UNIT-17 LITERARY TERMS

STRUCTURE

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17.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall

- Learn a few selected literary terms, along with their detail meaning.
- Learn about association of the terms discussed in this unit.

17.1 INTRODUCTION

This present unit defines and discusses terms that are commonly used to understand, classify, analyze, and interpret literature. The selected literary terms will definitely provide guideline for further reading of literature especially toward undergraduate students of English, and other literatures. However, these literary terms are proved to be a useful for advanced students, as well as for the general reader with literary interests.

17.2 LITERARY TERMS

1. Act and Scene: An act is one of the major divisions in the action of a play. In England, it was introduced by Elizabethan dramatists, who imitated ancient Roman plays by structuring the action into five acts. Acts are often subdivided into scenes, which in modern plays usually consist of units of action in which there is no change of place or break in the continuity of time. In the conventional theater with a proscenium arch that frames the front of the stage, the end of a scene is usually indicated by a dropped curtain or a dimming of the lights and the end of an act by a dropped curtain and an intermission.

2. Alliteration: It is the repetition of a speech sound in a sequence of nearby words. The term is usually applied only to consonants, and only when the re-current sound begins a word or a stressed syllable within a word.

3. Antihero: The chief person in a modern novel, whose character is widely discrepant from that which we associate with the traditional protagonist or hero of a serious literary work. The antihero is petty, ignominious, passive, ineffectual, or dishonest. The term "antihero," however, is usually applied to writings in the period of disillusion after the Second World War, beginning with such protagonists as we find in John Wain's Hurry on Down (1953) and Kingsley Amis' Lucky Jim (1954).

The antihero is especially conspicuous in dramatic tragedy, in which the protagonist had usually been of high estate, dignity, and courage. Extreme instances are the characters who people a world stripped of certainties, values, or even meaning in Samuel Beckett's dramas—the tramps Vladimir and Estragon in Waiting for Godot (1952).

4. Ballad: A ballad is a song, which is transmitted orally. Ballads are narrative techniques of folk songs, which originate, and are communicated orally. The initial version of a ballad was composed by a single author, but he or she is unknown; and since each singer who learns and repeats an oral ballad is apt to introduce changes in both the text and the tune, it exists in many variant forms. Many traditional ballads probably originated in the later middle age, they were not collected and printed until the eighteenth century, first in England, then in Germany. The basic modern collection is Francis J. Child's English and Scottish *Popular Ballads* (1882-98), which includes 305 ballads, many of them in variant versions.

5. Biography: John Dryden defined biography as "the history of particular men's lives". Both the ancient Greeks and Romans produced short, formal lives of individuals. The eighteenth century in England is the age of the emergence of the full-scale biography, and also of the theory of biography as a special literary *genre.* In our own time biographies of notable women and men have become one of the most popular of literary forms, and usually there is at least one biographical title high on the bestseller list for example, Steve Jobs by Walter Isaacson.

6. Blank Verse: It consists of lines of *iambic pentameter* which are unrhymed. John Milton used blank verse for his epic *Paradise Lost* (1667). A large number of meditative lyrics, from the *Romantic Period* to the present, have also been written in blank verse, including Coleridge's *Frost at Midnight*, and Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*.

7. Canon of Literature: The Greek word "kanon," suggesting a measuring rod or a rule, was extended to denote a list or catalogue, then came to be applied to the list of books in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament which were designated by church authorities as the genuine Holy Scriptures. The term "canon" was later used in a literary application to signify the list of secular works accepted by experts as genuinely written by a particular author. The collection of essays edited by Robert von Hallberg, *Canons* (1984); John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (1993); and Wendell V. Harris, *Canonicity, PULA, 106* (1991) are the examples of canons.

