

INTRODUCTORY LINGUISTICS, PHONETICS AND MODERN ENGLISH USAGE II

**MAENG405
II SEMESTER**



RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY

Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112

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E-28, Sector-8, Noida - 201301 (UP)

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About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

About IDE

The formal system of higher education in our country is facing the problems of access, limitation of seats, lack of facilities and infrastructure. Academicians from various disciplines opine that it is learning which is more important and not the channel of education. The education through distance mode is an alternative mode of imparting instruction to overcome the problems of access, infrastructure and socio-economic barriers. This will meet the demand for qualitative higher education of millions of people who cannot get admission in the regular system and wish to pursue their education. It also helps interested employed and unemployed men and women to continue with their higher education. Distance education is a distinct approach to impart education to learners who remained away in the space and/or time from the teachers and teaching institutions on account of economic, social and other considerations. Our main aim is to provide higher education opportunities to those who are unable to join regular academic and vocational education programmes in the affiliated colleges of the University and make higher education reach to the doorsteps in rural and geographically remote areas of Arunachal Pradesh in particular and North-eastern part of India in general. In 2008, the Centre for Distance Education has been renamed as "Institute of Distance Education (IDE)."

Continuing the endeavor to expand the learning opportunities for distant learners, IDE has introduced Post Graduate Courses in 5 subjects (Education, English, Hindi, History and Political Science) from the Academic Session 2013-14.

The Institute of Distance Education is housed in the Physical Sciences Faculty Building (first floor) next to the University Library. The University campus is 6 kms from NERIST point on National Highway 52A. The University buses ply to NERIST point regularly.

Outstanding Features of Institute of Distance Education:

(i) At Par with Regular Mode

Eligibility requirements, curricular content, mode of examination and the award of degrees are on par with the colleges affiliated to the Rajiv Gandhi University and the Department(s) of the University.

(ii) Self-Instructional Study Material (SISM)

The students are provided SISM prepared by the Institute and approved by Distance Education Council (DEC), New Delhi. This will be provided at the time of admission at the IDE or its Study Centres. SISM is provided only in English except Hindi subject.

(iii) Contact and Counselling Programme (CCP)

The course curriculum of every programme involves counselling in the form of personal contact programme of duration of approximately 7-15 days. The CCP shall not be compulsory for BA. However for professional courses and MA the attendance in CCP will be mandatory.

(iv) Field Training and Project

For professional course(s) there shall be provision of field training and project writing in the concerned subject.

(v) Medium of Instruction and Examination

The medium of instruction and examination will be English for all the subjects except for those subjects where the learners will need to write in the respective languages.

(vi) Subject/Counselling Coordinators

For developing study material, the IDE appoints subject coordinators from within and outside the University. In order to run the PCCP effectively Counselling Coordinators are engaged from the Departments of the University, The Counselling-Coordinators do necessary coordination for involving resource persons in contact and counselling programme and assignment evaluation. The learners can also contact them for clarifying their difficulties in then respective subjects.

SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Syllabi

UNIT I: First and Second Language Acquisition

Forms of Communication and Language

UNIT II: Methods of Teaching English

UNIT III: Teaching Reading and Writing Skills

UNIT IV: Teaching Listening and Speaking Skills

UNIT V: Language Testing and Assessment

UNIT I: First and Second Language Acquisition

1.1 Language Acquisition

How do children acquire language? Do parents teach their children to talk?

No. Children acquire language quickly, easily, and without effort or formal teaching. It happens automatically, whether their parents try to teach them or not.

Although parents or other caretakers don't teach their children to speak, they do perform an important role by talking to their children. Children who are never spoken to will not acquire language. And the language must be used for interaction with the child; for example, a child who regularly hears language on the TV or radio but nowhere else will not learn to talk.

Children acquire language through interaction - not only with their parents and other adults, but also with other children. All normal children who grow up in normal households, surrounded by conversation, will acquire the language that is being used around them. And it is just as easy for a child to acquire two or more languages at the same time, as long as they are regularly interacting with speakers of those languages.

The special way in which many adults speak to small children also helps them to acquire language. Studies show that the 'baby talk' that adults naturally use with infants and toddlers tends to always be just a bit ahead of the level of the child's own language development, as though pulling the child along. This 'baby talk' has simpler vocabulary and sentence structure than adult language, exaggerated intonation and sounds, and lots of repetition and questions. All of these features help the child to sort out the meanings, sounds, and sentence patterns of his or her language.

When do children learn to talk?

There is no one point at which a child learns to talk. By the time the child first utters a single meaningful word, he or she has already spent many months playing around with the sounds and intonations of language and connecting words with meanings. Children acquire language in stages, and different children reach the various stages at different times. The order in which these stages are reached, however, is virtually always the same.

The first sounds a baby makes are the sounds of crying. Then, around six weeks of age, the baby will begin making vowel sounds, starting with aah, ee, and ooh. At about six months, the baby starts to produce strings of consonant-vowel pairs like boo and da. In this stage, the child is playing around with the sounds of speech and sorting out the sounds that are important for making words in his or her language from the sounds that aren't. Many parents hear a child in this stage produce a combination like "mama" or "dada" and excitedly declare that the child has uttered his or her first word, even though the child probably didn't attach any meaning to the 'word'.

Somewhere around age one or one and a half, the child will actually begin to utter single words with meaning. These are always 'content' words like cookie, doggie, run, and see - never 'function' words like and, the, and of. Around the age of two, the child will begin putting two words together to make 'sentences' like doggie run. A little later on, the child may produce longer sentences that lack function words, such as big doggie run fast. At this point all that's left to add are the function words, some different sentence forms (like the passive), and the more complex sound combinations (like str). By the time the child enters kindergarten, he or she will have acquired the vast majority of the rules and sounds of the language. After this, it's just a matter of combining the different sentence types in new ways and adding new words to his or her vocabulary.

Why did my daughter say feet correctly for a while, and then go back to calling them foots?

Actually, she hasn't 'gone back' at all; she's gone forward. When she used the word feet as a toddler, she was just imitating what she had heard. But now she has learned a rule for making plurals, which is that you add the s sound to the end of the word. So she's just applying her new rule to all nouns - even the exceptions to the rule, like foot/feet. She'll probably do the same thing when she learns to add ed to verbs to make the past tense, saying things like he standed up until she learns that stand/stood is an exception to the rule. She'll sort it all out eventually, but for now, rest assured that this is progress; it's evidence that she's going beyond imitation and actually learning the rules of the English language.

How can a child who can't even tie her own shoes master a system as complex as the English language?

Although the 'baby talk' that parents use with small children may help them to acquire language, many linguists believe that this still cannot explain how infants and toddlers can acquire such a complicated system so easily.

It's far easier for a child to acquire language as an infant and toddler than it will be for the same child to learn, say, French in a college classroom 18 years later. Many linguists now say that a newborn's brain is already programmed to learn language, and in fact that when a baby is born he or she already instinctively knows a lot about language. This means that it's as natural for a human being to talk as it is for a bird to sing or for a spider to spin a web. In this sense, language may be like walking: The ability to walk is genetic, and children develop the ability to walk whether or not anybody tries to teach them to do so. In the same way, children develop the ability to talk whether or not anybody tries to teach them. For this reason, many linguists believe that language ability is genetic. Researchers believe there may be a 'critical period' (lasting roughly from infancy until puberty) during which language acquisition is effortless. According to these researchers, changes occur in the structure of the brain during puberty, and after that it is much harder to learn a new language.

Linguists have become deeply interested in finding out what all 5,000 or so of the world's languages have in common, because this may tell us what kinds of knowledge about language are actually innate. For example, it appears that all languages use the vowel sounds aah, ee, and ooh - the same vowel sounds a baby produces first. By studying languages from all over the world, linguists hope to find out what properties all languages have in common, and whether those properties are somehow hard-wired into the human brain. If it's true that babies are born with a lot of language knowledge built in, that will help to explain how it's possible for a very small child - with no teaching, and regardless of intelligence level - to quickly and easily acquire a system of language so complex that no other animal or machine has ever mastered it.

1.2. Language Theories

4 theories of language acquisition

There are 4 main theories of language acquisition that we learn in English Language. These are:

- Behavioural Theory
- Cognitive Theory
- Nativist Theory
- Interactionist Theory

There are also certain theorists of language development who have contributed to the development or further study of a certain language acquisition theory.

Theorists of Language Development	<u>Language Acquisition</u> Theory
BF Skinner	Behavioural Theory
Jean <u>Piaget</u>	<u>Cognitive Theory</u>
Noam <u>Chomsky</u>	<u>Nativist</u> Theory
Jerome Bruner	<u>Interactionist Theory</u>

Behavioural theory (BF Skinner theory of language acquisition)

The Behavioural theory of language acquisition, sometimes called the Imitation Theory, is part of behaviourist theory. Behaviourism proposes that we are a product of our environment. Therefore, children have no internal mechanism or ability to develop language by themselves. BF Skinner (1957) suggests that children learn the language first by imitating their caregivers (usually parents) and then modifying their use of language due to operant conditioning.

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What is operant conditioning?

Operant conditioning is a way of learning that focuses on the reward (positive reinforcement) or punishment (negative reinforcement) of desired or undesired behaviour.

You can train a dog to sit by feeding it a treat when it obeys your commands, or you can stop it from sleeping on your bed by ignoring it or verbally discouraging it.

How does operant conditioning apply to language acquisition?

Skinner suggested that children first learn words and phrases from their caregivers or others around them and eventually try to say and use those words correctly. In this case, operant conditioning occurs when a caregiver responds to the child's attempt at using language. If the child uses language correctly, the caregiver may respond by telling the child they're clever or otherwise showing their approval. If the child makes a request, such as asking for food, the caregiver may reward the child by providing it. This is positive reinforcement.

If the child uses language incorrectly, makes a mistake, or is incoherent, they are more likely to receive negative reinforcement from the caregiver. They can be told they're wrong and then be corrected or simply be ignored. Negative reinforcement teaches the child which mistakes to avoid and how to correct them.

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Fig 1. The above flowchart shows how Skinner proposed the ways operant conditioning affects language.

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Cognitive theory (Jean Piaget theory of language acquisition)

The Cognitive theory of language acquisition suggests that the primary drives behind our actions are our thoughts and internal processes. Jean Piaget (1923) assumes that children are born with relatively little cognitive ability, but their minds develop and build new schemas (ideas and understanding of how the world works) as they age and experience the world around them. Eventually, they can apply language to their schemas through assimilation (fitting new information into what is already known) and accommodation (changing one's schemas to support new information).

Piaget believed that cognitive development had to come before language development because it would be impossible for children to express things that they don't yet understand. For example, a younger child with no sense of time couldn't express things in the future tense or speak hypothetically, no matter how much they are taught language.

Piaget proposed that this cognitive development could be split into four stages: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational stages. Let's take a brief look at them.

Piaget's four stages of cognitive development

First is the sensorimotor stage. This takes place from birth to around two years of age. At this stage, the child is developing sensory coordination and interacting with their environment by feeling and playing with things. Their use of language extends primarily to babbles and few spoken words.

The next stage is the pre-operational stage, which takes place from ages two to seven. At this stage, children are able to use language with a better grasp of grammatical structure, context, and syntax. Child thinking at this stage is still very egocentric (their understanding of the world is limited to how it affects them).

Next is the concrete operational stage. It takes place from ages seven to eleven. At this stage, children understand concepts such as time, numbers, and object properties and gain reasoning and logic, which allows them to rationalise their beliefs and speak in greater detail about their own thoughts and the world around them. They can also speak to others about their beliefs and understand how outcomes or viewpoints may differ.

Finally, we have the formal operational stage. This takes place from twelve years old to adulthood. At this stage, children can engage in higher reasoning and think and speak about the abstract, such as hypotheticals, morals, and political systems. Language is essentially unlimited, as there is no cognitive limit to one's understanding of the world at this stage.

UNIT 5 READING AND WRITING

Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Unit Objectives
- 5.2 Reading and Writing Skills
- 5.3 Summary
- 5.4 Key Terms
- 5.5 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 5.6 Questions and Exercises
- 5.7 Further Reading

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you studied word and sentence stress in English, rhythm and intonation of English, and basic sentence structure and its constituents.

Writing is that form of communication which reveals the sender's clarity of thought and expression in encoding a message. Barbara Tuchman, a well-known historian, has very aptly said that though effective communication needs both a sender and a receiver, this process can become more successful if the writer (who is the sender in this case) keeps the written form (the message) simple, concise and brief. Reading involves the ability to comprehend what is written either in the form of poetry or prose. The level of writing determines the extent of comprehensibility. In other words, complex writing would make it difficult for readers to comprehend the essence.

In this unit, you will study various skills to be used in reading and writing.

5.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss the skills associated with reading and writing

5.2 READING AND WRITING SKILLS

Theory and process of first language acquisition

'We are designed to walk... That we are taught to walk is impossible. And pretty much the same is true of language. Nobody is taught language. In fact you can't prevent a child from learning it.' (Chomsky, 1994)

Language acquisition is the process by which we acquire the competence to perceive, produce and use words to understand and communicate in a meaningful way. To achieve this competence, one needs to acquire diverse capacities including syntax (science of sentence

construction), phonetics (study of sounds) and an extensive vocabulary (this comprises the study of words or morphology). Language acquisition is primarily in the spoken form and is cultivated in terms of using sounds in a meaningful

way. However, gradually, human beings also learn the way of using signs or symbols to write down the sounds so that they can use it for future reference.

Language acquisition usually refers to first language acquisition which studies infants' acquisition of their native language. In second language acquisition, we deal with acquisition (in both children and adults) of additional language(s). This capacity to acquire and use language in a meaningful way is a key aspect that distinguishes humans from other animals.

A major issue in acquiring the knowledge of language acquisition is to analyze how linguistic competence is picked by children. A range of theories of language acquisition have been created in order to explain this issue. This includes innatism, which refers to the theory in which a child is born prepared in some manner with the capability to learn language. In other theories, language is simply learnt from the social and linguistic circumstances in which the child grows up.

History

The history of the study of language acquisition is long and can be traced to the origins of classical Greece. Ancient scholars from different parts of the world have tried to understand the nature and process of language acquisition by infants.

Plato believed that the word-meaning mapping in some form was innate in human beings. This means that a human child is born with the innate capability of making the connection between words and their meanings. Sanskrit grammarians and scholars of the twelfth century have debated with regard to whether meaning was God-given (in the sense of being innate) or was learned from older convention. For example, a child learns the word 'cow' by listening to trusted speakers talking about cows.

In the eighteenth century, empiricists like Hobbes and Locke were of the opinion that knowledge (and for Locke, language) emerge ultimately from abstracted sense impressions.

Behaviourism argued that language may be learned through a form of operant conditioning. In *Verbal Behaviour* (1957), B.F. Skinner suggested that the successful use of a sign such as a word or lexical unit, when given a certain stimulus, reinforces its 'momentary' or contextual probability.

Empiricist theories of language acquisition include statistical learning theories of language acquisition, relational frame theory, functionalist linguistics, social interactionist theory and usage-based language acquisition.

This behaviourist idea was strongly attacked by Noam Chomsky in a review article 'A Review of B.F. Skinner's Verbal Behaviour', in 1959. He called it 'largely mythology' and a 'serious delusion'. Instead, Chomsky argued for a more theoretical approach, based on a study of syntax.

The beauty of literary appreciation and criticism lies in the fact that the reader ultimately depends on himself rather than depending upon making his choice. In order to appreciate literature, the reader or critic must understand the fundamental theory that literature can best be thought of as a process of communication between the writer and his audience. This understanding enables the critic to analyse any piece of writing. In order to analyse or even realize the beauty of a poem, the reader should ask himself whether he receives the impression that the particular poem or piece of prose effectively communicates what it aims to do. He should also analyse whether the ideal picture,

character or situation communicated by the poem is of any value to him. However, neither of these questions can be easily or automatically answered. Each of them requires the reader to read carefully, reflect and compare impression received from one thing with those received from others. The essence of literary appreciation and criticism is successfully achieved only when the reader is able to strongly feel and respond to the words used by the writer to convey his thoughts and emotions. When this level of appreciation can be reached or achieved, the writer can claim his appreciation.

Furthermore, the relationship between the creative writer and the literary critic should be placed in proper perspective. In other words, there are several ways in which criticism and the making of a literary work can be regarded as one and the same thing. In the first type of cooperation, the creative talent and the creative faculty together exist in the same person and may be regarded as identical.

The final shape of the literary work enjoys a general influence of literary appreciation and criticism. This is because even in the published form, the literary product is greatly dependent on the work of criticism in order to establish its importance on its place in the tradition. Often, it is the responsibility of literary appreciation to bring the author's work to the audience. It might either reduce the admiration it already enjoys with the reading public or it might help in the development of a practice by establishing a taste for similar literature. Moreover, literary appreciation can play a vital role in bringing out the importance of a work of the author by discovering new meanings, which might not have been noticed before by the public. This would, thereby, give the work a new form and a new importance, perhaps over and above originally intended or thought of by the author.

A good reader and a critic is one who can respond to the unfamiliar. In literature, one does not know in advance just how we should be expected to respond and the demand for alternative components. A practical critic should put forward the following fundamental questions to a work of art:

- Can I respond to this poem in the way the poet wants me to respond?
- In a way, can I identify myself in the spirit in which it was written?

However, with some points, these general questions should be translated into more practical questions such as:

- What is gained by this effect?
- Does this detail seem successful?
- Does it relate meaningfully to a general effect?

- What precisely is the intention here?

In other words, in order to discover where the reader's real interest lies, it requires searching and thorough appraisal of everything that makes up the total effect of a poem.

