaccented single syllable at the end, there are no single syllable feet in the middle of a line. If you find a pattern that seems to demand one, rethink your perception of the pattern. (Yeats's "Lake Isle of Innisfree" is the notable exception.) The most typical substitution in an iambic meter is the use of a trochaic or spondaic foot at the beginning of a line for emphasis. The first line in Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium," for example, has a trochee in the first position:

That is\ no coun\ try for\ old men.\ The young

You can tell it's a trochee because the rhetorical emphasis of the demonstrative pronoun that requires it. There is a spondee in the first position in another poem by Yeats written in memory of two dead friends:

Dear sha\ dows, now\ you know\ it all,

The substitution called a double iamb often occurs at the beginning of a line because of the usual structure of prepositional phrases in English – preposition, article, adjective, noun: "in a dark time, on a high peak." If you apply our second rule to these phrases, you would probably scan them this way –

/ x / / / x / /

\ in a\ dark time\ \ on a\ high peak\

- because the prepositions get slightly more semantic emphasis than the articles. To an ear tuned to the phrase-rhythm and not to the meter, they sound, of course, like this -

x x / / x x / /

in a dark time on a high peak

- and some poets tend to think of that pattern as a form of two-foot metrical substitution, in effect, a double iamb, so that you could, for example, scan a line from Robert Frost's "Birches"—

He always kept his poise

to the top branches, climbing carefully

- like this:

x x / / x / x / x /

to the top bran\ ches, climb\ ing care\ fully

3. So, the third rule of scansion is to be alert to substitution. For example, look at these lines from Frost's "The Oven Bird":

str

lik

lik SO' say an tin yoi a!, "LI un It's fee are em the

There is a singer everyone has heard, Loud, a mid-summer and a mid-wood bird, Who makes the solid tree trunks sound again. He says that leaves are old and that for flowers Mid-summer is to spring as one to ten.

First, divide it into poetic feet; then mark the stressed and un-stressed syllables. You will have done well if you divided the lines like this:

/There is/ a sing/ er ev/ eryone/ has heard,/ /Loud, a/ mid-sum/ mer
and/ a mid-/ wood bird,/ /Who makes/ the sol/ id tree/ trunks sound/

again./ /He says/ that leaves/ are old/ and that/ for flowers/ /Mid-sum/
mer is/ to spring/ as one/ to ten./

The only word you may have puzzled over is flowers. It is a word, like heaven, that is sometimes treated as a one-syllable word and sometimes as a two-syllable word, depending on how you hear and say it. Frost is either hearing it as a one-syllable word or he is leaving an extra unstressed syllable at the end of the line, as poets some-times do. But when it comes to scansion there may be several feet that give you pause. The first obvious substitution occurs in the foot /Loud, a/, in which it's clear for both semantic and rhetorical reasons that "Loud" is more strongly accented than "a." The pattern is stressed-unstressed, so the foot is a trochee, and this is a trochaic substitution. It's the most common one in English verse. You may also be unsure about how to mark the second and fifth feet in the same line. Is /mid-sum/ a spondee because both syllables are emphasized equally, or an iamb because sum gets slightly more emphasis than mid-? And what about /wood bird,/? This brings us to the fourth and fifth rules of scansion

4. The fourth rule is that a tie goes to the meter. That is, the point of creating a metrical pattern is to draw the relation of stressed and unstressed syllables into an order. Ezra Pound had a metaphor for this order-making in art—"the rose in the steel dust." He was thinking of the rose shape made when a magnet pulls random par-ticles of steel dust into the pattern made by lines of electromagnetic force. Meter pulls syllables into its pattern in the same way. So, if you are not sure which way a scansion should go, give the meter the benefit of the doubt. In that second line above, therefore, it's probably best to call both feet iambs. But if you think that the whole structure of sound is changed by those strong accents, then call thempondees.
5. Which leads us to the fifth rule: The point is not to be right; the point is to listen and to train your ear into the deepest textures of the sound of a poem. Once you notice what Frost is doing in that line, piling up strongly accented syllables-

Loud, a mid-summer and a mid-wood bird.

-it doesn't too much matter whether you scan it

or

/Loud, a/ mid-sum/ mer and/ a mid-/ wood bird./

/Loud, a/ mid-sum/ mer and/ a mid-/ wood bird./

What matters is that you notice that Frost is trying to give you something of the energy of the bird's song. To summarize: 1. you determine the meter by inspection—by testing your sense of what it is until you discover what pattern the poet had in mind; 2. you mark stressed and unstressed syllables only by comparing the relative stress with other syllables in the same foot; 3. you are alert to substitution; 4. you assume, if you're not sure, that the metrical pattern pre-dominates; 5. and you don't worry too much about whether you're right or not; you listen to the sound of the poem.