8. Character and Characterization: The character is the name of a literary *genre;* it is a short, and usually witty. The genre was inaugurated by Theophrastus, a Greek author of the second century B.C., who wrote a lively book entitled *Characters.* The books of characters then written by Joseph Hall, Sir Thomas Overbury, and John Earle influenced later writers of essays, history, and fiction. A character may remain stable or unchanged in outlook and disposition, from beginning to end of a work for example Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest,* Micawber in Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield,* or may undergo a radical change, either through a gradual process of development or as the result of a crisis for example Shakespeare's *King Lear,* Pip in Dickens' *Great Expectations.* E. M. Forster, in his book *Aspects of the Novel* introduced popular new terms i.e flat and round characters. A flat character Forster says, is built around 'a single idea or quality' and a round character is presented in complex manner.

9. Chorus: Chorus was famous among the ancient Greeks. A group of people, wearing masks, who sang or chanted verses while performing dance like maneuvers at religious festivals Roman playwrights such as Seneca took over the chorus from the Greeks, and in the mid-sixteenth century some English dramatists imitated the Senecan chorus. The classical type of chorus was never widely adopted by English dramatic writers. During the Elizabethan Age the term "chorus" was applied also to a single person who spoke the prologue and epilogue to a play, and sometimes introduced each act as well.

Modern scholars use the term choral character to refer to a person within the play itself who stands apart from the action and by his comments provides the audience with a special perspective through which to view the other characters and events.

10.Conceit: It means a concept or image. English poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries adapted the term from the Italian 'concetto'. There are two types of conceit.

- The Petrarchan conceit is a type of figure used in love poems that had been novel and effective in the Italian poet Petrarch, but became hackneyed in some of his imitators among the *Elizabethan* sonneteers. sonnet of Petrarch's translated by Wyatt begins with an oxymoron describing the opposing passions experienced by a courtly sufferer from the disease of love:

Ifindno peace; and all my war is done;
I fear and hope; I burn and freeze in ice.

- The metaphysical conceit is a characteristic figure in John Donne (1572-1631) and other metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century. It was described by Samuel Johnson, in a famed passage in his "Life of Cowley," (1779-81), as "wit" which is a kind of *discordia Concors*- a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike, the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together.

10. Connotation and Denotation: In literary usage, the denotation of a word is its primary signification or reference; its connotation is the range of secondary or associated significations and feelings which it commonly suggests or implies. Example, ‘home’ denotes the house where one lives, but connotes privacy and intimacy that is the reason real estate agents like to use ‘home’ instead of ‘house’ in their advertisements. Poems typically establish contexts that bring into play some part of the connotative as well as the denotative mean-ing of words. In his poem "Virtue" George Herbert wrote,

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky.

11. Criticism: Criticism is the overall term for studies concerned with defining, classifying, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating works of literature. Theoretical criticism proposes an explicit theory of literature, in the sense of general principles, together with a set of terms, distinctions, and categories, to be applied to identifying and analyzing works of literature, as well as the criteria by which these works and their writers are to be evaluated. Applied criticism, concerns itself with the discussion of particular works and writers; in an applied critique, the theoretical principles controlling the mode of the analysis, interpretation, and evaluation are often left implicit, or brought in only as the occasion demands. Impressionistic criticism attempts to represent in words the felt qualities of a particular passage or work, and to express the responses that the work directly evokes from the critic.

12. Drama: It is the form of composition designed for performance in the theater, in which actors take the roles of the characters, perform the indicated action, and utter the written dialogue. In poetic drama the dialogue is written in verse, which in English is usually *blank verse*. Almost all the *heroic dramas* of the English Restoration Period, were written in *heroic couplets* A closet drama is written in dramatic form, with dialogue, indicated settings, and stage directions, but is intended by the author to be read rather than to be performed; examples are Milton's *Samson Agonistes* Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), and Hardy's *The Dynasts.*

13. Dramatic Monologue: A monologue is a lengthy speech by a single person. In a play, when a character utters a monologue that expresses his or her private thoughts, it is known as a soliloquy. The dramatic monologue has the following features. (1) A single person, who is patently *not* the poet, utters the speech that makes up the whole of the poem, in a specific situation at a critical moment (2) This person ad-dresses and interacts with one or more other people; but we know of the auditors' presence, and what they say and do, only from clues in the discourse of the single speaker. (3) The main principle controlling the poet's formulation of what the lyric speaker says is to reveal to the reader, in a way that enhances its interest, the speaker's temperament and character.