The significant parts about reading a poem are:

- To reflect on a poem
- To decide as to where we stand in relation to it
- To look for the right language to express ourselves about it

A reader becomes a novice in the work of art when he naturally responds to it by realizing exactly what he likes about it and has a vibrant description of the work as

part of that realization. It is only when the reader has a sharper and a stronger feeling for the description, it is realized that he has actually been moved by the literature and the spirit of the criticism. Until he finds a description that satisfies him to the ultimate extent, the reader has not grasped the final meaning and the beauty in the work.

However, we often come across questions as a reader that why should we read a work of literature in the way of analysing it. Is analysing not hostile to the spirit of poetry? Wordsworth's popular lines are instructive in this respect.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;

Our meddling intellect

Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things

We murder to dissect...

These questions suggest that in addition to misconceiving the nature of literary appreciation and criticism, they underestimate the poem they seem to defend. They also suggest that our pleasure in poetry is a subjective illusion which cannot sustain the closeness to the poem. However, this is not so. In fact, a poem or a work of art that is in any degree successful flourishes the critic's careful attention. The critic is not immediately possessed by the beauty of a great poem, but gradually over an undefined period of time.

In the poem, there is generally a line, sequence of lines or an isolated phrase which actually possesses the critic to such an extent that it returns to the critic with a great sense of fitness and familiarity. He begins to be in awe as to where he heard such a thing as the poem comes anew to him with its fresh form and beauty. When the critic reads the poem for the second time or so, it is not that he recalls his analysis step by step. Rather, the critic is captured by the experience of the poem's totality and its uniqueness more powerfully than before. Literary appreciation includes a

new sense of the poem's structure and the imagery, its tone and verbal delicacy, and its precise effect.

A poem is defined as a literary piece which is generally written in verse form and has rhyme and rhythm. Some characteristics of true poetry are:

- (a) Rhythm - Rhythm refers to the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in connected speech. A poet arranges his words in such a manner that there is a regular flow of accented and unaccented syllables. This regular interval of strong and light sounds gives a beat to the poem which essentially differentiates it from prose and is one of the primary requirements of poetry. For example:

By the shore of Gitchee Gumee,

By the shining Big-Sea- Water,

At the doorway of his wigwam,

In the pleasant Summer morning,

Hiawatha stood and waited. (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

- (b) Rhyme - Poetry generally has rhyme (though you can have a poem without rhyme, for example, in Modern Poetry where you have blank/free verse), i.e., the last word of each line has the same sound (vowel or consonantal). For example, flow, slow, low. The most important function of rhyme is that it gives music to the poem and makes it pleasing to the ears. More examples are:

/ met a traveller from an antique land,

Who said—'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone

Stand in the desert....Near them, on the sand,

Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,

Tell that its sculptor well those passions read

Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,

The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;

And on the pedestal, these words appear:

My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings,

Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay

Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare

The lone and level sands stretch far away. (Percy Bysshe Shelley)

- (c) Stanzas - A poem is written in units of four-six lines which are exactly alike in form. Such units or divisions in a poem are called stanzas. However, it is not an essential characteristic of poetry and poets in the Modern Age have experimented with the regular stanza pattern. For example:

Do not go gentle into that good night,

Old age should burn and rave at close of day;

Rage, rage against the dying of the light (Dylan Thomas)

- (d) Music - Apart from rhyme, a poet can add music to his poetry in the form of onomatopoeia, alliteration, repetition and refrains.

Prose, as opposed to poetry, is the ordinary form of written or spoken language. It is the most typical form of written language, which applies ordinary grammatical structure and natural flow of speech rather than rhythmic structure (as in traditional poetry). While there are critical debates on the construction of prose, its simplicity and loosely defined structure has led to its adoption for the majority of spoken dialogue, factual discourse as well as topical and fictional writing. It is commonly used in literature, magazines, newspapers, broadcasting, film, encyclopaedias, law, history, philosophy and many other forms of communication.

Novels, essays, short stories, and works of criticism are examples of prose. Other examples include:

- Comedy
- Drama
- Fable
- Fiction
- Folk tale
- Hagiography
- Legend
- Literature
- Myth

- Narrative
- Saga
- Science fiction
- Story
- Theme
- Tragedy

The literary appreciation of an unseen prose passage is more or less done on the same parameters as those used for poetry. One must focus on the following points:

- Summary/meaning of the prose passage
- Theme/subject matter or vision of the writer
- Language of the writer which will include the use of figures of speech and imagery
- Structure of the passage, sentence patterns and type, diction (choice of words)
- Comparison with other prose pieces dealing with the same theme

Prose does not have the more formal metrical structure of verse that is almost always found in traditional poetry. Poems often involve a meter and/or rhyme scheme. Instead, prose comprises full, grammatical sentences, which then include paragraphs and overlook aesthetic appeal. Some works of prose do contain traces of metrical structure or versification and a conscious blend of the two literature formats is known as prose poetry.

Prose poetry is poetry written in prose instead of using verse, while preserving poetic qualities such as heightened imagery and emotional effects. It can be seen as either primarily poetry or prose, or a separate genre altogether. The argument for prose poetry belonging to the genre of poetry emphasizes its heightened attention to language and prominent use of metaphor. On the other hand, prose poetry can be identified primarily as prose for its dependence on the association of prose with narrative and on the expectation of an objective presentation of truth.

Let us now take an unseen prose passage and critically appreciate it. .

Tradition is not solely or even primarily the maintenance of certain dogmatic beliefs; these beliefs have come to take their living form in the course of the formation of a tradition. What I mean by tradition is all those habitual actions, habits, customs from the most significant religious rites to our conventional way of greeting a stranger which represents the blood kinship of the 'same people living in the same place'.

In the above passage, the writer appears to be attempting to define the concept of tradition. He believes that tradition is not just following certain beliefs or customs blindly and religiously. Ironically, these beliefs have become a part of the tradition in due course of time. His definition of tradition is based on the notion of blood relationship of the people inhabiting the same place, people who share certain habits, customs, religion and acceptable ways of behaviour and pass them on to their future generations with the passage of time. The writer emphasizes that culture, when transmitted from one generation to another with time, takes the form of tradition.

The language of the passage is scholarly though extremely disciplined. The writer appears to be very much convinced about what he is saying (though he sounds too pontifical at times). Without using any kind of ornamentation, the writer has been

successful in creating a very powerful effect on the readers, so much so, that they are convinced by his words. The diction, over all, is quite appropriate to his purpose, i.e., persuasion of the readers to what he is saying. Though he has used the personal pronoun I, his language is, by far, objective.

We can take another unseen passage which is very different from the one above for critical appreciation:

Time was when the stereotyped phrase, 'a fair young English girl,' meant the ideal of womanhood; to us, at least, of home birth and breeding. It meant a creature generous, capable, and modest; something franker than a Frenchwoman, more to be trusted than an Italian, as brave as an American but more refined, as domestic as a German and more graceful. It meant a girl who could be trusted alone if need be, because of the innate purity and dignity of her nature, but who was neither bold in bearing nor masculine in mind; a girl who, when she married, would be her husband's friend and companion, but never his rival; one who would consider their interests identical, and not hold him as just so much fair game for spoil; who would make his house his true home a place of rest, not a mere passage-place for vanity and ostentation to go through; a tender mother, an industrious housekeeper, a judicious mistress.

The above piece appears to have been written towards the end of the nineteenth century, when the traditional notion and roles of women were changing in Victorian England. It describes the advent of the *New Woman* who had broken free from the image of the *Angel in the House*. Before the Victorian Age, a woman performed the traditional role of carrying on the race and nurturing the family. She must be fairly educated so that she could supervise her children's education, was expected to have a little knowledge of French, must be accomplished in some fine art like painting, singing, playing the piano or sewing. Her basic role was that of an ideal homemaker who would take good care of her husband and children. We find descriptions of such women in the novels of Jane Austen and the Bronte sisters. But in the writings of George Eliot, we see glimpses of the *New Woman* emerging from the shadows. The given passage is one such piece of writing which throws light on the changing roles of women and gives a comparison between the past and present status and roles of women in England.

The language of the writer is vividly descriptive. It is devoid of any ornamentation. With the help of a simple language and style, he/she has been able to describe the change effectively. The opening sentence sounds almost poetical when the writer says, 'Time was when the stereotyped phrase, 'a fair young English girl,' meant the ideal of womanhood;' A comparison is made between an English girl and European and American girls of the time. There is a note of sarcasm when the writer says that a married woman was expected to be her husband's friend and companion but never a rival. The writer has eloquently portrayed the changing image of the *Angel in the House*.

Effective writing skills

Writing is that form of communication which reveals the sender's clarity of thought and expression in encoding a message. Barbara Tuchman, a well-known historian, has very aptly said that though effective communication needs both a sender and a receiver, this process can become more successful if the writer (who is the sender in this case) keeps the written form (the message) simple, concise and brief.

Effective writing does not happen just on its own. It is a skill which needs to be cultivated. In other words, it involves the practice of following what is commonly

called ABC i.e. Accuracy, Brevity and Clarity. Accuracy here means use of correct facts and figures, language and tone. By brevity is meant the ability to express oneself in a few words, leaving out unnecessary details. Clarity refers to the expression of thought in a clear and simple language.

Since the success of communication, to a large extent, depends on the receiver and how he responds to the message, recognizing the needs, expectations, fears and attitudes of the receiver/s is very essential. In written communication, the feedback is delayed and the receiver cannot immediately clarify his doubts in case of an unclear message. Therefore, getting our written communication right becomes a matter of prime concern.

The next important task for effective writing is to identify and determine the purpose of communication. The purpose of written communication, as communication in general, is two-fold - to inform and to persuade. Informative writing presents information and is expository in nature, its purpose is to disseminate knowledge, i.e., to educate and not to persuade. Therefore, maintaining maximum objectivity is very essential. Persuasive or argumentative writing aims at convincing the readers about a matter. It expresses opinions rather than facts.

Effective writing skills, therefore, entail planning before writing, identifying the purpose of writing, considering the needs of the audience, choosing appropriate language and effective tone. The ability to communicate a message in a simple, concise and accurate written form makes a person's writing skills effective.

Characteristics of a good essay

A good essay must have the following qualities:

1. Unity - Unity is the first principle of a good essay. This means that the essay must develop a single idea with a definite purpose. Though the idea must be dealt with in a variety of ways and from different points of view but all unnecessary details must be excluded.
2. Order - The essay should be so ordered in a logical sequence that it comes to a definite conclusion. Thus, planning the structure is important so that thoughts flow in an order without being haphazard and unorganized.
3. Brevity - Though the length of an essay depends on the nature of the subject, it must be brief, direct in style and expressed precisely.
4. Style - An essay has a literary value. Hence, the style of an essay must be dignified and formal. Colloquial terms, slang words and informal expressions that are non-conventional must be avoided as far as possible. The language used should be simple, clear and direct without any attempts at unnecessary embellishments.
5. Personal touch - An essay reflects the personal feelings and opinions of an individual. Therefore, it must give expression to his unique individuality. One must not be afraid to express himself freely in an essay. The personal touch can be given despite maintaining one's objectivity.

Apart from the above mentioned features, appropriate subject-matter, proper organization and powerful expression of thoughts make an essay effective.

Descriptive essays - A descriptive essay includes the description of some person, place or thing. For example, mother, father, friend (person), Delhi, Bombay,

the Taj Mahal (place), cars, aspects of nature like the sun, moon, etc. (thing). As the word suggests, a descriptive essay primarily focuses on specific details and facts pertaining to animate and inanimate things. You could describe a particular creature, or types of clouds. Describing places, buildings and objects, requires familiarity with the subject or close observation. The selection and arrangement of facts should highlight specific characteristics and if there is anything unique or special, you could mention it. A descriptive essay has many images and the tone is usually objective and impersonal. However, the writer's response to the subject he is describing is evident from his choice of words.

Narrative essays - Narration is extensively used in fiction. It consists mainly in the narration of some event, or series of events. Narrative essays will include reflection and some imagination. It can be a historical story, biography of a great leader, incidents and accidents, a journey or voyage and a real or imaginary story. Narrative essays incorporate features of other styles of essay writing. While the primary emphasis is on narrating or talking about, 'recounting and relating' events in an orderly fashion, descriptive and reflective features are present. A narrative account of any historical event, individual or, episode has to be given in a logical and sequential manner. The narrative could be dramatically presented but you have to keep an overall coherence in mind. Most newspaper articles tend to be narrative and students find it easier to write narrative essays.

Reflective essays - Reflection means pondering over a subject or idea. It can include qualities like heroism, honesty, patriotism, socio-political issues such as education, corruption, democracy, philosophical and religious topics.

Imaginative essays - In an imaginative essay, the writer is required to put himself in someone else's shoes and visualize a situation or experience. For example, an essay on 'If I were the Prime Minister of India' or 'The autobiography of a cow' would be imaginative in nature. Imaginative essays are among the most interesting because the writer gives rein to his imagination and the essay is often characterized by wit, humour, originality. The writer has complete freedom to develop the topic in whichever way he wants to and the style can be personal and subjective. In an imaginative essay, you are visualizing a particular situation, which you may not have experienced, except imaginatively, for example, 'The day my father cooked dinner'. Such a situation may never have taken place, yet you can vividly imagine what might transpire if your father had to cook dinner. Imaginative essays are lively in tone, have an original perspective and are personal in expression.

Fictionalizing an episode and writing creatively about it, is also considered as an imaginative essay, for example, 'my summer holidays'. You can write about events that may not have actually taken place, but what you have imagined.

Imaginative essays are fun to write and students should be encouraged to use their imagination and express themselves.

Expository essay - An expository essay consists of explanation of a subject or topic. For example, institutions or occupations (parliament, farming), scientific subjects (global warming, evolution of man) and literary topics (nature of poetry, the plays of Shakespeare, the poetry of Keats). The word expository means 'to explain'. An essay that deals with the explanation of a particular process, for example, Rain harvesting, an institution, (how legislative bodies function) or a

natural phenomena, (black holes in the universe) or the discussion of a particular text or style of writing, is classified as an expository essay. The writer attempts to explain why and how something happens. Here the writer is expected to demonstrate his familiarity with the subject, provide the necessary information, elaborate wherever possible. It is better to write in a linear, sequential manner and it is important to see that your material is well structured. If you are going to talk about rain harvesting, you need to first explain the term, tell the reader what is required and go through a systematic process, so that the reader understands the entire process and the importance of rain harvesting.

Discursive essay-Quite often, an essay requires that the writer to discuss a particular subject and come to a conclusion, after examining the merits and demerits of the topic, for example, 'Attendance should be compulsory in a university'. A statement like this challenges a response. You have to be clear about your own view and structure the essay such that the body of the essay examines the arguments that eventually lead to the conclusion.

As far as possible, it is advisable to objectively state both sides and then proceed to your personal conclusion. An essay like this tends to be more analytical as both arguments and counter arguments have to be rationally debated and concluded with a statement or point of view.

Parts of an essay

An essay consists of paragraphs arranged in a sequence. A paragraph is a group of sentences linked together to form a unit. Each paragraph deals with a single idea. In an essay, each paragraph explains or demonstrates a key point or thought of the central idea, usually to inform or persuade. The sentence which expresses the main idea of the paragraph is called the *topic sentence*. It is also known as *key sentence* or *theme sentence*. The topic sentence can come anywhere in the paragraph, either at the beginning, middle or end. All the other sentences in the paragraph are explanations or illustrations of the topic sentence.

In a paragraph, the sentences are in cohesion, i.e., they stick together in unison. Coherence is also an essential requirement of a paragraph. By coherence is meant the clear and logical linking of ideas in a paragraph. Thus, each sentence should be well linked with the sentence that precedes and follows it. There should be unity in the sense that all the ideas contained within a given paragraph 'hang together' in a way that is easy for the reader to understand. When the writer changes the idea, he must begin a new paragraph. This helps the reader to go along with the writer's thoughts and flow of ideas. The reader knows that the writer is dealing with one main topic and the beginning of a new paragraph signals that the writer is moving on to a new topic. Consider the following example:

Employees' attitude at National Electric Company should be improved. The workers do not feel that they are a working team instead of just individuals. If people felt they were a part of a team, they would not misuse the tools, or deliberately undermine the work of others.

Management's attitude towards its employees should also be improved. Managers at National Electric act as though their employees are incapable of taking decisions or doing their own work. Managers treat workers like objects, not human beings.

In the above example, two ideas are discussed in separate paragraphs. In the first paragraph, the writer deals with the subject of employees' attitudes. The first sentence is the topic sentence and the other sentences are linked together in a logical sequence and are illustrations of the topic sentence. When the writer changes his idea from employees' attitudes to management's attitude, he begins a new paragraph. This new paragraph has a different topic sentence which is written in italics. The second paragraph, too, displays the features of cohesion, coherence and unity.

Now that we are familiar with the idea of a paragraph, let us discuss the different parts of an essay. An essay basically has three paragraphs, namely, introduction, description (or body) and conclusion. The body of the essay may have more than one or several paragraphs depending on the topic. Before the conclusion, there can be a transitional paragraph.

The introductory paragraph introduces the topic and familiarizes the readers with the main idea of the essay. It should be brisk and to the point. The purpose of an introduction is to supply sufficient background information and orient the readers with the subject matter. It may consist of a definition, or a quotation, proverb, a brief story or a general remark, leading up to the subject.

Description means the discussion of the topic in detail. It can include explanations and illustrations on the main idea. The length of the description will depend on the topic in question but the description should be proportionate with each part getting the due weight. It should be to the point and the use of unnecessary words should be avoided. Words and phrases should be carefully chosen so that they match the subject matter and best express the ideas in mind. The sentences should be so framed that they are quite clear and forcefully explain the topic. The paragraphs should be well constructed and should be related to one another according to the direction of the essay.

After the body, comes the transitional paragraph which anticipates the conclusion and prepares the readers for the end. The concluding paragraph stems directly from the description and must sum up the whole discussion. An effective and satisfying end to an essay is as important as an arresting beginning. An abrupt or feeble ending may spoil the whole effect of the essay. A good conclusion can include a suitable quotation or a striking sentence that would leave the readers satisfied.