METER LENGTHS

Poems with two metrical feet are written in dimeter. If in iambic feet, iambic dimeter. And so on. Three feet is trimeter, four is tetrameter, five is pentameter, six hexameter. The commonest meters in English are iambic tetrameter and iambic pentameter.

PAUSES IN A LINE

When talking about the meter and the rhythm of a poem, it is often useful to pay attention to the changing position of the main pause in each line. The term for this pause is caesura, and caesuras are often marked with a double line, //. For example:

/There is/ a sing/ er//ev/ eryone/ has heard/ /Loud,/a/ mid-sum/ mer
and/ a mid-/ wood bird./

You can see, if you imagine that brief silence moving around in relation to the unchanging measure of the ten-syllable line, how it would have a strong, subtle effect on the overall rhythm. And you should notice also that the caesura can occur either in a foot or at the end of one.

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SCANSION - II

Unit Structure

7.0 Objectives

7.1 Scansion

7.2 Exercises

7.0 OBJECTIVES:

- To introduce students about scansion of a poem and techniques involved in it.
 - To scan poem, identify the base metre (iamb, trochee), variations (pyrrhic, spondee, anapaest, dactyl, cretic, amphibrach, etc.)
 - To identify rhyme scheme, stanza forms, and the metrical peculiarities such as end-stopped lines, run-on lines, elision, caesura and other basic concepts of versification.
-

7.1 SCANSION:

Rhythm: The pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line

Metre: The number of feet in a line

Scansion: Describing the rhythms of poetry by dividing the lines into feet, marking the locations of stressed and unstressed syllables, and counting the syllables

When we describe the rhythm of a poem, we “scan” the poem and mark the stresses (/) and absences of stress (x) and count the number of feet.

In English, the major feet are:

Iambus:

x / x / x / x /

In all my wand’rings round this world of care,

x / x / x / x /

In all my griefs – and GOD has giv’n my share -

Trochee:

/ x / x / x / x

Never, never, never, never, never!

Spondee:

/ / / /

Drop, drop, slow tears

Pyrrhic:

x / x x x x /

Inglorious on the plain

Anapaest:

x x / / x /

From the shore come the notes

x x / x x /

To their mill where it floats

Dactyl:

/ x x / x x

Cold inhumanity

/ x x / x x

Burning insanity

Iambic and **anapestic** meters are called rising meters because their movement rises from unstressed syllable to stressed syllable. **Trochaic** and **dactylic** meters are called falling because their movement is from stressed syllable to unstressed syllable. **Spondee** and **pyrrhic** are called feet, even though they contain only one kind of stressed syllable. They are never used as the sole meter of a poem. But inserted now and then, they can lend emphasis and variety to a meter, eg: Yeats in "Who Goes With Fergus?"

x x / / x x / /

And the white breast Of the dim sea,

A stanza is a regular pattern of lines which forms a unit in a poem. The common stanza forms are as follows:

Couplet: stanza of two lines**Tercet/triplet:** stanza of three lines**Quatrains:** stanza of four lines**Quintain/quintet:** stanza of five lines**Sestet:** stanza of six lines**Septet:** stanza of seven lines (most famous kind of septet: *rhyme royal*)

Octet: stanza of eight lines

Nonet: stanza of nine lines (important example is the Spenserian stanza)

Sample passage (1):

Scanning:

/ x / x / x / x	
/ Willows / whiten, / aspens/ quiver/,	L1
/ x / x / x / x	
Little/ breezes /dusk and /shiver	L2
x x / x / x / x	
Through the / wave that / runs for/ever	L3
x x / x x x / x	
By the/ island / in the/ river	L4
/ x / x / x /	
Flowing/ down to/ Camelot.	L5
/ / / x / / / x	
Four grey/ walls, ll and/ four grey/ towers,	L6
/ x / x / x / x	
Over/look a/ space of/ flowers,	L7
x x / x / x / x	
And the/ silent/ isle em/bowers,	L8
x / x x / x	
The La/dy of /Shalot.	L9

Base Meter:

Trochaic Tetrameter

Modulations:

L3: 1st foot – pyrrhic

L4: 1st foot and 3rd foot – pyrrhic

L5: 3rd foot – cretic

L6: 1st foot and 3rd foot – spondee

L8: 1st foot – pyrrhic

L9: 1st foot – iamb, 2nd foot – pyrrhic

Metrical peculiarities:

L1: weak caesura after ‘whiten’