Essay writing involves:

1. Preparation-One of the chief difficulties that one faces while writing an essay is the lack of content. This difficulty can be overcome by extensive reading and powerful and alert observation. Francis Bacon has very aptly said, 'Reading maketh a full man', i.e., a well-read man has a wide range of knowledge and is complete in all respects. For writing good essays, general knowledge on a variety of topics is very helpful. Apart from reading, a keen observation also adds to one's knowledge of things that are around him. Observation and a critical mind sharpen his intelligence and give him a grasp over any given subject matter. One also learns from other people's conversations and thoughts on a certain issue. Thus, interaction with people is also helpful in gathering information.
2. Understanding the topic - For good essay writing, the writer must have a clear and accurate understanding of what he is expected to write. In an essay, it is very important to come straight to the point instead of discussing unnecessary

and irrelevant details. For example, if the topic is 'The influence of the media on Indian culture', the writer must understand that the essay has to talk about the specific influence that the media in India has on the culture of the country.

3. Organizing the material - The first thing to do is to read the topic a few times to get a clear idea of what is expected from the writer. Once you are clear about the subject, the next step is to reflect over it and think what can be written about it. Attempting to write down the first thing that comes to mind, without knowing what is to come next; is fatal to good essay writing.

As thoughts come in the mind regarding the topic, one must jot them down, lest they are forgotten. Once you have collected enough material, read it over and select the points that are most suitable for your purpose. Selection of points must be done very carefully, omitting repetitions, choosing relevant illustrations and so on! The process of selection will suggest to you the line of thought you may follow in the essay.

After selecting the points, one must arrange them in a logical order so that the essay is properly structured without being disproportionate or full of repetitions and irrelevant details. Hence, making the outline first and then filling in the details is a more effective method. What you are able to produce through this process is a well-articulated essay.

Selected essays

'Truth and False Humour' by Joseph Addison

Nothing so foolish as the laugh of fools.

Among all kinds of writing, there is none in which authors are more apt to miscarry than in works of humour, as there is none in which they are more ambitious to excel. It is not an imagination that teems with monsters, a head that is filled with extravagant conceptions, which is capable of furnishing the world with diversions of this nature; and yet, if we look into the productions of several writers, who set up for men of humour, what wild, irregular fancies, what unnatural distortions of thought do we meet with? If they speak nonsense, they believe they are talking humour; and when they have drawn together a scheme of absurd, inconsistent ideas, they are not able to read it over to themselves without laughing. These poor gentlemen endeavour to gain themselves the reputation of wits and humorists, by such monstrous conceits as almost qualify them for Bedlam; not considering that humour should always lie under the check of reason, and that it requires the direction of the nicest judgment, by so much the more as it indulges itself in the most boundless freedoms. There is a kind of nature that is to be observed in this sort of compositions, as well as in all other; and a certain regularity of thought which must discover the writer to be a man of sense, at the same time that he appears altogether given up to caprice. For my part, when I read the delirious mirth of an unskilful author, I cannot be so barbarous as to divert myself with it, but am rather apt to pity the man, than to laugh at anything he writes.

The deceased Mr. Shadwell, who had himself a great deal of the talent which I am treating of, represents an empty rake, in one of his plays, as very much surprised to hear one say that breaking of windows was not humour; and I question not but several English readers will be as much startled to hear me affirm, that many of those raving, incoherent pieces, which are often spread

among us, under odd chimerical titles, are rather the offsprings of a distempered brain than works of humour.

It is, indeed, much easier to describe what is not humour than what is; and very difficult to define it otherwise than as Cowley has done wit, by negatives. Were I to give my own notions of it, I would deliver them after Plato's manner, in a kind of allegory, and, by supposing Humour to be a person, deduce to him all his qualifications, according to the following genealogy. Truth was the founder of the family, and the father of Good Sense. Good Sense was the father of Wit, who married a lady of a collateral line called Mirth, by whom he had issue Humour. Humour therefore being the youngest of this illustrious family, and descended from parents of such different dispositions, is very various and unequal in his temper; sometimes you see him putting on grave looks and a solemn habit, sometimes airy in his behaviour and fantastic in his dress; insomuch that at different times he appears as serious as a judge, and as jocular as a merry-andrew. But, as he has a great deal of the mother in his constitution, whatever mood he is in, he never fails to make his company laugh.

But since there is an impostor abroad, who takes upon him the name of this young gentleman, and would willingly pass for him in the world; to the end that well-meaning persons may not be imposed upon by cheats, I would desire my readers, when they meet with this pretender, to look into his parentage, and to examine him strictly, whether or no he be remotely allied to Truth, and lineally descended from Good Sense; if not, they may conclude him a counterfeit. They may likewise distinguish him by a loud and excessive laughter, in which he seldom gets his company to join with him. For as True Humour generally looks serious while everybody laughs about him, False Humour is always laughing whilst everybody about him looks serious. I shall only add, if he has not in him a mixture of both parents—that is, if he would pass for the offspring of Wit without Mirth, or Mirth without Wit, you may conclude him to be altogether spurious and a cheat.

The impostor of whom I am speaking descends originally from Falsehood, who was the mother of Nonsense, who was brought to bed of a son called Phrensy, who married one of the daughters of Folly, commonly known by the name of Laughter, on whom he begot that monstrous infant of which I have been here speaking. I shall set down at length the genealogical table of False Humour, and, at the same time, place under it the genealogy of True Humour, that the reader may at one view behold their different pedigrees and relations :-

Falsehood.

Nonsense. Phrensy.—Laughter. False
Humour. Truth.

Good Sense. Wit.—Mirth,
Humour.

I might extend the allegory, by mentioning several of the children of False Humour, who are more in number than the sands of the sea, and might in particular enumerate the many sons and daughters which he has begot in this island. But as this would be a very invidious task, I shall only observe in general that False Humour differs from the True as a monkey does from a man.

First of all, he is exceedingly given to little apish tricks and buffooneries.

Secondly, he so much delights in mimicry, that it is all one to him whether he exposes by it vice and folly, luxury and avarice; or, on the contrary, virtue and wisdom, pain and poverty.

Thirdly, he is wonderfully unlucky, insomuch that he will bite the hand that feeds him, and endeavour to ridicule both friends and foes indifferently. For, having but small talents, he must be merry where he can, not where he should.

Fourthly, Being entirely void of reason, he pursues no point either of morality or instruction, but is ludicrous only for the sake of being so.

Fifthly, Being incapable of anything but mock representations, his ridicule is always personal, and aimed at the vicious man, or the writer; not at the vice, or at the writing.

I have here only pointed at the whole species of false humorists; but, as one of my principal designs in this paper is to beat down that malignant spirit which discovers itself in the writings of the present age, I shall not scruple, for the future, to single out any of the small wits that infest the world with such compositions as are ill-natured, immoral, and absurd. This is the only exception which I shall make to the general rule I have prescribed myself, of attacking multitudes; since every honest man ought to look upon himself as in a natural state of war with the libeller and lampooner, and to annoy them wherever they fall in his way. This is but retaliating upon them, and treating them as they treat others.

'A City Night Piece' by Oliver Goldsmith

The clock has just struck two, the expiring taper rises and sinks in the socket, the watchman forgets the hour in slumber, the laborious and the happy are at rest, and nothing wakes but meditation, guilt, revelry, and despair. The drunkard once more fills the destroying bowl, the robber walks his midnight round, and the suicide lifts his guilty arm against his own sacred person.

Let me no longer waste the night over the page of antiquity or the sallies of contemporary genius, but pursue the solitary walk, where Vanity, ever changing, but a few hours past walked before me, where she kept up the pageant, and now, like a forward child, seems hushed with her own importunities.

What a gloom hangs all around! The dying lamp feebly emits a yellow gleam; no sound is heard but of the chiming clock, or the distant watch-dog. All the bustle of human pride is forgotten; an hour like this may well display the emptiness of human vanity.

There will come a time when this temporary solitude may be made continual, and the city itself, like its inhabitants, fade away, and leave a desert in its room.

What cities, as great as this, have once triumphed in existence! had their victories as great, joy as just and as Unbounded, and, with short-sighted presumption, promised themselves immortality! Posterity can hardly trace the situation of some; the sorrowful traveller wanders over the lawful ruins of others; and, as he beholds, he learns wisdom, and feels the transience of every sublunary possession.

"Here," he cries, "stood their citadel, now grown over with, weeds; there, their senate house, but now the haunt of every noxious reptile; temples and theatres stood here, now only an undistinguished heap of ruin. They are fallen: for luxury and avarice first made them feeble. The rewards of the state were conferred on amusing and not on useful members of society. Their riches and opulence invited the invaders, who,

though at first repulsed, returned again, conquered by perseverance, and at last swept the defendants into undistinguished destruction."

How few appear in those streets which, but some few hours ago, were crowded! and those who appear now no longer wear their daily mask, nor attempt to hide their lewdness or their misery.

But who are those who make the streets their couch, and find a short repose from wretchedness at the doors of the opulent? These are strangers, wanderers, and orphans, whose circumstances are too humble to expect redress, and whose distresses are too great even for pity. Their wretchedness rather excites horror than pity. Some are without the covering even of rags, and others emaciated with disease: the world has disclaimed them; society turns its back upon their distress, and has given them up to nakedness and hunger. These poor shivering females have once seen happier days and been flattered into beauty. They have been prostituted to the gay, luxurious villain, and are now turned out to meet the severity of Winter. Perhaps, now lying at the doors of their betrayers, they sue to wretches whose hearts are insensible, to debauchees who may curse but will not relieve them.

Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the sufferings of wretches I cannot relieve! Poor houseless creatures! the world will give you reproaches, but will not give you relief. The slightest misfortunes of the great, the most imaginary uneasinesses of the rich, are aggravated with all the power of eloquence, and held up to engage our attention and sympathetic sorrow. The poor weep unheeded, persecuted by every subordinate species of tyranny; and every law, which gives others security, becomes an enemy to them.

Why was this heart of mine formed with so much sensibility! or why was not my fortune adapted to its impulse! Tenderness, without a capacity of relieving, only makes the man who feels it more wretched than the object which sues for assistance. Adieu.

'The Sagacity of Certain Insects' by Oliver Goldsmith

Animals in general are sagacious in proportion as they cultivate society. The elephant and the beaver show the greatest signs of this when united; but when man intrudes into their communities, they lose all their spirit of industry, and testify but a very small share of that sagacity, for which, when in a social state, they are so remarkable.

Among insects, the labours of the bee and the ant have employed the attention and admiration of the naturalist; but their whole sagacity is lost upon separation, and a single bee or ant seems destitute of every degree of industry, is the most stupid insect imaginable, languishes for a time in solitude, and soon dies.

Of all the solitary insects I have ever remarked, the spider is the most sagacious, and its actions to me, who have attentively considered them, seem almost to exceed belief. This insect is formed by nature for a state of war, not only upon other insects, but upon each other. For this state nature seems perfectly well to have formed it. Its head and breast are covered with a strong

natural coat of mail, which is impenetrable to the attempts of every other insect, and its belly is enveloped in a soft pliant skin, which eludes the sting even of a wasp. Its legs are terminated by strong claws, not unlike those of a lobster, and their vast length, like spears, serve to keep every assailant at a distance.

Not worse furnished for observation than for an attack or a defence, it has several eyes, large, transparent, and covered with a horny substance, which, however,

does not impede its vision. Besides this, it is furnished with a forceps above the mouth, which serves to kill or secure the prey already caught in its claws or its net.

Such are the implements of war with which the body is immediately furnished; but its net to entangle the enemy seems what it chiefly trusts to, and what it takes most pains to render as complete as possible. Nature has furnished the body of this little creature with a glutinous liquid, which proceeding from the anus, it spins into a thread coarser or finer, as it chooses to contract or dilate its sphincter. In order to fix its thread when it begins to weave, it emits a small drop of liquid against the wall, which hardening by degrees, serves to hold the thread very firmly. Then receding from the first point, as it recedes the thread lengthens; and when the spider has come to the place where the other end of the thread should be fixed, gathering up with its claws the thread which would otherwise be too slack, it is stretched tightly, and fixed in the same manner to the wall as before.

In this manner it spins and fixes several threads parallel to each other, which, so to speak, serve as the warp to the intended web. To form the woof, it spins in the same manner its thread, transversely fixing one end to the first thread that was spun, and which is always the strongest of the whole web, and the other to the wall. All these threads, being newly spun, are glutinous, and therefore stick to each other wherever they happen to touch, and in those parts of the web, most exposed to be torn, our natural artist strengthens them, by doubling the threads sometimes six-fold.

Thus far naturalists have gone in the description of this animal: what follows is the result of my own observation upon that species of the insect called an *House-Spider*. I perceived about four years ago, a large spider in one corner of my room making its web; and, though the maid frequently leveled her fatal broom against the labours of the little animal, I had the good fortune then to prevent its destruction, and I may say, it more than paid me by the entertainment it afforded.

In three days the web was, with incredible diligence, completed; nor could I avoid thinking that the insect seemed to exult in its new abode. It frequently traversed it round, examined the strength of every part of it, retired into its hole, and came out very frequently. The first enemy, however, it had to encounter, was another and a much larger spider, which, having no web of its own, and having probably exhausted all its stock in former labours of this kind, came to invade the property of its neighbour. Soon then a terrible encounter ensued, in which the invader seemed to have the victory, and the laborious spider was obliged to take refuge in its hole. Upon this I perceived the victor using every art to draw the enemy from his strong hold. He seemed to go off, but quickly returned, and when he found all arts vain, began to demolish the new web without mercy. This brought on another battle, and, contrary to my expectations, the laborious spider became conqueror, and fairly killed his antagonist.

Now then, in peaceable possession of what was justly its own, it waited three days with the utmost patience, repairing the breaches of its web, and taking no sustenance that I could perceive. At last, however, a large blue fly fell into the snare, and struggled hard to get loose. The spider gave it leave to entangle itself as much as possible, but it seemed to be too strong for the cobweb. I must own I was greatly surprized when I saw the spider immediately sally out, and in less than a minute weave a new net round its captive, by which the motion of its wings was stopped, and when it was fairly hampered in this manner, it was seized, and dragged into the hole.

In this manner it lived, in a precarious state, and nature seemed to have fitted it for such a life, for upon a single fly it subsisted for more than a week. I once put a

wasp into the net, but when the spider came out in order to seize it as usual, upon perceiving what kind of an enemy it had to deal with, it instantly broke all the bands that held it fast, and contributed all that lay in its power to disengage so formidable an antagonist. When the wasp was at liberty, I expected the spider would have set about repairing the breaches that were made in its net, but those, it seems, were irreparable, wherefore the cobweb was now entirely forsaken, and a new one begun, which was completed in the usual time.

I had now a mind to try how many cobwebs a single spider could furnish, wherefore I destroyed this, and the insect set about another. When I destroyed the other also, its whole stock seemed entirely exhausted, and it could spin no more. The arts it made use of to support itself, now deprived of its great means of subsistence, were indeed surprizing. I have seen it roll up its legs like a ball, and lie motionless for hours together, but cautiously watching all the time; when a fly happened to approach sufficiently near, it would dart out all at once, and often seize its prey.

Of this life, however, it soon began to grow weary, and resolved to invade the possession of some other spider, since it could not make a web of its own. It formed an attack upon a neighboring fortification with great vigour, and at first was as vigorously repulsed. Not daunted, however, with one defeat, in this manner it continued to lay siege to another's web for three days, and at length, having killed the defendant, actually took possession. When smaller flies happen to fall into the snare, the spider does not sally out at once, but very patiently waits till it is sure of them; for, upon his immediately approaching the terror of his appearance might give the captive strength sufficient to get loose: the manner then, is to wait patiently till, by ineffectual and impotent struggles, the captive has wasted all its strength, and then he becomes a certain and easy conquest.

The insect I am now describing lived three years; every year it changed its skin and got a new set of legs. I have sometimes plucked off a leg, which grew again in two or three days. At first it dreaded my approach to its web, but at last it became so familiar as to take a fly out of my hand, and upon my touching any part of the web, would immediately leave its hole, prepared either for a defense or an attack.

To complete this description, it may be observed, that the male spider is much less than the female, and that the latter are oviparous. When they come to lay, they spread a part of their web under the eggs, and then roll them up carefully, as we roll up things in a cloth, and thus hatch them in their hole. If disturbed in their holes, they never attempt to escape without carrying this young brood in their forceps away with them, and thus frequently are sacrificed to their paternal affection.

As soon as ever the young ones leave their artificial covering, they begin to spin, and almost sensibly seem to grow bigger. If they have the good fortune, when even but a day old, to catch a fly, they fall too with good appetites; but they live sometimes three or four days without any sort of sustenance, and yet still continue to grow larger, so as every day to double their former size. As they grow old, however, they do not still continue to increase, but their legs only continue to grow longer; and when a spider becomes entirely stiff with age, and unable to seize its prey, it dies at length of hunger.

'Sights and Monsters' by Oliver Goldsmith

Though the frequent invitations I receive from men of distinction here might excite the vanity of some, I am quite mortified, however, when I consider the motives that inspire their civility. I am sent for, not to be treated as a friend, but to satisfy curiosity;

not to be entertained so much as wondered at; the same earnestness which excites them to see a Chinese, would have made them equally proud of a visit from the rhinoceros.

From the highest to the lowest, this people seem fond of sights and monsters. I am told of a person here who gets a very comfortable livelihood by making wonders, and then selling or showing them to the people for money; no matter how insignificant they were in the beginning, by locking them up close, and showing for money, they soon became prodigies! His first essay in this way was to exhibit himself as a waxwork figure behind a glass door at a puppet show. Thus, keeping the spectators at a proper distance and having his head adorned with a copper crown, he looked extremely *natural, and very like the life itself*. He continued this exhibition with success, till an involuntary fit of sneezing brought him to life before all the spectators, and consequently rendered him for that time as entirely useless as the peaceable inhabitant of a catacomb.

Determined to act the statue no more, he next levied contributions under the figure of an Indian king; and by painting his face, and counterfeiting the savage howl, he frightened several ladies and children with amazing success: in this manner, therefore, he might have lived very comfortably, had he not been arrested for a debt that was contracted when he was the figure in wax-work: thus his face underwent an involuntary ablution, and he found himself reduced to his primitive complexion and indigence.

After some time, being freed from jail, he was now grown wiser, and instead of making himself a wonder, was resolved only to make wonders. He learned the art of pasting up of mummies; was never at a loss for an artificial *lusus naturae*; nay, it has been reported, that he has sold seven petrified lobsters of his own manufacture to a noted collector of rarities; but this the learned Cracovius Putridus has undertaken to refute in a very elaborate dissertation.

His last wonder was nothing more than a halter, yet by this halter he gained more than by all his former exhibitions. The people, it seems, had got in their heads, that a certain noble criminal was to be hanged with a silken rope. Now there was nothing they so much wished to see as this very rope; and he was resolved to gratify their curiosity: he therefore got one made, not only of silk, but to render it more striking, several threads of gold were intermixed. The people paid their money only to see silk, but were, highly satisfied when they found it was mixed with gold into the bargain. It is scarcely necessary to mention, that the projector sold his silken rope for almost what it had cost him, as soon as the criminal was known to be hanged in hempen materials.

By their fondness of sights, one would be apt to imagine, that instead of desiring to see things as they should be, they are rather solicitous of seeing them as they ought not to be. A cat with four legs is disregarded, though never so useful; but, if it has but two, and is consequently incapable of catching mice, it is reckoned inestimable, and every man of taste is ready to raise the auction. A man, though in his person faultless as an aerial genius, might starve; but if stuck over with hideous warts like a porcupine, his fortune is made for ever, and he may show himself with impunity and applause.

A good woman in my neighbourhood, who was bred a habit-maker, though she handled her needle tolerably well, could scarcely get employment. But being obliged, by an accident, to have both her hands cut off from the elbows, what would in another country have been her ruin, made her fortune here: she was now thought more fit for her trade than before; business flowed in apace, and all people paid for seeing the mantua-maker who wrought without hands.

A gentleman showing me his collection of pictures, stopped at one with peculiar admiration: there, cries he, is an inestimable piece. I gazed at the picture for some time, but could see none of those graces with which he seemed enraptured: it appeared to me the most paltry piece of the whole collection: I therefore demanded where those beauties lay, of which I was yet insensible. Sir, cries he, the merit does not consist in the piece, but in the manner in which it was done. The painter drew the whole with his foot, and held the pencil between his toes: I bought it at a very great price; for peculiar merit should ever be rewarded.

But these people are not more fond of wonders, than liberal in rewarding those who show them. From the wonderful dog of knowledge, at present under the patronage of the nobility, down to the man with the box, who professes to show the best imitation of nature that was ever seen, they all live in luxury. A singing-woman shall collect subscriptions in her own coach and six: a fellow shall make a fortune by tossing a straw from his toe to his nose; one in particular has found that eating fire was the most ready way to live; and another who jingles several bells fixed to his cap, is the only man that I know of, who has received emolument from the labours of his head.

A young author, a man of good-nature and learning, was complaining to me some nights ago of this misplaced generosity of the times. Here, says he, have I spent part of my youth in attempting to instruct and amuse my fellow-creatures, and all my reward has been solitude, poverty, and reproach; while a fellow, possessed of even the smallest share of fiddling merit, or who has perhaps learned to whistle double, is rewarded, applauded, and caressed! Prythee, young man, says I to him, are you ignorant, that in so large a city as this, it is better to be an amusing than a useful member of society? Can you leap up, and touch your feet four times before you come to the ground? No, Sir. Can you stand upon two horses at full speed? No, Sir. Can you swallow a pen-knife? I can do none of these tricks. Why then, cried I, there is no other prudent means of subsistence left, but to apprize the town that you speedily intend to eat up your own nose, by subscription.

I have frequently regretted that none of our Eastern posture-masters, or showmen, have ventured to England. I should be pleased to see that money circulate in Asia, which is now sent to Italy and France, in order to bring their vagabonds hither. Several of our tricks would undoubtedly give the English high satisfaction, Men of fashion would be greatly pleased with the postures as well as the condescension of our dancing girls; and the ladies would equally admire the conductors of our fireworks. What an agreeable surprise would it be to see a huge fellow with whiskers flash a charged blunderbuss full in a lady's face, without singeing her hair, or melting her pomatum.

Perhaps, when the first surprise was over, she might then grow familiar with danger; and the ladies might vie with each other in standing fire with intrepidity.

But of all the wonders of the East, the most useful, and I should fancy the most pleasing, would be the looking-glass of Lao, which reflects the mind as well as the body. It is said, that the Emperor Chusi used to make his ladies dress their heads and their hearts in one of these glasses every morning; while the lady was at her toilet, he would frequently look over her shoulder; and it is recorded that not one was found whose mind was not even more beautiful than her person.

I make no doubt but a glass in this country would have the very same effect. The English ladies would undoubtedly cut very pretty figures in so faithful a monitor. There, should we happen to peep over a lady's shoulder while dressing, we might be able to see neither gaming nor ill-nature; neither pride, debauchery, nor a love of

adding. We should find her, if any sensible defect appeared in the mind, more careful in rectifying it, than plastering up the irreparable decays of the person; nay, I am even apt to fancy, that ladies would find more real pleasure in this utensil in private, than in any other bauble imported from China, though ever so expensive or amusing.

'Of Beauty' by Francis Bacon

A MAN that is young in years, may be old in hours, if he have lost no time. But that happeneth rarely. Generally, youth is like the first cogitations, not so wise as the second. For there is a youth in thoughts, as well as in ages. And yet the invention of young men, is more lively than that of old; and imaginations stream into their minds better, and, as it were, more divinely. Natures that have much heat, and great and violent desires and perturbations, are not ripe for action, till they have passed the meridian of their years; as it was with Julius Caesar and Septimius Severus. Of the latter, of whom it is said, *Juventutem egit erroribus, imo furoribus, plenam*. And yet he was the ablest emperor, almost, of all the list. But reposed natures may do well in youth. As it is seen in Augustus Caesar, Cosmus Duke of Florence, Gaston de Foix, and others. On the other side, heat and vivacity in age, is an excellent composition for business. Young men are fitter to invent, than to judge; fitter for execution, than for counsel; and fitter for new projects, than for settled business. For the experience of age, in things that fall within the compass of it, directeth them; but in new things, abuseth them.

The errors of young men, are the ruin of business; but the errors of aged men, amount but to this, that more might have been done, or sooner. Young men, in the conduct and manage of actions, embrace more than they can hold; stir more than they can quiet; fly to the end, without consideration of the means and degrees; pursue some few principles, which they have chanced upon absurdly; care not to innovate, which draws unknown inconveniences; use extreme remedies at first; and, that which doubleth all errors, will not acknowledge or retract them; like an unready horse, that will neither stop nor turn. Men of age object too much, consult too long, adventure too little, repent too soon, and seldom drive business home to the full period, but content themselves with a mediocrity of success. Certainly it is good to compound employments of both; for that will be good for the present, because the virtues of either age, may correct the defects of both; and good for succession, that young men may be learners, while men in age are actors; and, lastly, good for extern accidents, because authority followeth old men, and favor and popularity, youth. But for the moral part, perhaps youth will have the pre-eminence, as age hath for the politic. A certain rabbin, upon the text, *Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall*

dream dreams, inferreth that young men, are admitted nearer to God than old, because vision, is a clearer revelation, than a dream. And certainly, the more a man drinketh of the world, the more it intoxicateth; and age doth profit rather in the powers of understanding, than in the virtues of the will and affections. There be some, have an over-early ripeness in their years, which fadeth betimes. These are, first, such as have brittle wits, the edge whereof is soon turned; such as was Hermogenes the rhetorician, whose books are exceeding subtle; who afterwards waxed stupid. A second sort, is of those that have some natural dispositions which have better grace in youth, than in age; such as is a fluent and luxuriant speech; which becomes youth well, but not age: so Tully saith of Hortensius, *Idem manebat, neque idem decebat*. The third is of such, as take too high a strain at the first, and are magnanimous, more than tract of years can uphold. As was Scipio Africanus, of whom Livy saith in effect, *Ultima primis cedebant*.

'Of Travel' by Francis Bacon

TRAVEL, in the younger sort, is a part of education, in the elder, a part of experience. He that travelleth into a country, before he hath some entrance into the language, goeth to school, and not to travel. That young men travel under some tutor, or grave servant, I allow well; so that he be such a one that hath the language, and hath been in the country before; whereby he may be able to tell them what things are worthy to be seen, in the country where they go; what acquaintances they are to seek; what exercises, or discipline, the place yieldeth. For else, young men shall go hooded, and look abroad little. It is a strange thing, that in sea voyages, where there is nothing to be seen, but sky and sea, men should make diaries; but in land-travel, wherein so much is to be observed, for the most part they omit it; as if chance were fitter to be registered, than observation. Let diaries, therefore, be brought in use. The things to be seen and observed are: the courts of princes, especially when they give audience to ambassadors; the courts of justice, while they sit and hear causes; and so of consistories ecclesiastic; the churches and monasteries, with the monuments which are therein extant; the walls and fortifications of cities, and towns, and so the heavens and harbors; antiquities and ruins; libraries; colleges, disputations, and lectures, where any are; shipping and navies; houses and gardens of state and pleasure, near great cities; armories; arsenals; magazines; exchanges; burses; warehouses; exercises of horsemanship, fencing, training of soldiers, and the like; comedies, such whereunto the better sort of persons do resort; treasuries of jewels and robes; cabinets and rarities; and, to conclude, whatsoever is memorable, in the places where they go. After all which, the tutors, or servants, ought to make diligent inquiry. As for triumphs, masks, feasts, weddings, funerals, capital executions, and such shows, men need not to be put in mind of them; yet are they not to be neglected. If you will have a young man to put his travel into a little room, and in short time to gather much, this you must do. First, as was said, he must have some entrance into the language before he goeth. Then he must have such a servant, or tutor, as knoweth the country, as was likewise said. Let him carry with him also, some card or book, describing the country where he travelleth; which will be a good key to his inquiry. Let him keep also a diary. Let him not stay long, in one city or town; more or less as the place deserveth, but not long; nay, when he stayeth in one city or town, let him change his lodging from one end and part of the town, to another; which is a great adamant of acquaintance. Let him sequester himself, from the company of his countrymen, and diet in such places, where there is good company of the nation where he travelleth. Let him, upon his removes from one place to another, procure recommendation to some person of quality, residing in the place whither he removeth; that he may use his favor, in those things he desireth to see or know. Thus he may abridge his travel, with much profit. As for the acquaintance, which is to be sought in travel; that which is most of all profitable, is acquaintance with the secretaries and employed men of ambassadors: for so in travelling in one country, he shall suck the experience of many. Let him also see, and visit, eminent persons in all kinds, which are of great name abroad;

that he may be able to tell, how the life agreeth with the fame. For quarrels, they are with care and discretion to be avoided. They are commonly for mistresses, healths, place, and words. And let a man beware, how he keepeth company with choleric and quarrelsome persons; for they will engage him into then-own quarrels. When a traveller returneth home, let him not leave the countries, where he hath travelled, altogether behind him; but maintain a correspondence by letters, with those of his acquaintance, which are of most worth. And let his travel appear rather in his discourse, than his apparel or gesture; and in his discourse, let him be rather advised in his answers, than forward to tell stories; and let it appear that he doth

not change his country manners, for those of foreign parts; but only prick in some flowers, of that he hath learned abroad, into the customs of his own country.

'On Friendship' by A. Clutton-Brock

Friendship is above reason, for, though you find virtues in a friend, he was your friend .] before you found them. It is a gift that we offer because we must; to give it as the | reward of virtue would be to set a price upon it, and those who do that have no ' friendship to give. If you choose your friends on the ground that you are virtuous and | want virtuous company, you are no nearer to true friendship than if you choose them for commercial reasons. Besides, who are you that you should be setting a price upon ! your friendship? It is enough for any man that he has the divine power of making friends, and he must leave it to that power to determine who his friends shall be. For, though you may choose the virtuous to be your friends, they may not choose you; indeed, friendship cannot grow where there is any calculated choice. It comes, like sleep, when you are not thinking about it; and you should be grateful, without any misgiving, when it comes. So no man who knows what friendship is, ever gave up a friend because he turns out to be disreputable. His only reason for giving up a friend is that he has ceased to care for him; and, when that happens, he should reproach himself for this mortal poverty of affection, not the friend for having proved unworthy. For it is inhuman presumption to say of any man that he is unworthy of your friendship, just as it is to say of any woman, when you have fallen out of love with her, that she was unworthy of your love. In friendship and in love we are always humble, because we see that a free gift has been given to us; and to lose that humility because we have lost friendship or love is to take a pride in what should shame us. There are men who cannot be friends except when they are under an illusion that their friends are perfect, "•J when the illusion passes there is an end of their friendship. But true friendship has no illusions, for it reaches to mat part of a man's nature that is beyond his imperfections, and in doing so it takes all of them for granted. It does not even assume that he is better than other men, for there is egotism in assuming that. A man is your friend, not because of his superiorities, but because there is something open from your nature to his, a way that is closed between you and most men. You and he understand each other, as the phrase is; your relation with him is a rare success among a multitude of failures, and if you are proud of the success you should be ashamed of the failure.

'The Origin of Species' by Charles Darwin

Authors of the highest eminence seem to be fully satisfied with the view that each Species has been independently created. To my mind it accords better with what we know of the laws impressed on matter by the Creator, that the production and extinction of the past and present inhabitants of the world should have been due to secondary causes, like those deterrriing the birth and death of the individual. When I view all beings not as special creations, but as the lineal descendants of some few beings which lived long before the first bed of the Silurian system was

deposited, they seem to me to become ennobled. Judging from the past, we may safely infer that not one living species will transmit its unaltered likeness to a distant futurity. And of the species now living very few will transmit progeny of any kind to a far distant futurity; for the manner in which all organic beings are grouped, shows that the greater number of species in each genus, and all the species in many genera, have left no descendants, but have become utterly extinct. We can so far take a prophetic glance into futurity as to foretell that it will be the common and widely spread species, belonging to the larger and dominant groups, which will ultimately prevail and procreate new and

dominant species. As all the living forms of life are the lineal descendants of those which lived long before the Silurian epoch, we may feel certain that the ordinary succession by generation has never once been broken, and that no cataclysm has desolated the whole world. NOTES Hence we may look with some confidence to a secure future of equally inappreciable length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection. It is interesting to contemplate a tangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent on each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us. These laws, taken in the largest sense, being growth with reproduction; Inheritance which is almost implied by reproduction; variability from the indirect and direct action of the conditions of life, and from use and disuse; a ratio of increase so high as to lead to a struggle for life, and as a consequence to natural selection, entailing divergence of character and the extinction of less-improved forms. Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved.

'Of Parents and Children' by Francis Bacon

The joys of parents are secret; and so are their griefs and fears. They cannot utter the one; nor they will not utter the other. Children sweeten labors; but they make misfortunes more bitter. They increase the cares of life; but they mitigate the remembrance of death. The perpetuity by generation is common to beasts; but memory, merit, and noble works, are proper to men. And surely a man shall see the noblest works and foundations have proceeded from childless men; which have sought to express the images of their minds, where those of their bodies have failed. So the care of posterity is most in them, that have no posterity. They that are the first raisers of their houses, are most indulgent towards their children; beholding them as the continuance, not only of their kind, but of their work; and so both children and creatures.

The difference in affection, of parents towards their several children, is many times unequal; and sometimes unworthy; especially in the mothers; as Solomon saith, A wise son rejoiceth the father, but an ungracious son shames the mother. A man shall see, where there is a house full of children, one or two of the eldest respected, and the youngest made wantons; but in the midst, some that are as it were forgotten, who many times, nevertheless, prove the best. The illiberality of parents, in allowance towards their children, is a harmful error; makes them base; acquaints them with shifts; makes them sort with mean company; and makes them surfeit more when they come to plenty. And therefore the proof is best, when men keep their authority towards the children, but not their purse.

Men have a foolish manner (both parents and schoolmasters and servants) in creating and breeding an emulation between brothers, during childhood, which many times sorteth to discord when they are men, and disturbeth families. The Italians make little difference between children, and nephews or near kinsfolks; but so they be of the lump, they care not though they pass not through their own body. And, to say truth,

in nature it is much a like matter; insomuch that we see a nephew sometimes resembleth an uncle, or a kinsman, more than his own parent; as the blood happens. Let parents choose betimes, the vocations and courses they mean their children should take; for then they are most flexible; and let them not too much apply themselves to the disposition of their children, as thinking they will take best to that, which they have most mind to. It is true, that if the affection or aptness of the children be extraordinary, then it is good not to cross it; but generally the precept is good, optimum elige, suave et facile illud faciet consuetude Younger brothers are commonly fortunate, but seldom or never where the elder are disinherited.

'How To Observe Nature' by Elizabeth Brightwen

There is all the difference between taking a walk simply for exercise, for some special errand, or to enjoy conversation with one's friends, and the sort of quiet observant stroll I am going to ask my kind readers to take with me to-day. This beautiful world is full of wonders of every kind, full of evidences of the Great Creator's wisdom and skill in adapting each created thing to its special purpose. The whole realm of nature is meant, I believe, to speak to us, to teach us lessons in parables - to lead our hearts upward to God who made us and fitted us also for our special place in creation.