L2, 3, 4: enjambment (run-on lines)

L 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9: end-stopped lines

L6: weak caesura after 'walls'

L5, 9: trimeter

Rhyme Scheme: a a a a b c c c b

Sample Passage (2):

Scanning:

x / x / x / x / x /	
No long/er mourn/ for me/ when I/ am dead,	L1
/ x x / x / x / x /	
Then you/ shall hear/ the sur/ly sull/en bell	L2
x / x x x / x / x /	
Give warn/ing to/ the world/ that I/ am fled	L3
x x / / x / x / x /	
From this /vile world/ with vile/st worms/ to dwell:	L4
/ x x / x / x / x /	
Nay, ll if /you read/ this line,/ ll remem/ber not	L5
x / x / x x x / x /	
The hand/ that writ/ it; for/ I love/ you so,	L6
x / x x / / x / x /	
That I/ in your/ sweet thoughts/ would be/ forgot	L7
x / x x x / x / x /	
If think/ing on/ me then/ should make/ you woe.	L8

Base Meter:

Iambic Pentameter

Modulations:

L2: 1st foot – trochee

L3: 2nd foot – pyrrhic

L4: 1st foot – pyrrhic, 2nd foot – spondee

L5: 1st foot – trochee

L6: 3rd foot – pyrrhic

L7: 2nd foot – pyrrhic, 3rd foot – spondee

L8: 2nd foot - pyrrhic

Metrical peculiarities:

L5: two weak caesuras – after 'nay' and after 'line'

L6: strong caesura after 'it'

L2, 3, 5, 7: enjambment (run-on lines)

L1, 4, 6, 8: end-stopped lines

Rhyme Scheme: a b a b c d c d

7.2 EXERCISES:

Given below are some poems to practice scansion on. Each is written in an accentual-syllabic meter. Divide each into feet and mark the metrical pattern and the substitutions. Mark the caesuras as well:

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

- Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.
My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.
He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.
The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

The Oven Bird

- Robert Frost

There is a singer everyone has heard,
Loud, a mid-summer and a mid-wood bird,
Who makes the solid tree trunks sound again.
He says that leaves are old and that for flowers
Mid-summer is to spring as one to ten.
He says the early petal-fall is past
When pear and cherry bloom went down in showers
On sunny days a moment overcast;
And comes that other fall we name the fall.
He says the highway dust is over all.
The bird would cease and be as other birds
But that he knows in singing not to sing.

The question that he frames in all but words
Is what to make of a diminished thing.

Scansion - II

Neither Out Far Nor In Deep

- Robert Frost

The people along the sand
All turn and look one way.
They turn their back on the land.
They look at the sea all day.
As long as it takes to pass
A ship keeps raising its hull;
The wetter ground like glass
Reflects a standing gull
The land may vary more;
But wherever the truth may be –
The water comes ashore,
And the people look at the sea.
They cannot look out far.
They cannot look in deep.
But when was that ever a bar
To any watch they keep?

Birches

- Robert Frost

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay
As ice-storms do. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods

Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
 Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
 Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
 But I was going to say when Truth broke in
 With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
 I should prefer to have some boy bend them
 As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
 Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
 Whose only play was what he found himself,
 Summer or winter, and could play alone.
 One by one he subdued his father's trees
 By riding them down over and over again
 Until he took the stiffness out of them,
 And not one but hung limp, not one was left
 For him to conquer. He learned all there was
 To learn about not launching out too soon
 And so not carrying the tree away
 Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
 To the top branches, climbing carefully
 With the same pains you use to fill a cup
 Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
 Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
 Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
 So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
 And so I dream of going back to be.
 It's when I'm weary of considerations,
 And life is too much like a pathless wood
 Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
 Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
 From a twig's having lashed across it open.
 I'd like to get away from earth awhile
 And then come back to it and begin over.
 May no fate willfully misunderstand me
 And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
 Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
 I don't know where it's likely to go better.
 I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,

And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
 But dipped its top and set me down again.
 That would be good both going and coming back.
 One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

Design

- Robert Frost

I found a dimpled spider, fat and white,
 On a white heal-all, holding up a moth
 Like a white piece of rigid satin cloth—
 Assorted characters of death and blight
 Mixed ready to begin the morning right,
 Like the ingredients of a witches' broth—
 A snow-drop spider, a flower like a froth,
 And dead wings carried like a paper kite.
 What had that flower to do with being white,
 The wayside blue and innocent heal-all?
 What brought the kindred spider to that height,
 Then steered the white moth thither in the night?
 What but design of darkness to appall?—
 If design govern in a thing so small.