In the nineteenth Psalm of the Bible, David speaks of the two great books God has given us for our instruction. In the first six verses he speaks of the teachings of the book of nature and the rest of the Psalm deals with the written Word of God. We acknowledge and read the Scriptures as the book which reveals the will of God and His wondrous works for the welfare of mankind, but how many fail to give any time or thought to reading the book of nature! Thousands may travel and admire beautiful scenery, and derive a certain amount of pleasure from nature, just glancing at each object, but really observing nothing, and thus failing to learn any of the lessons this world's beauty is intended to teach, they might almost as well have stayed at home save for the benefit of fresh air and change of scene. The habit of minute and careful observation is seldom taught in childhood, and is not very likely to be gained in later life when the mind is filled with other things. Yet if natural objects are presented attractively to the young, how quickly they are interested! Question after question is asked, and unconsciously a vast amount of information may be conveyed to an intelligent child's mind by a simple, happy little chat about some bird or insect. Our ramble might be indefinitely prolonged and still be full of interest and instruction, but in these simple remarks enough has been shown, I trust, to lead many to think and observe closely even minutest thing that catches their attention whilst out for a ramble in lanes and fields. Even a microscopic moss upon an old wall has been suggestive of many lovely thoughts, with which I will conclude our ramble and this chapter.

'My First Play' by Charles Lamb

AT the north end of Cross-court there yet stands a portal, of some architectural pretensions, though reduced to humble use, serving at present for an entrance to a printing-office. This old doorway, if you are young, reader, you may not know was the identical pit entrance to Old Drury — Garrick's Drury — all of it that is left. I never pass it without shaking some forty years from off

my shoulders, recurring to the evening when I passed through it to see my first play. The afternoon had been wet, and the condition of our going (the elder folks and myself) was, that the rain should cease. With what a beating heart did I watch from the window the puddles, from the stillness of which I was taught to prognosticate the desired cessation! I seem to remember the last spurt, and the glee with which I ran to announce it.

We went with orders, which my godfather F. had sent us. He kept the oil shop (now Davies's) at the corner of Featherstone- building, in Holborn. F. was a tall grave person, lofty in speech, and had pretensions above his rank. He associated in those days with John Palmer, the comedian, whose gait and bearing he seemed to copy; if John (which is quite as likely) did not rather borrow somewhat of his manner from my godfather. He was also known to, and visited by, Sheridan. It was to his house in Holborn that young Brinsley brought his first wife on her elopement with him from a boarding-school at Bath — the beautiful Maria Linley. My parents were present (over a quadrille table) when he arrived in the evening with his harmonious charge. — From either of these connexions it may be inferred that my godfather could command an order for the then Drury-lane theatre at pleasure — and, indeed, a pretty liberal issue of those cheap billets, in Brinsley's easy autograph, I have heard him say was the sole remuneration which he had received for many years' nightly illumination of the orchestra and various avenues of that theatre — and he was content it should be so. The honour of Sheridan's familiarity — or supposed familiarity — was better to my godfather than money.

F. was the most gentlemanly of oilmen; grandiloquent, yet courteous. His delivery of the commonest matters of fact was Ciceronian. He had two Latin words almost constantly in his mouth (how odd sounds Latin from an oilman's lips!), which my better knowledge since has enabled me to correct. In strict pronunciation they should have been sounded vice versa — but in those young years they impressed me with more awe than they would now do, read aright from Seneca or Varro — in his own peculiar pronunciation, monosyllabically elaborated, or Anglicized, into something like verse. By an imposing manner, and the help of these distorted syllables, he climbed (but that was little) to the highest parochial honours which St. Andrew's has to bestow.

He is dead — and thus much I thought due to his memory, both for my first orders (little wondrous talismans ! — slight keys, and insignificant to outward sight, but opening to me more than Arabian paradises!) and moreover, that by his testamentary beneficence I came into possession of the only landed property which I could ever call my own — situate near the road-way village of pleasant Puckeridge, in Hertfordshire. When I journeyed down to take possession, and planted foot on my own ground, the stately habits of the donor descended upon me, and I strode (shall I confess the vanity?) with larger paces over my allotment of three quarters of an acre, with its commodious mansion in the midst, with the feeling of an English freeholder that all betwixt sky and centre was my own. The estate has passed into more prudent hands, and nothing but an agrarian can restore it.

In those days were pit orders. Beshrew the uncomfortable manager who abolished them ! — with one of these we went. I remember the waiting at the door — not that which is left — but between that and an inner door in shelter — O when shall I be such an expectant again ! — with the cry of nonpareils, an indispensable playhouse accompaniment in those days. As near as I can recollect, the fashionable pronunciation of the theatrical fruiteresses then was, "Chase some oranges, chase some numparels, chase a bill of the play;" — chase pro chuse. But when we got in, and I beheld the green curtain that veiled a heaven to my imagination, which was soon to be disclosed — the breathless anticipations I endured! I had seen something like it in the plate prefixed to Troilus and Cressida, in Rowe's Shakspeare — the tent scene with Diomede — and a

sight of that plate can always bring back in a measure the feeling of that evening. — The boxes at that time, full of well-dressed women of

quality, protected over the pit; and the pilasters reaching down were adorned with a glistering substance (I know not what) under glass (as it seemed), resembling — a homely fancy — but I judged it to be sugar-candy — yet, to my raised imagination, divested of its homelier qualities, it appeared a glorified candy — The orchestra lights at length arose, those "fair Auroras!" Once the bell sounded. It was to ring out yet once again — and, incapable of the anticipation, I reposed my shut eyes in a sort of resignation upon the maternal lap. It rang the second time. The curtain drew up — I was not past six years old — and the play was Artaxerxes!

I had dabbled a little in the Universal History — the ancient part of it — and here was the court of Persia. It was being admitted to a sight of the past I took no proper interest in the action going on, for I understood not its import — but I heard the word Darius, and I was in the midst of Daniel. All feeling was absorbed in vision. Gorgeous vests, gardens, palaces, princesses, passed before me. I knew not players. I was in Persepolis for the time; and the burning idol of their devotion almost converted me into a worshipper. I was awe-struck, and believed those significations to be something more than elemental fires. It was all enchantment and a dream. No such pleasure has since visited me but in dreams. — Harlequin's Invasion followed; where, I remember, the transformation of the magistrates into reverend beldams seemed to me a piece of grave historic justice, and the tailor carrying his own head to be as sober a verity as the legend of St. Denys.

The next play to which I was taken was the Lady of the Manor, of which, with the exception of some scenery, very faint traces are left in my memory. It was followed by a pantomime, called Lun's Ghost — a satiric touch, I apprehend, upon Rich, not long since dead — but to my apprehension (too sincere for satire), Lun was as remote a piece of antiquity as Lud — the father of a line of Harlequins — transmitting his dagger of lath (the wooden sceptre) through countless ages. I saw the primeval Motley come from his silent tomb in a ghastly vest of white patch-work, like the apparition of a dead rainbow. So Harlequins (thought I) look when they are dead.

My third play followed in quick succession. It was the Way of the World. I think I must have sat at it as grave as a judge; for, I remember, the hysteric affectations of good Lady Wishfort affected me like some solemn tragic passion. Robinson Crusoe followed; in which Crusoe, man Friday, and the parrot, were as good and authentic as in the story. —The clownery and pantaloony of these pantomimes have clean passed out of my head. I believe, I no more laughed at them, than at the same age I should have been disposed to laugh at the grotesque Gothic heads (seeming to me then replete with devout meaning) that gape, and grin, in stone around the inside of the old Round Church (my church) of the Templars.

I saw these plays in the season 1781-2, when I was from six to seven years old. After the intervention of six or seven other years (for at school all play-going was inhibited) I again entered the doors of a theatre. That old Artaxerxes evening had never done ringing in my fancy. I expected the same feelings to come again with the same occasion. But we differ from ourselves less at sixty and sixteen, than the latter does from six. In that interval what had I not lost! At the first period I knew nothing, understood nothing, discriminated nothing. I felt all, loved all, wondered all - Was nourished, I could not tell how.

I had left the temple a devotee* and was returned a rationalist. The same things were there materially; but the emblem, the reference, was gone — The green curtain was no longer a veil, drawn between two worlds, the unfolding of which was to bring

back past ages, to present "a royal ghost," — but a certain quantity of green baize, which was to separate the audience for a given time from certain of their fellow-men who were to come forward and pretend those parts. The lights — the orchestra lights — came up a clumsy machinery. The first ring, and the second ring, was now but a trick of the prompter's bell — which had been, like the note of the cuckoo, a phantom of a voice, no hand seen or guessed at which ministered to its warning. The actors were men and women painted. I thought the fault was in them; but it was in myself, and the alteration which those many centuries — of six short twelve- months — had wrought in me. — Perhaps it was fortunate for me that the play of the evening was but an indifferent comedy, as it gave me time to crop some unreasonable expectations, which might have interfered with the genuine emotions with which I was soon after enabled to enter upon the first appearance to me of Mrs. Siddons in *Isabella*. Comparison and retrospection soon yielded to the present attraction of the scene; and the theatre became to me, upon a new stock, the most delightful of recreations.

Smoking

It is not news that every third adult of the world smokes and it is a bad habit. It is bad because it causes harm to the smoker's health and puts his life at risk. The worker spends his hard earned money to buy only diseases like mouth cancer, lung cancer, asthma and heart diseases.

In other words, smoking causes cancers of oral cavity, larynx, esophagus and bladder, lung cancer and lung disorders, TB, bronchitis that leads to asthma causing severe breathing trouble, which is a significant factor in the development of coronary heart diseases, damage to the fetuses in women and Buerger's disease (a disease in the veins of legs that may lead to the gangrene of foot) to name a few. Seven people die of tobacco use every minute. A cigarette contains 49 carcinogenic compounds and 4000 other toxins. These toxins cause lung disorders like emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, bronchitis, lower immunity and the respiratory system becomes more prone to infections. These also cause high blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases, stroke and brain hemorrhages. These cause both infertility in men and women, miscarriage, complicated pregnancies and early menopause. Nicotine damages the bones, joints and muscles of the body by causing osteopenia and osteoporosis. Smoking also causes loss of taste, bad breath, dental caries, stained teeth, mouth sores and receding gums. Medical costs incurred on the diseases caused by smoking directly affects the national economy. Smoking causes lower work-efficiency which in turn affects the output in any field.

The capitalists engaged in the manufacture and supply of tobacco products are not only trying to justify the habit of smoking by hiding the above hard facts about its harmful effects but also glorifying smoking as a mark of modern life style in order to promote their business. They are least bothered about the health of the common people. They mint money by brainwashing the common people and exploiting their weakness. The labels of cigar packets are thrown away along with the phrase 'Smoking is injurious to health', printed on it just to comply with the government's mandate. Right thinking people are worried about the glorification of this bad habit. Governments fail to implement their mandate in letter and spirit because of the influence the capitalists wield. One approach is to ban tobacco products altogether and another is to educate the people about the harmful effects of smoking. Successful government authorities lack will power, are morally weak and afraid of adopting the first approach. In order to hide their inability, the authorities put forward a hallow argument that the government gets huge income by way of tax from the cigar manufacturers and suppliers

and the tobacco industry offers employment opportunities. Also, such companies spend some money on social rehabilitation and philanthropic activities and make tall claims of social cause. The authorities lack will power and are morally weak either to take firm policy decisions or to implement whatever decisions are taken in letter and spirit again because of rampant bribery and other lucrative favours. They conveniently hide the data on the social front as to how many people are inflicted with breath related diseases and the cost on account of maintenance of public health. The medical expenditure on breath related diseases caused by smoking is not less than the income the government derives from the cigar capitalists. Apart from public health, it also affects the public economy in a big way. By flashing fantastic advertisements on the mass-media they hide the truth about the harmful effects of smoking. Instead of opposing such anti-people advertisements, the mass-media rather shamelessly solicits such advertisements for money because it simply cannot sustain without such advertisements. Therefore, as a face saving formula, the authorities have no option but to take up the second approach - to educate the people against smoking. In the name of educating the people, the government spends crores of rupees by way of releasing advertisements in the mass-media indicating the harmful effects of smoking. These advertisements are useless, just like drizzling water in the desert. Many doctors, despite knowing the harmful effects of smoking, get addicted to the habit and willingly become chain smokers. This being the influence of the capitalists' advertisements, what change of mind can we expect from the general public? We are obviously in the grip of a capitalist cobweb. Every smoker is supporting capitalistic designs, which makes the rich richer and the poor poorer and reduces ten billion people to paupers to produce ten billionaires.

The 'Reality' Of Reality Shows

Breaking News! A "so called" celebrity slapped another in a reality show and in an extraordinary example of betrayal, a man was found cheating on his wife of ten years. Sounds pretty exciting? Bet it is! After all, its all this unusual cut-throat "action" we crave for and the producers of the show know exactly what we want and therefore invest money into it. Today's reality shows are a total package of emotion and action. As the name itself suggests, reality shows are television programmes, wherein, the participant, one amongst the ordinary crowd, gets a chance to be in the limelight for a variable period of time - it could be a few minutes, hours or even days and during his brief stay, tries his luck at winning the sought after prize of the show. These programmes are like contests where many people battle it out till one of the contestants emerges as the winner in the end. Add some spice to a normal competition and you get the perfect recipe of a reality show.

, Television today is flooded with reality shows that are based on every random theme one can think of. It all started with quiz and musical talent hunt shows, which initially appeared to be legitimate. But then the great Indian market woke up to a new concept - "reality and lifestyles of famous people". Now this new product attracted people like bees to honey. After all, who would not want to peek into the lives of our favourite superstars and who, in turn, did not disappoint us to say the least. Countless viewers watch these shows eagerly with their eyes glued to the screen to see the drama unfold before their eyes, making them feel as if it is happening just in front of them and not on the screen. Thus, they are dependent on them for their daily dose of fun-filled entertainment, which even the popular melodramatic daily soaps sometimes fail to offer.

Several people have shot to fame overnight after winning the most coveted possessions these shows offer-name, fame, money - well, that is what the game is all about. But in reality, what is the reality behind these reality shows? Are they genuinely as real as they claim to be? While the general public goes on enjoying these shows, somewhere in the back of the mind, one is always suspecting the genuineness of the product being served. Actually, it varies from show to show. These shows are generally not scripted, but sometimes the organizers themselves break the rules and introduce controversial content in the show in order to achieve higher TRPs (Television Rating Points). It is in such situations that people begin questioning the transparency of such shows. Whatever the reality may be, the truth is that despite all these allegations, people never miss even a single episode of their favourite shows and continue to watch them everyday without fail.

R. K. Narayan's Style of Writing

R.K. Narayan was a great 20th century Indian novelist and short story writer whose wide range of representation of human life and society brought him fame both in India and abroad. He was a very keen observer of society and lover of human nature. He used simple language for his works which reflected an unaffected prose accompanied with humour. Throughout his life, he endeavoured to focus on the society through all his works. He portrayed the life of common man. His readers always saw his works as if it were their own life and society. His focus remained on ordinary life and people in everything that he created. He portrays the daily life of the Indian people with a psychological insight into their character and activities very intricately. He often used the contemporary description of the Tamil lifestyle. In fact, his stories focus on the life and culture of Tamilnadu. But all the same, simplicity has the greatest part in the delineation of his characters which are universal types. Graham Greene compared him to Anton Chekhov because of his simplicity and lustre of prose, its gentle beauty, ironical portrayal of tragic situations interspersed with humour and vivid characterisation.

Realism: Narayan used realism for all his narratives. He described what he saw around him. His novels and short stories tell the tales of men and women from our society. Malgudi, the backdrop of his novels is a fictionalized setting like any south Indian village. Malgudi acquainted the Indian readers with the local Tamil society where they could feel at home and relate to the incidents, people and their lives. It described the daily life of Indians in a small town. Anthony West of the New Yorker considered Narayan's style of writing full of realism and variety and likened it to Nikolai Gogol's art of story telling.

Transparency of Vision: Narayan was a keen observer of people and society and he used the minute details of our lives with simplicity in his books. He was detailed and his language is easily understood by everyone. He had studied the life of ordinary man very closely. The conversation between Raju and the villagers in *The Guide* is an example. Jhumpa Lahiri, the Pulitzer Prize winner Indian author, says that Narayan's short stories have the same captivating feelings as his novels. They are short but they are very interesting and engrossing because of their complete expression and this is where the greatest reward of a story-teller lies. People take lot of time to enjoy its short length and simplicity. According to her, what Narayan encapsulates from the beginning till the end of a short story, others strive to achieve in more than hundreds of pages. In fact, his insight, presentation, full expression of the lives of characters in their entirety are all matchless. The depiction of life and characters with

full and minute details are a gift of keen insight, sharp observation and the capacity to read the life closely. It is because of these characteristics that he has been compared with O Henry, Frank O'Connor, and Flannery O'Connor. Lahiri also compares him to Guy de Maupassant for his ability of precision without losing lustre and interest in the narrative. Like Maupassant, the great French writer, Narayan also sketches commonplace characters of the middle class life and watches them as a silent spectator.

Descriptive Narrative: R.K Narayan's style of prose is descriptive and not analytical. His style is objective where the author is expected to create his characters without involving his personal sentiments and emotions into their actions. He puts them in the story as they are in their real lives. But he takes full interest in describing his characters with a mild touch of humour. His works, on the whole, show that he was an avid reader of human life. His commonplace incidents are arranged so peculiarly in all their native simplicity that the readers attach their sentiments with them so naturally. The most important part of his style is his capacity of being imaginative. His Malgudi is its greatest example. It is a sketch of a local small town where people still take pride in a traditional outlook towards life. They hold superstition in great awe and flinch from accepting anything new or modern. He chose this set-up as a background to show also how modernity had been making inroads into Indian society. The world of Malgudi has a wide range of characters

Humour and Irony: Narayan's writings are interspersed with a soft touch of humour and irony. In his "The Guide", he chooses an ordinary man Raju who is mean and petty; but the author views him with indulgence. Narayan describes incidents related to him with mild humour and sarcasm adding colour to the portrayal of his character and story. The undercurrent of humour and irony are in the texture of the novel. For example, there is a description in the beginning when Raju takes refuge in a temple by the river and poses as a sage. The writer has given the intricate details of the behaviour of Raju and the villagers with the touch of humour and irony. But there is pathos also in his stories which he handles with great care. It is pity that a man who has been jailed as Raju had done, comes out in the society to cheat people as a pretended sadhu.

Humour and irony walk side by side in his works supporting each other. Humour is used to enliven an incident or a character-sketch whereas there is pathos, pity and irony to highlight the atmosphere of the situation. In this manner, Narayan's writing style can be compared to that of William Faulkner. Both of them were humanists. They picked up an individual to describe the whole society through them. The juxtaposition of the conflict between man and society is a part of the works of Narayan. Though there is similarity between their subjects, especially their vision for humanity. Faulkner used rhetorical prose and illustrated his points with extraordinary descriptions whereas Narayan used simple language and realistic situations.

Humanism: R.K. Narayan's works display a dedication to the cause of humanity. It is not patriotic or religious. But his descriptions touch the heart of his readers. His characters are chosen from ordinary life and the details about them are also commonplace but the beauty lies in their description. Man and his behaviour are his prime interests. For instance, he depicts the character of Raju, the protagonist of his famous novel The Guide, from his journey as man of very ordinary and sordid interests to a man who is salvaged by supreme spirituality. Narayan feels that common man is born with qualities which can lead him to the supreme goal of life. But a man has his shortcomings and to overcome those isn't easy. He deals with the life of a human being

with details but his point of view remains humanitarian. All his works display a basic love towards mankind. He deals with even smaller incidents of a human life or a human character with neatness and objectivity to add charm and completeness to the characters.

Unlike his other contemporaries, Narayan was fond of simple prose. His style remained simple and precise. His narrative style is a descriptive type of prose. He looked deep into human life with sympathy and dedication and yet kept himself aloof while rendering his descriptions. His satires are mild and appealing to the readers. They are neither coarse nor uninteresting. All his portrayals may also be seen as psychological penetrations into a human heart. His artistic depth in character deUneation is partly due to the fact that he was a great reader of human psychology and behaviour. Probably inspired by Thomas Hardy, a man who dedicated novels to the lost territory called Wessex, Narayan created the fictitious world of Malgudi, a small town in Tamilnadu. This imaginary setting is used in all his works. He was concerned with the upliftment of the society also because he was humane to the core looks into the life and actions of his characters sympathetically. He was influenced by many great English novelists. With widely acknowledged simplicity, Narayan's style remains chiefly as that of a humanitarian but he presented life with a touch of humour, irony and depth. He loved the traditional way of story telling with all its nuances.

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Stylistics of writing

Stylistics is concerned with establishing the principles that are capable of explaining the choices made by individuals and social groups while using language. Some important features of stylistics include the use of dialogue, and this includes regional accents and dialects, descriptive language, grammar and so on. Stylistics also determines the nexus between the form and effects within a particular variety of language.

Semantics is described as the linguistic study of the meaning of words, phrases and sentences. Linguistic semantics, therefore, deals with the conventional meaning conveyed by the use of words, phrases and sentences of a language. In semantic analysis, one focuses on the conventional meaning of words, rather than on what an individual speaker might want them to mean on a particular occasion.

Words do not only have meanings of their own. They signify something, but it is significant that they are in relationship with one another. Sometimes, we make sense of words by comparing and contrasting with other words. Words have relationships amongst them and help us in understanding their meanings. For example, if we are explaining the meaning of 'love', we may also say that it is opposite to 'hate'. Structuralists try to interpret the world in terms of binary opposites. We make sense of a word in contrast to the opposite of it. Man is man because, he is not woman. Light is of significance only because there is darkness. Thus, words and their meanings are in relation to each other. The linguistic approach of making sense of words in relation to other words is called lexical relations.

Synonymy

It is true that no two words are same in their meaning. If the meaning of two or more words would have been similar, there would not have been a need for two different words. There must be a slight variation in meaning amongst the two words. Two or more words with very closely related meanings are called synonyms. These synonymous words can often be substituted in a sentence to mean almost the same thing. However,

this may not always be true. For example, what is your answer? Or 'what is your reply?', 'what is your response?' almost mean the same thing. The meanings may differ from context to context. However, the words which are synonymous, like 'reply', 'answer' and 'response' cannot be used when a person is writing an exam. It seems not very proper to say that 'Sam has replies to all the questions in the examination'. Also, 'Sam has responses to all the questions in the examination' is also not correct. The proper mode should be 'Sam has answers to all the questions in the examination.' Thus, depending on the context, we can substitute one synonymous word with another. Therefore, one needs to keep in mind that the idea of 'sameness' of meaning used in discussing synonymy is not necessarily 'total sameness'.

Antonymy

Words with opposite meanings are called antonyms. For example, big/small, fast/ slow, happy/sad, hot/cold, long/short, male/female, old/new, rich/poor, true/false.

Antonyms can be divided into two main types :

1. Gradable antonyms, that is, opposites along a scale and
2. Non-gradable antonyms, that is, direct opposites.

Gradable antonyms, such as the pair, big/small, can be used in comparative structures, such as 'A football is bigger than a cricket ball' or 'A cricket ball is smaller than a football'. Moreover, it should also be mentioned here that the negative of one member of a gradable pair does not necessarily imply the other. For example, 'my car is not old', does not mean that the car is new. Non-gradable antonyms are antonyms such as dead/alive. They are non-gradable as we cannot say that someone is more or less dead than the other. In this case, the negative of one member of a non-gradable pair does imply the other member.

Hyponymy

When the meaning of one form of word is included in the meaning of the other, the relationship between the two words is described as hyponymy. For example, animal/ dog, vegetable/carrot, flower/rose, tree/banyan. The concept of 'inclusion' is involved in this relationship. The concept of a rose necessarily implies that it is a flower. Therefore, rose is a hyponym of flower. In hyponymous connections, one is primarily looking at the meaning of words in some type of hierarchical relationship. The relation of hyponymy captures the concept of 'is a kind of'. For example, let us consider the sentence, 'carrot is a kind of vegetable'. Sometimes, the only thing we know about the meaning of a word is that it is a hyponym of another term.

Polysemy

Two or more words with the same form and related meanings are known as polysemy. Polysemy can be described as one form (written or spoken) having multiple meanings that are all related by extension. Examples are the word 'head', used to refer to the object on top of your body, on top of a glass of beer, person at the top of a company or department, and many other things. Other

examples of polysemy are 'foot' (91' person, of bed, of mountain) or run (person does, water does, colours do).

When one is not sure whether different uses of a single word are examples of homonymy or polysemy, one should check in a dictionary. If the word has multiple meanings, it is polysemous and there will be a single entry. There will be a numbered list of the different meanings of that word. If two words are treated as homonyms,

they will typically have two separate entries. In most dictionaries, bank, mail, mole, and sole are clearly treated as homonyms whereas face, foot, get, head and run are treated as examples of polysemy.

Metonymy

Metonymy is a substitution of a word or phrase to stand for a word or phrase similar in meaning. Examples are as follows:

1. In Shakespeare's time, the crown was anti-Catholic. (Crown stands for Queen Elizabeth I.)
2. The White House was severely criticized for its opposition to the tax increase. ('White House' stands for the president or the president and his advisers.)
3. The Wall Street welcomes the reduction in interest rates. ('Wall Street' represents investors.)
4. Sweat, not wealth, earned her the respect of her peers. ('Sweat' stands for hard work.)

Some more examples are as follows: The close connection can be based on a container-contents relation (*bottle/water, can/juice*), a whole-part relation (*car/ wheels, house/roof*) or a representative-symbol relationship (*king/crown, the President/the White House*).

Metonymy makes it possible for us to understand that 'He drank the whole bottle', although it sounds absurd literally (i.e., he drank the liquid, not the glass object). Similarly when we say 'The White House has announced ... or Downing Street protested ...', we do not get puzzled that buildings appear to be talking. This is because we know that the buildings are representative of something, someone or some office. We use metonymy when we talk about filling up the car, answering the door, boiling a kettle, giving someone a hand, or needing some wheels. Making sense of such expressions often depends on context, background knowledge and inference.

Collocation

One way in which we organize our vocabulary or knowledge of words is based on the words which frequently occur together. They are technically known as collocation. For example, when one says hammer, most people will say nail, as it is the word that frequently occur with it. If you say table, mostly people will say chair, and butter elicits bread, needle elicits thread and salt elicits pepper and so forth.

In recent years, the study of the words occurring together and their frequency of co-occurrence has received a lot more attention in corpus linguistics. A corpus is a large collection of texts, spoken or written, typically stored as a database of how often specific words or phrases occur and what types of collocations are most common.

Essentials of stylistics

The word 'stylistics' comes from the word 'style'. Style is nothing but fashioning oneself in a particular way. Each of us has a distinctive style of speaking and writing. Within the field of literary writing, stylistics refers to those attributive features of the author which makes us distinguish him or her from others. In other words, stylistics can be called the 'linguistic thumb print' of the author which makes the attentive critical reader identify the author in many cases. It is applicable even when the author's name is unknown to us. But to achieve that perfection, a rigorous study of the authors

and their works is necessary so that the personal style of the author becomes familiar in terms of author's range of vocabulary, sentence length and construction, frequency of certain linguistic features, etc. Moreover, stylistics is also significant in making us understand a piece of linguistic art, in terms of getting to the meaning of it.

Ordinary language is the background to literary language. This is true whether the language used in a poem or a novel is grammatically correct or not. The language used in poetry is selected from the background of normal language and achieves a particular purpose. The language of poetry may vary from age to age, depending to a large extent on the type of language commonly used in that age. So, Romantics can make a deliberate break from the language of the Augustan age, and T.S. Eliot from the language of the Georgians and the Victorians.

Roman Jakobson (1960: 377) is of the view that the relationship between linguistics and literary studies is very significant. Literary studies are not possible without a linguistic study. In other words, the relationship between linguistics and poetics is very much evident in the field of literary studies. Jakobson writes:

If there are some critics who still doubt the competence of linguistics to embrace the field of poetics, I privately believe that .. linguists have been mistaken for an inadequacy of the linguistic science itself. All of us here, however, definitely realize that a linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistic problems and unacquainted with linguistic methods are equally flagrant anachronisms.

Stylistics is the meeting ground between linguistics and poetics. There are many scholars who have worked immensely in this area. They point out how the two disciplines are interconnected. Carter defines stylistics as a 'process of literary text analysis which starts from a basic assumption that the primary interpretative procedures used in the reading of a literary text are linguistic procedures'. Stylistics analysis has its roots in the works of Widdowson (1975), Collie and Slater (1986), Carter (1983), Carter and Long (1987), Short (1983) and Lazar (1993). Carter (1996: 5) argues on the relevance of stylistics for literature teaching. He states that stylistic analysis helps to foster interpretative skills and to encourage reading between the lines. He further posits the advantages of stylistics stating that 'stylistics provides students with a method of scrutinizing texts, "a way in" to a text, opening up starting points for fuller interpretation'. The method is detailed and explicit and shows how you reach or begin to reach an interpretation.

Conceptual versus associative meaning or literal versus figurative meaning

Meanings of words can be seen at least in two different ways—conceptual or literal meaning and associative or figurative meaning. Conceptual or literal meaning is what is available at the surface of an utterance. Figurative meaning or associative meaning (sometimes also referred to as symbolic or implied meaning) is the meaning which is derived from the interpretation. It involves figurative meaning such as metaphor, symbol, and irony.

In ordinary language, the conceptual meaning or the literal meaning is of importance as it is the literal meaning of words which is usually associated by the people when they utter or listen to a word or chain of words. But when we come to the field of literature it is a different ball game. The author is not always using the same everyday language. It may seem from the vocabulary of the author as being

represented in his or her writing that the language is not different from the ordinary everyday language. However, the same language is used without its literal meaning in a figurative way so that the text seems to be literary. The beauty of the language is that depending on its use the language gets its meaning.

The function of stylistics as a branch of study is to look at all the shades of meaning and moreover in a literary context the meaning of the work from its thematic content.

Let us now focus on various methods used by poets and writers as stylistic devices to make their work poetic. Some of the ways are deviation, foregrounding, parallelism and metaphor.

Types of Deviation

The concept of deviation is important to the study in literary texts. Deviation is used as an important stylistic device by the poets and writers to emphasize the theme and the significance of their writing. It is a stylistically distinctive feature. When we use the word deviation, we mean that the language of the deviant construction varies from the normal grammatical or linguistic rules. Hence, when readers read it, their attention is caught by the deviancy, and leads to certain emphasis on meaning. Let us take the example of first two lines of John Keats' in *Ode to Nightingale*:

'My heart aches and drowsy numbness pains my senses as though hemlock I had drunk.'

The last part of the second line, 'hemlock I had drunk' deviates from the normal word order of English. We know that the word order of English is SVO (subject-verb-object). From the normal linguistic point of view, the poet should have used the phrase, 'I had drunk hemlock'; instead of 'hemlock I had drunk', where the word order is inverted to OSV (object - subject - verb). The poet has deliberately done this to emphasize the word 'hemlock' and to provide some poetic effect in the text. Thus, deviant construction is usually employed by poets to emphasize the theme or a particular sub-theme of the poem.

To Leech, this norm may be an absolute one, functioning 'for the language as a whole' or a relative one 'provided by some set of texts which for the purposes of the study are regarded as comparable'. Another distinction proposed in this connection is between determinate and statistical deviations. While statistical deviation is a quantitative measure of linguistic differences between the domain and the norm, determinate deviation is non-quantitative. In determinate deviation, the deviation is observed as a discrepancy between what is allowed by the rules and conventions of the language system and what occurs in the text. It is this type of deviation which is considered by Leech as significant in the study of literary style and especially in poetry.

It is also possible to consider deviations in literary texts at three levels, where the text deviates from norms of the language as a whole (primary deviation), where it deviates from norms of literary composition in particular (secondary deviation) and where the deviation is from norms internal to a text (tertiary deviation or internal deviation).

Primary deviation takes two main forms:

1. Where the language allows a choice within the rules of its code and the conventions of its use, the writer goes outside the choices available.
2. Where the language allows a choice, the writer denies himself the freedom to choose and uses the same item repeatedly.

These result in deviation from some expected frequency and the expression of some linguistic elements. This may be 'more rarely than usual' and 'more often than usual'.

One has to keep in mind here that a deviant linguistic feature does not exist in isolation. It enters into two kinds of relations: into intra-textual relations with other language elements. They are both regular and irregular in the context, and into extra-textual relations with the language code from which it derives.

Foregrounding and parallelism

Foregrounding can be said to be any process in literary writing for making something into the most central and prominent figures in a discourse. In literary texts, foregrounding is used as a device by which some pieces of information are given more prominence in relation to other pieces of information. The prominent information is thus 'foregrounded', while the other information is put in background. Foregrounding can be achieved in two ways:

1. The creation of rhythmic patterns, or what are termed as 'parallelisms'.
2. The use of irregularity in language use, or deviation from the accepted norms of grammar, lexis and phonology.

In foregrounding through parallelism, an extra regularity into language is introduced. The regularity is over and above the demands of correctness. The following are the instances of phonological over-regularity: rhyme, rhythm, metre, alliteration and assonance. Parallel constructions which occur in sequence and appear similar in structure usually indicate similarity of meaning. We can categorize the different foregroundings under three heads:

1. Grammatical parallelism
 2. Phonological parallelism
 3. Deviant constructions
1. Grammatical parallelism can be at the level of words, phrases, clauses or sentences. Coordination of two constructions which are parallel helps to reinforce the meaning and gives it emphasis in the context. For example:

'As idle as a painted ship Upon the painted ocean' (Coleridge, *The Ancient Mariner*).

The construction, 'a painted ship', and 'a painted ocean' are phrases parallel to each other. They are parallel in terms of the structure, to the extent of being almost identical. They differ only in the respect of one word in each of the phrases. The emphasis being placed on 'painted' and brings out the unreality of the situation. The words are also ironical in the context of the poem, because a real ship on a real ocean is being compared to something which is painted and hence unreal.

The phonological parallelisms are usually at the level of the sound, for example:

'The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew'.

The consonantal /f/ and /b/ sounds predominate, as there is alliteration. This is a form of parallelism. There is also a grammatical parallelism. The vowel sound /u:/, as in *blew* and *flew*, is identical in each and gives rise to internal rhyme. Rhyme and meter are forms of parallelism. Similarity in the vowel sound even without alliteration can also give rise to parallelism. In all these cases, the parallel constructions build on the potential of the language. They also create greater

regularity in the patterning of the language than would normally occur in the flow of ordinary speech.

Constructions can be said to be foregrounded if they deviate from the rules of normal language, that is, if they form the accepted norms of grammar, lexis or phonology. For example:

'the what of a which of a wind' (E. E. Cummings)

'What' and 'which' are used as nouns, rather than relative pronouns. Cummings used it in this construct to provide special emphasis on the signification. This makes the utterance intriguing and mysterious because the change of parts of speech gives a new meaning to the words. We feel we are being introduced to a " world where everything has a different meaning. At the same time, the alliteration suggests that it is a world of lyricism and light-heartedness.

Mukarovsky refers to foregrounding as 'the aesthetically intentional distortion of the linguistic components'. This definition signifies two important aspects of foregrounding: first, poetic foregrounding, being 'intentional', presupposes some motivation on the part of the poet. This demands careful attention from the reader. Secondly, distortion of any 'linguistic component' may bring about foregrounding. Thus, concentration of any linguistic features—phonological, syntactic or semantic—are rare or unnoticed in ordinary speech. They are brought into prominence deliberately in the literary text with the purpose of contributing to its total effect can result in foregrounding. This 'calling of the reader's attention to linguistic structures, quite different from the way in which a non-literary writer will emphasize the language elements,' is an essential part of literary relation'.

Leech and Short identify two kinds of foregrounding:

1. Qualitative foregrounding
2. Quantitative foregrounding

In the former, there is deviation from the rules of the language code or from the conventions of language use or both. In the latter, the deviance is from some expected frequency of linguistic occurrence and not from the language code.

Patterns of sound

'Take care of the sense and the sounds will look after themselves' The Duchess to Alice
in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*

Some words have sounds that are related to their meaning. They are called the onomatopoeic words. However, with the advent of Saussurean linguistics, we came to know about the arbitrariness of the signifier and signified. But even after Saussure, we still follow the pattern where we give importance to sounds as it is by virtue of sound that we try to grasp the meaning of words. Moreover, in case of poetry it is usually said that a good recitation of poetry can make half of the meaning of poetry clear. Therefore, it would be very foolish to overlook the aspect of

sound pattern in poems. Sound effects are used extensively in poetry for aesthetic purposes. Sound can also interact with meaning in many ways. One such way is onomatopoeia which emphasizes certain words and provides structural support by bidding together distant words. Poets use everyday language and make it poetic by using different devices related to sound. Hence, readers also have pleasure in uttering because of the musical quality.

Certain significant comments

- 'As poetry becomes a kind-of which semantic meaning is

one' [*The Metaphysics of Sound in Wallace Stevens*, Anca Rosu, University of Alabama Press, 1995]

- 'Music (or sound) must be regarded as another dimension of language not less important than syntax and semantics, although it is usually underestimated because we are accustomed to viewing sound as a conventional, material carrier of meaning.' [*The Metaphysics of Sound in Wallace Stevens*, Anca Rosu, Univ of Alabama Press, 1995]
- *The idea that music can have meaning*— 'Repetition, combined with variation, forms a pattern that creates expectations that, in turn, either may be fulfilled and give satisfaction or may be frustrated and create suspense' [*The Metaphysics of Sound in Wallace Stevens*, Anca Rosu, University of Alabama Press, 1995].
- It can now be said with some certainty that the conspicuous presence or absence of certain consonant sounds in a poem can help to determine whether the reader will be inclined to perceive that poem as 'musical' or 'non-musical' in tone. [*Sound and Sense in the Poetry of Theodor Storm*, Alan B. Gait, Herbert Lang, 1973]
- 'There may be a relatively high correlation between the 'meaning' of poems and their vowel patterns.' [*Sound and Sense in the Poetry of Theodor Storm*, Alan B. Gait, Herbert Lang, 1973]
- 'As my analysis of the mechanism underlying the statistical correlations between back vowels and such qualities as "mystic obscurities" and "hatred and struggle" may suggest, far from being confined to non-aesthetic processes, cognitive poetics provides powerful tools for understanding the relationship between aesthetic qualities and their non-aesthetic perceptual conditions as well as the significant relationships between two or more aesthetic qualities' [*What Makes Sound Patterns Expressive?*, Reuven Tsur, Duke University Press, 1992]
- it would appear, then, that the impressionistic-subjective distinction concerning the "beauty" of some speech sounds and the "ugliness" of some others can be translated into two pairs of objective or inter-subjective opposites. First, the latest acquisitions [the sounds learnt latest by babies] may assume greater emotional or aesthetic intensity than earlier ones, for better or worse. Second, within the late acquisitions, continuous and periodic sounds are beautiful, whereas the interrupted, periodic sounds are ugly.' [*What Makes Sound Patterns Expressive?*, Reuven Tsur, Duke University Press, 1992]

There are ways of identifying the sound effects in poetry. They are as follows:

1. Identify any regular rhyming scheme, such as first stanza of Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, where the rhyme scheme is abab.

'The curfew tolls the knell of parting day

The lowing herd wine slowly o'er the lea, The plowman
homeward plods his weary way, And leaves the world to
darkness and to me.'

2. Identify similar sounds occurring together. There are three basic types of this device:

- (i) Similar initial sounds (first letters) is alliteration. 'Wade won't waltz willingly' is an alliterative sentence.
- (ii) Similar vowel sounds is called assonance. 'Murder urges, scourges and purges a cur' uses assonance.
- (iii) Similar sounds used throughout words is called consonance. 'Pimpled, gurgle-faced Peggy jumped up repeatedly' has 'p' sounds at the beginning, middle and end of words. This device used with 's' or 'sh' sounds is sometimes called sibilance. 'Hissing snakes slither silently,' for example.
- (iv) Count syllables (we have done this earlier)
- (v) Determine stresses (we have done this earlier)

Major patterns of poetry

Although there are many ways to classify poetry or verse, three major patterns have been identified. They are:

1. Pure accentual: The pattern is based on the number of stresses (emphasis) in a foot, line or poem. Stresses are usually easier to detect when the poem is read aloud. This type of structure is good for oral poetry. Example in this regard is nursery rhymes.
2. Pure syllabic: The pattern is determined by the number of syllables in a word, line or poem. Syllabic pattern is usually more easily discerned by the eye than ear. Example in this regard is Haiku.
3. Accentual-syllabic: This pattern counts both the stresses and the syllables. Groups of syllables containing a set number of stressed and unstressed words are called feet. This is the most common type of verse used in traditional English poetry. An example in this regard is the sonnet.

Aspects of metaphor

Jacques Derrida says, 'Metaphor has always been defined as the trope of resemblance; not simply between signifier and signified but between what are already two signs; the one designating the other.'

The word 'resemblance' signifies the essential quality of a metaphor. In a metaphoric association, similarity principle is applied. This means that one sign is substituted by another because of similar association. As Richard Bradford writes, 'A metaphoric association is suggested when two images with no prior causal or circumstantial relationship are juxtaposed: associative meaning is generated rather than recalled.' For example, 'he goes along the road', can be

restated as 'he goes along the street'. The similarity principle between the words, 'road and street' would make one substitute one word for another.

Metaphor etymologically means 'transporting' one word for another to give figurative quality to language. Aristotle defines metaphor as a trope which/consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else, the transference being either from genres to species or from species to genres or from species to species or on grounds of analogy'. Thus, metaphorical process is the process of selection of sign for a figurative language which will make language poetical. As Roman Jakobson says, 'for poetry, metaphor and for prose metonymy is the line of least resistance and consequently the study of poetical tropes is directed chiefly towards metaphor.'

Roman Jakobson's seminal study on metaphor and metonymy comes in the end of his highly technical discussion of aphasia or language disorder. His studies show that there are two poles—metaphoric and metonymic—which makes all discourse

possible. Here metaphor corresponds to the selection axis of language depending upon things that are not normally contiguous. Metonymy corresponds to the combination axis of language. We can make a simple chart regarding these aspects.

Metaphor	Metonymy
Selection	Combination
Paradigmatic	Syntagmatic
Substitution	Contexture
Similarity	Contiguity

METAPHOR: Selection, Similarity

In our day-to-day conversation, both metaphorical and metonymical or paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationship work accordingly. This happens when the encoder or the addresser wants to communicate something to the addressee he works with the code in a metaphorical or paradigmatic axis in the first building block. This is followed by combining and integrating the chosen units along the syntagmatic chain. When the addressee or the decoder receives the message, his initial encounter is made with the combinative sequence. This is followed by its selected consequences. Richard Bradford writes: 'Our most basic communicative interactions involve us in the following linear combinatory movement from word to word; addresser to addressee cohabit within the syntagm, a kind of contiguity between the participants of any speech event. But the selection pole, that which feeds more readily upon the code is more closely associated with the individual addresser.' Therefore, it is the relationship of the addresser and the code that the metaphorical. Axis plays a major role because it is the addresser who first works in the selection process to form the message to be conveyed. However, in any interaction, both the devices—metaphoric and metonymic—have the same importance as Jakobson writes: 'A competition between both devices, metonymic and metaphoric, is manifest in any symbolic process be it interpersonal or social. Thus in an inquiry into the structure of dreams the decisive question is whether the symbols and the temporal sequences used are based on contiguity or similarity.'

Freud's distinction between 'condensation' and 'displacement' (contiguity) and symbolism and identification (similarity) is inconsistent with Jakobson's model of linguistic communication. In the *Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud classified the dream as the disguised fulfillment of a

suppressed or repressed wish. The two primary processes of transference from latent dreams to manifest are condensation and displacement. The problem with Jakobson's model is that Freud's model involves a finally indecisive mixture of prelinguistic and linguistic analogies. Condensation and displacement are metonymic and make use of the syntagmatic pole of contiguity. However, each item in the latent dream is immanently symbolic and thus invokes the paradigmatic selective pole.

Thus, Freud's notion is at odds with Jakobson's model but it was not that Jakobson did not believe in Freud's model of conscious and unconscious activities, Freud's consistent argument that creative writing or literature is analogous to and

sometimes an example of dream manifestation undermines Jakobson's conception of poetry. Jakobson is using the two terms—metaphorical and metonymical poles—he engages himself to establish a binary distinction within all linguistic usages. In this, a metaphor is a function of the paradigmatic selective axis and metonymy a function of its syntagmatic combinatory counterpart. Jacques Lacan intrudes between Jakobson and Freud, and states that metaphor is the superimposition of signifier. He says that it is linked with the substitution of surface meaning for repressed meaning. In short, metonymy-displacement involves disclosure and metaphor-condensation involves disguise. 'The creative spark of the metaphor does not spring from the conjunction of two images that is of the two signifiers equally actualized. It springs from two signifiers one of which has taken the place of the other in the signifying chain, the hidden signifier then remaining present through its (metonymic) relation to the rest of the chain.'

Jakobson emphasizes that in metaphoric writing the poetic part is stronger whereas in the metonymic writing it is the prosaic or realistic aspect. 'It is generally realized that romanticism is closely linked with metaphor, whereas the equally intimate ties of realism with metonymy usually remain unnoticed.' Thus, the association of poetry with metaphor is very evident from Jakobson's writing, as Richard Bradford says:

'For poetry to register at all we need to be aware that language can relate specifically to a pre-linguistic continuum (the syntagmatic metonymic axis) and by its own means distort and reorder this continuum (the paradigmatic metaphoric axis).'

The poetic encoder or the poet is more concerned with the code than the message or the context. The essential quality of poetic language is its ability to defamiliarize or to make strange pattern of linguistic representation. Therefore, the poet's language ought to be metaphorical. The metaphorical quality of the poem makes it more of a poem as M. H. Abrams says, 'A poem is the very image of life expressed in its essential truth. A story of particular facts is a mirror which obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful: poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted.'

In the essay 'Linguistics and Poetics', Jakobson talks about six basic functions of communication as follows:

In the case of poetry, the poetic function takes supremacy over the referential function because the poem involves the organization of phonetic material. It is not simply a decoration signifying structures shared by poetic and non-poetic languages, but a signifying structure in itself. Hence, the traditional opposition of form to content is an inaccurate model of the poetic function. 'The poetic function projects the principle of 'equivalence' from the axis of selection into the axis of combination.' Thus, the concept of 'equivalence' that Jakobson introduces means the equivalent element of language are substitutable in the same place in a syntagm as Jakobson writes:

The principle of similarity underlies poetry; the metrical parallelism of lines or the phonic equivalence of rhyming words prompts the question of semantic similarity and contrast; there exist, for instance, grammatical and anti-grammatical but never agrammatical rhymes. Prose, on the contrary is foregrounded by contiguity. Thus for poetry, metaphor and for prose, metonymy - is the line of least resistance and consequently the study of poetical tropes is directed chiefly towards metaphor.

However, Paul Ricoeur in his essay, *'Metaphor and the Semantics of Discourse,'* makes the distinction between semiotics and semantics. He entails a new dimension of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships. As he argues that 'the metaphor, treated in discourse—the metaphorical utterance—is a kind of syntagm, and we can no more put the metaphorical process on the syntagmatic side'. If we consider the meaning from the point of view of semantics where sentence is a semantic unit, then it becomes clear that 'a metaphoric utterance must indeed be considered as a syntagm, if it is true that significance results from a certain action that words exert upon each other in the sentence'. Thus, following Beneviste's argument that 'it is following their co-optation that the words acquire the values that they did not themselves possess and which can even be contradictory to the values possessed earlier,' we can easily say that metaphor does not simply belong to the paradigmatic order. Thus, metaphor as a paradigmatic does not work if we deal with it in the field of semantics, while Jakobson himself must be aware, as he wrote:

'In Poetry, where similarity is superimposed upon contiguity, any metonymy is slightly metaphoric and any metaphor has a metonymic tint.'

Examples of stylistic analysis

Widdowson is of the opinion that organization of the language into patterns is crucial to the character of literature. For example, what is distinctive about a poem is that its language is organized into a pattern of recurring sounds, structures and meanings. These are not required according to the rules of phonology, syntax or semantics of the language code which provides with its basic resources. The phonology of English, for example, requires no alliteration, assonance, rhyme or metrical measure in message forms. These sound patterns are exploited in a poem to create a code which makes the expression poetic. Whether the aspects of its language are deviant, non-deviant or both from the rules of the language code or from the conventions of its use are only of secondary importance. It is this unique organizational aspect in literary texts that Wellek and Warren also referred to in their *Theory of Literature* published in 1949. 'Poetic language organizes, tightens, the resources of everyday language, and

sometimes does even violence to them, in an effort to force us into awareness and attention... every work of art imposes an order, an organization, a unity on its material.'

Thus, stylistic analysis of a poem has to be done with the stylistic devices that we have discussed earlier. As an example of stylistic analysis of a poem, the poem by E.E. Cummings, *listen* is given here.

An analysis of '(listen)' by E.E. Cummings

written by Dan McIntyre (taken from [http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/projects/stylistics/sab/example, htm](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/projects/stylistics/sab/example.htm))

1. Introduction

If you are new to stylistics, it is often difficult to know where to begin when attempting a stylistic analysis. Many people come to stylistics having studied English literature, which demands a very different set of skills. Analyzing a text stylistically is unlike doing a 'literary' analysis as it needs to be much more objective and rooted in fact. With stylistics, we aim to explain how the words of a text create the feelings and responses that we get when we read them. We demonstrate how to go about doing stylistics by analyzing a poem by the American poet, E.E. Cummings. We will study how such an analysis might be structured, how to relate linguistic elements to meaning, and how to provide an objective account of your initial interpretation of a text.

2. (listen) by E.E. Cummings

How do you begin a stylistic analysis? Well, it is a good idea to start with your initial thoughts and feelings about the text you are going to analyze. When you do the actual analysis, you can see if you were right or wrong in your initial interpretation. Sometimes, the linguistic structure of the text will not support your interpretation, in which case you may have to reconsider this in the light of your analysis. This is why stylistics is useful as a method of interpreting texts. Let us begin by looking at our chosen poem.

'(listen)' is taken from E.E. Cummings' 1964 collection of seventy-three poems, of which it is the sixty-third one. None of the poems in the collection have titles but are instead referred to by number. However, for ease of reference, we have used the first line of the poem as a title. A transcript of the poem is given here.

The poem '(listen)' is typical of Cummings' style and contains some striking irregularities of form in comparison to 'traditional' poetry. You can notice, for example, the lack of capitalization where you might normally expect it, the strange use of punctuation and the seemingly odd structure of particular phrases. Cummings' poems all use lots of deviation and '(listen)' is no exception. One of the reasons for this is Cummings' desire to break with more conventional poetic traditions. However, his

use of deviation is not simply for shock value, and the linguistic choices he makes are by no means arbitrary. Despite this, such extreme deviation can make it difficult for us to interpret his poems. In the past, some critics have even disregarded his seemingly odd use of language, claiming that it is of no interpretative significance. In 1954, R.P. Blackmur, a critic, had the following to say about the strange linguistic choices in Cummings' poems:

'... extensive consideration of these peculiarities today has very little importance, carries almost no reference to the meaning of the poems.' (Blackmur 1954: 320)

63	
[1]	(listen)
[5]	faces streets steeples are eagerly tumbling through wonder ful sunlight
[10]	- look - selves, stir: writhe o-p-e-n-i-n-g are (leaves; flowers) dreams, come quickly come
[15]	run run with me now jump shout (laugh dance cry sing) for it's Spring
[20]	- irrevocably; and in earth sky trees :every where a miracle arrives
[25]	(yes) .
[30]	but nobody will stop it
	With All The Policemen In The World
	(E.E. Cummings, 73 Poems)

The view that Blackmur gives is now extremely dated. What he refers to as 'peculiarities' are in fact highly significant linguistic deviations, and it is important for us to assume that every element of any piece of writing has a possible interpretative significance. You might ask if this is actually the case. Do we really infer meaning from every bit of a text? Well, the evidence we have would suggest that we do. Researchers such as Van Peer (1980; 1986) have found that readers do indeed pick up on the smallest details of a text and use them to construct a meaningful interpretation. A stylistic analysis of our poem will enable us to explain the foregrounding within it thoroughly, and will also show how stylistics can be a valuable tool for the literary critic.

Let us start with an initial interpretation of the poem. Like many of Cummings' poems, '(listen)' appears to be a celebration of the imminent arrival of spring and all the joy and newness it brings. There is a dynamic feel to the poem and, of course, along with the references to new life we can note the related sexual connotations. The poem seems also to be an address to a lover to share the poet's happiness, and to acknowledge the inevitability of the natural world and all that this encompasses. The themes of spring and sex, and nature and man are thus intertwined, creating the quirky humour typical of Cummings. In this case, there is a double-meaning plea to a lover to let nature take its course. The poem is not overtly descriptive in its treatment of spring. Instead, we seem to be presented with a set of random images (e.g. houses, smiles, people, streets) and actions. We will look at the significance of this factor in creating what we perceive to be a poem

about Spring in Section 3.1. To sum up, the speaker appears to be saying that, like the arrival of spring, his love is inevitable and cannot be stopped.

'(listen)' is not a particularly difficult poem in terms of the complexity of the subject matter. What is more difficult is to relate the numerous 'strange' stylistic features that Cummings has chosen to use to our general interpretation. We can begin to do this by looking at the most foregrounded features of the poem. The bits of the poem that stand out because they seem unusual. So, now that we have an initial interpretation of the poem, we can move on and try a thorough linguistic analysis of it.

3. Analysis

The initial interpretation of '(listen)' came about solely as a consequence of looking at the words in the poem. We do not think particularly about the deviant grammatical and graphological elements. An examination of the lexical features, then, is perhaps a good place to start with a more detailed linguistic analysis. We will consider how other poetic effects contribute to the overall meaning of the poem later on.

Lexical Features

Let us consider the open class words in the poem. Open class words are those which carry the majority of meaning in a language, as opposed to closed class (grammatical) words such as determiners (e.g. this, that, the) and prepositions (e.g. in, at, on). Closed class words act like sentence 'glue' and link together open class words in meaningful arrangements (sentences). Table 5.1 shows how the open class words are distributed throughout the poem, and whether they are nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs.

Table 5.1 *Distribution of Open Class Words*

NOUNS	MAIN VERBS	ADJECTIVES	ADVERBS
dog	listen	wonderful	crazily
houses	Barks		easily
eyes	tumbling		quickly
people	look		irrevocably
smiles	stir		
faces	writhe		
streets	opening		
steeple	come (x2)		
sunlight	run (x2)		
leaves	jump		
flowers	shout		
dreams	laugh		
earth	dance		
sky	cry		
trees	sing		
miracle	[i]'s		
poems	arrives		
policemen	hurry		
world	stop		
19	21	1	4

We can see from the above table that the poem consists mainly of nouns and verbs. The nouns are mostly concrete - that is, they refer to physical objects - and only two of the nouns are

abstract (dreams and miracle). It is possible to divide the nouns into two rough areas of meaning, or semantic fields. Table 5.2 shows how we might do this:

Table 5.2 *Distribution of Open Class Words*

NOUNS RELATED TO NATURE	NOUNS RELATED TO HUMANS
dog, sunlight, leaves, flowers, earth, sky, trees, miracle, world	houses, eyes, people, smiles, faces, streets, steeples, dreams, poems, policemen

The mixture of nouns in the poem belonging to these two different semantic classes could be said to account for what we perceive as an interconnection between nature and man. The initial impression of the poem is that there was some kind of conflict between these two elements. This is explained in part by the preceding table. The two abstract nouns, dreams and miracle, could belong to either category and might be seen to connect the two semantic classes.

If we now look at the verbs in the poem, we can see that they create a sense of immediacy as we read it. They also contribute to our understanding of it as an address

to another person. All the verbs which are marked for tense (finite verbs) are in the present tense. So we have present simple verbs such as 'barks' [2], 'is' [19] and 'arrives' [24] and present progressive forms such as 'are [eagerly] tumb/ling' [6/7/8] and 'o-p-e-n-i-n-g/are' [12/13]. In addition to helping to establish a sense of immediacy, the progressive present participles ('tumbling' and 'opening') indicate the ongoing ('stretched') nature of the actions. This contributes to the idea of the inevitability of nature. Spring is arriving even as the poet speaks. This is also reinforced by the four adverbs of manner, which convey a sense of speed (quickly), excitement (crazily, eagerly) and inevitability (irrevocably).

The sense of getting of the poem being an address to another person is achieved through the use of directive verbs. Twelve of the verbs in the poem take this form (listen, look, come (x2), run (x2), jump, shout, laugh, dance, cry, sing). Directives can be used for commanding (Do your essay!), inviting (Come in), warning (Mind your head) etc. In '(listen)' they appear to be used (1) to plead with, and to urge the addressee to join in with, the speaker's celebration of Spring, and (2) to share in, and contribute to, his feelings of happiness (for example, in the lines 'run run/with me now' and 'sing)for it's Spring'). Note, too, that in the final stanza there is a second person pronoun ('you') and that in line 29 this addressee is referred to as 'my darling', suggesting a romantic relationship between the speaker and whomever he/she is addressing.

There are no unusual words in the poem—no neologisms, for example, and no unconventional affixation, which Cummings often uses in his other poems. However, some of the words are arranged on the page in a seemingly strange way. Wonderful, for example, runs across two lines and as a consequence is highly foregrounded. Dividing the word across the morphemes (wonder and ful) allows us two interpretative effects. We first read the word as the noun wonder, and then as the adjective wonderful. The graphological deviation here foregrounds the word and creates a density of meaning. Since deviation is such an apparent feature in '(listen)', it is worth examining it in more detail. We can also consider parallelism and the foregrounding effects that this creates.

Deviation and parallelism

Perhaps the most striking aspect of deviation in '(listen)' is the almost constant use of lower case letters where we would normally expect capitals. This is typical of Cummings's poetry and so we cannot attribute any great significance to it, other than his desire to break with normal convention. However, one of the effects of this graphological deviation is to foreground any instances where Cummings does use capitalization. Hence, we can infer that the word 'spring' in line 19 is an important concept in the poem. It is the first word we come across with initial capitalization. Likewise, the final line of the poem [31] is heavily foregrounded by each word beginning with a capital letter. This emphasizes the idea being expressed here; namely that nothing (least of all poetry) and nobody is able to stop the progression of Spring or the poet's love for his addressee—not even conventionally powerful people such as policemen. Cummings perhaps chooses 'policemen' because they are a stereotypical example of powerful people.

In addition to the graphological deviations, there are also a number of grammatical deviations in the poem. Many of these occur through Cummings' tendency to use punctuation where it would not normally be necessary. So, for instance, we get

phrases being bracketed where there is no grammatical need, in order to express the notion of two events happening at the same time. An example would be in lines twelve and thirteen - 'o-p-e-n-i-n-g/are (leaves; flowers) dreams'. Here, the bracketed part of line thirteen seems to mean that leaves and flowers are physically opening at the same time as the poet's dreams are opening metaphorically. Again, this contributes to our understanding of the poem as being very active and dynamic. Note the additional semantic deviation here—dreams cannot actually open and so this part of the line is foregrounded. This suggests that with the arrival of spring, the speaker becomes more aware of his dreams and aspirations, more 'open' in the sense of receptive and unguarded.

Cummings tries to capture the idea of a multitude of thoughts occurring simultaneously by breaking grammatical conventions. In addition to his use of bracketed phrases, groups of nouns are often run together without punctuation (e.g. lines three to six and line twenty-two), and we also find both definite and indefinite reference within the same clause ('this a dog barks'; a possible explanation for this is that 'this' is used to show that the speaker is referring to a specific dog, but 'a' is also used because the speaker is not familiar with the animal. He is not aware of its name. By using both definite and indefinite reference, the poet is able to convey this idea.). Such features, are what Blackmur (1954) dismissed as 'peculiarities'. However, if we examine these closely we can see that there is actually a systematicity to the deviations, and that they do indeed contribute to meaning. We can see an example of this in lines seven and eight. Here, Cummings divides the word tumbling so that the progressive morpheme *-ing* appears on a separate line. This foregrounds the verb and also creates a homological effect, or what Short (2000) refers to as a 'graphology-symbolic' effect. This is where a word or a piece of text actually looks like the concept that it represents. For example, if I were to write the word like this. In lines seven and eight, the verb appears to 'tumble' from one line to the next and so we understand the action to be an important concept within the poem. Similarly, in line twelve, Cummings uses deviant punctuation to split the progressive participle 'opening' into its component letters ('o-p-e-n-i-n-g'). Again, this foregrounds the verb and creates the homological effect of the word actually opening. Notice as well that the hyphens also suggest that the opening is a long, drawn-out process, reminiscent of the slowness with which flowers bloom, especially when contrasted with the following line which contains no spaces between words and punctuation marks.

If we look closely at the occurrences of graphological deviation in the poem, we can see that it often works to foreground the dynamic verbs. This refers to those verbs which imply action of some sort. Line ten ('-look-') is an example of this. The line consists of a single verb in the imperative mood, foregrounded by a hyphen either side of it. The initial verb of line fourteen is also

foregrounded due to the deviant punctuation (a comma is used to begin the line). And in line eleven ('selves, stir: writhe'), the verbs are foregrounded through being connected by a colon and by the lack of spaces between words.

Other actions are foregrounded in different ways. In line fifteen, we get repetition of the verb, and in lines sixteen, seventeen and eighteen, the verbs occur in an unpunctuated list, with the list in brackets running on to a new line. Line twelve is foregrounded at a number of different levels; graphology (which we have already mentioned), grammar (through an inversion of the expected subject-verb-object word order, which has the effect of placing the emphasis of the clause on the action) and semantics. This is done by having an inanimate abstract noun ('dreams') functioning

as the subject of a dynamic verb. All these deviations focus our attention on the actions in '(listen)' and contribute to the sense we have of the poem being very dynamic. You can see, then, that our stylistic analysis is so far upholding our initial interpretation of the poem.

In addition to the graphological deviation in the poem, there is also some degree of graphological parallelism in the arrangement of the poem into stanzas. There are several possible ways of describing the graphological organization of the poem. It may be seen as five 6-line stanzas (the first line of each stanza being separated from the remaining 5 by a line space), with a stand-alone line at the end of the poem. Alternatively, we might describe it as being made up of five 5-line stanzas, all interspersed with a single line. However you prefer to see it, what this seems to suggest is that there is some order to the poem. It is not the chaotic graphological jumble that it first appears. It is difficult, though, to know what to make of the parallel structure of the poem, and if we were to try and relate it to our initial impression of the poem it would be a pretty tenuous interpretation. However, one researcher who has studied a number of Cummings poems suggests that graphological parallelism is a significant stylistic feature in his poetry. Dixit (1977) studied a corpus of E.E. Cummings poems in detail and concluded that, far from being arbitrary examples of deviation, the poems are, in fact, systematically deviant. She explains that:

When the poet chooses to talk about spring, his poem displays a regular cyclic structure like that of the seasons themselves.

(Dixit 1977: 87-88)

Obviously, it is no accident that Cummings structured the poem as he did, and the above is one possible explanation as to why.

Another instance of parallelism in the poem occurs at the phonological level, where we find the repetition of particular sounds. Although '(listen)' does not have a rhyme scheme of any regularity (in fact, all that saves it from being defined as free verse is the regularity of its graphological organization on the page), Cummings does make use of internal rhyme at particular points within the poem. There is no strict pattern to its occurrence, yet there is some degree of phonological parallelism in each stanza except the last two. Often we find a repetition of vowel sounds in words in close proximity to each other, as we can see in the examples below (vowel sounds are in bold):

how crazily houses	[3]
eyes people smiles steeples are	[4]
eagerly	[6]
...wonder/ful sunlight,	[8,9]

come quickly come	[14]
sing) for it's Spring	[19]

What we can note from this is that the absence of phonological parallelism in the last stanza again foregrounds this part of the poem. The last stanza, then, is heavy with deviation, which suggests it is important in interpretative terms.

Congruence of foregrounding in the final stanza

As we have seen so far, there is a strong element of foregrounding in the final stanza of '(listen)'. This is what Leech (1969) describes as 'congruence' of foregrounding, which is where we get lots of different types of foregrounding occurring at once. This is obviously very important for our interpretation of the poem but before coining to

any overall conclusion about meaning; let us consider again exactly what elements are foregrounded here.

First, there is the internal deviation that we noticed with the initial capitalization of each word in the last line. Secondly, unlike in the other stanzas, there is a lack of any sort of phonological parallelism. There is disregard of the obvious lack of punctuation and the grammatical ordering of the stanza follows conventional rules of syntax. What is interesting about these foregrounded elements is that they are all the result of internal deviation. They are all foregrounded because they conform to our normal expectations of written language. In addition to the numerous deviant features of the poem in the other stanzas, what we have in the last stanza is a kind of 'reverse' deviation. The most strongly foregrounded features of '(listen)' are those which we would usually define as 'normal'.

The effect of all this is to make it unusually easy for us to understand the last stanza. There is no difficult interpretative work to do in comparison to the rest of the poem. So the final message of the poem is made extremely clear; nothing and nobody can stop the progress of spring and the poet's love. This implies that we should not struggle against these forces, but simply resign ourselves to accepting and becoming participants in them.

4. Conclusion

Now we have analysed the poem stylistically and we are in a position to write some sort of conclusion to our study. Here, you can reflect on whether or not your initial interpretation was borne out, and on those features of the text which you were perhaps not able to account for.

The analysis of '(listen)' shows how we can use stylistics to uphold an interpretation of a poem, and how it can also highlight elements of a poem that we might otherwise miss. It also enables us to speculate with more certainty on precisely why E.E. Cummings chooses to use such seemingly odd stylistic techniques in '(listen)'. For example, we saw that deviant punctuation is linked to the foregrounding of dynamic verbs, explaining why we perceive so much 'movement' in the poem.

Analyzing the poem stylistically also highlights how the most internally deviant features of the poem are those which we would usually consider being 'normal'. They are also non-deviant language in both everyday communication and within poetry, and suggest a reason as to why this might be. Stylistics is helpful in explaining parts of a text which we might not otherwise understand.

There are particular features of the poem, though, which have not been presented here. For example, the comma between 'selves' and 'stir' in line eleven is not explained. The relevance of the

colon just before 'every' in line twenty-three is not known. A stylistic analysis which could account for these factors would obviously supersede the one is given here.

In general though, it is described as to how the linguistic features of a poem are directly related to meaning. We have upheld the initial interpretation of '(listen)'. Of course, this is not the only interpretation which could be given to the poem. However, by using a systematic analytical technique like stylistics, we can ensure that our interpretation is as explicit and grounded in fact as it can be. It is also highly likely that . any other stylistic analysis of the poem would include at least some of these conclusions. We have shown you how to explain why a text makes you feel a particular way, and have convinced you that stylistics is a useful tool for anybody interpreting literary texts.

ACTIVITY

Write an essay on a topic of your choice using the necessary elements that you have studied in this unit.

5.3 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- In order to appreciate literature, the reader or critic must understand the fundamental theory that literature can best be thought of as a process of communication between the writer and his audience. This understanding enables the critic to analyse any piece of writing.
- A good reader and a critic is one who can respond to the unfamiliar. In literature, one does not know in advance just how we should be expected to respond and the demand for alternative component.
- Writing is that form of communication which reveals the sender's clarity of thought and expression in encoding a message. Barbara Tuchman, a well-known historian, has very aptly said that though effective communication needs both a sender and a receiver, this process can become more successful if the writer (who is the sender in this case) keeps the written form (the message) simple, concise and brief.
- Effective writing skills entail planning before writing, identifying the purpose of writing, considering the needs of the audience, choosing appropriate language and effective tone. The ability to communicate a message in a simple, concise and accurate written form makes a person's writing skills effective.
- "• Stylistics is concerned with establishing the principles that are capable of explaining the choices made by individuals and social groups while using language. Some important features of stylistics include the use of dialogue, and this includes regional accents and dialects, descriptive language, grammar and so on. Stylistics also determines the nexus between the form and effects within a particular variety of language.
- Semantics is described as the linguistic study of the meaning of words, phrases and sentences. Linguistic semantics, therefore, deals with the conventional meaning conveyed by the use of words, phrases and sentences of a language:
- Meanings of words can be seen at least in two different ways—conceptual or literal

meaning and associative or figurative meaning. Conceptual or literal meaning is what is available at the surface of an utterance. Figurative meaning or associative meaning (sometimes also referred to as symbolic or implied meaning) is the meaning which is derived from the interpretation. It involves figurative meaning such as metaphor, symbol, irony.

- The concept of deviation is important to the study in literary texts. Deviation is used as an important stylistic device by the poets and writers to emphasize the theme and the significance of their writing. It is a stylistically distinctive feature. When we use the word deviation, we mean that the language of the deviant construction varies from the normal grammatical or linguistic rules.

- **Foregrounding** Can any process in writing bring something into the most central and prominent figures in literary texts, foregrounding is used as a device by which some pieces of information are given more prominence in relation to other pieces of information. The prominent information is

put in the background.

5.4 KEY TERMS

- **Collocation:** A collocation is any habitually linked group of words, a kind of lexical partnership
- **Figurative language:** A type of language that deviates from the norms of literal language, in which words mean a
- **Intonation:** Refers to the rise and fall of the voice in speech
- **Metaphor:** The process of comparing one thing to another using like, as or than
- **Metonymy:** Refers to substitution of a word or phrase for another word or phrase that is closely associated with it
- **Phonetics:** The study of the physical production of speech sounds
- **Prefix:** A morpheme which is added before the root morpheme in the formation of a word

Stress: The process of giving prominence to syllables

- **Style:** The result of the choices that a writer (or speaker) makes regarding aspects of language
- **Suffix:** A morpheme which is added after a root
- **Syntax:** Comprises the rules governing the structure of sentences
- **Voicing:** Refers to whether or not the vocal cords are vibrated during the production of a phone

vocal cords and then freely out of the mouth

5.5 ANSWERS

1. Rhythm
2. A poem is written in units of four-six lines which are exactly alike in form. Such units or divisions in a poem are called stanzas.
3. A collocation is any habitually linked group of words, a kind of lexical partnership.
4. False
5. Stylistics

6. Metonymy to substitution of a word or phrase to stand for a word or phrase similar in meaning.

5.6 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What do you understand by rhythm?
2. What is the difference between rhyme and rhythm?
3. What is foregrounding?
4. What do you understand by parallelism?
5. Give five examples of forms of prose.
6. Distinguish between metaphor and metonymy.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the characteristics of poetry.
2. What do you understand by effective writing skills?
3. Write a short note on: Stylistics of writing.
4. Explain the concepts of deviation and parallelism.

5.7 FURTHER READING

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