14. Elegy: In Greek and Roman literature, ‘elegy denoted any poem written in elegiac meter**.** The term was also used, however, to refer to the subject matter of change and loss frequently ex-pressed in the elegiac verse form, especially in complaints about love. John Donne's elegies, written in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, are love poems. An important subtype of the *elegy is* the pastoral elegy, which *represents* both the poet and the one he mourns who is usually also a poet as shepherds. This poetic form was originated by the Sicilian Greek poet Theocritus, was continued by the Roman Virgil, was developed in various European countries during the Renaissance, and remained current in English poetry throughout the nineteenth century.

15. Enlightenment: The name applied to an intellectual movement and cultural ambiance which developed in western Europe during the seventeenth century and reached its height in the eighteenth. The common element was a trust in human reason as adequate to solve the crucial problems and to establish the essential norms in life, together with the belief that the application of reason was rapidly dissipating the darkness of superstition, prejudice, and barbarity, was freeing humanity from its earlier reliance on mere authority and unexamined tradition, and had opened the prospect of progress toward a life in this world of universal peace and happiness.

16. Fiction and Truth: In comprehensive sense, fiction is any literary *narrative,* whether in prose or verse, which is invented instead of being an account of events that in fact happened. In a narrower sense, however, fiction denotes only narratives that are written in prose, and sometimes is used simply as a synonym for the novel. Literary prose narratives in which the fiction is to a prominent degree based on biographical, historical, or contemporary facts are often referred to by compound names such as *fictional biography, the historical novel, and the nonfiction novel.*

17. Form and Structure: ‘Form’ is one of the most frequent terms in literary criticism, but also one of the most diverse in its meanings. It is often used merely to designate a *genre* or literary type, or for patterns of meter, lines, and rhymes.

18. Genres: It denotes types or classes of literature. The genres into which literary works have been grouped at different times are very numerous, and the criteria on which the classifications have been based are different.

19. Graveyard Poets: A term applied to eighteenth-century poets who wrote meditative poems, usually set in a graveyard, on the theme of human mortality, in moods which range from elegiac pensiveness to profound gloom. Examples are Edward Young's long *Night Thoughts*, and Robert Blair's *The Grave*. The vogue resulted in one of the most widely known English poems, Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. The writing of graveyard poems spread from England to Continental literature in the second part of the century and is represented in America by William Cullen Bryant's *Thanatopsis.*

20. Imitation: In literary criticism the word imitation has two frequent but diverse applications: (1) to define the nature of literature and the other arts, and (2)to indicate the relation of one literary work to another literary work which served as its model.

21. Imagery: This is one of the most common in criticism, and one of the most variable in meaning. Its applications range all the way from the 'mental pictures' which, it is sometimes claimed, are experienced by the reader of a poem, to the totality of the components which make up a poem.

Imagery is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a poem or other work of literature, whether by literal description, by *allusion,* or its similes and metaphors. For example in William Wordsworth's *She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways,* the imagery in this broad sense includes the literal objects the poem refers to for example, 'untrodden ways,' 'springs' and 'grave', as well as the 'violet' of the metaphor and the 'star' of the simile in the second stanza.

22. Local Color: The detailed representation in prose fiction of the setting, dialect, customs, dress, and ways of thinking and feeling which are distinctive of a particular region, such as Thomas Hardy's *Wessex*. After the Civil War a number of American writers exploited the literary possibilities of local color in various parts of America. The term 'local color writing' is often applied to works which, like O. Henry's or Damon Runyon's stories set in New York City, rely for their interest mainly on a sentimental or comic representation of the surface particularities of a region, instead of on more deep-seated, complex, and general human characteristics and problems.

23. Lyric: In the most common use of the term, a lyric is any fairly short poem, consisting of the utterance by a single speaker, who expresses a state of mind or a process of perception, thought, and feeling.
Although the lyric is uttered in the first person, the "I" in the poem need not be the poet who wrote it. In the original Greek, 'lyric' signified a song rendered to the accompaniment of a lyre. In some current usages, lyric still retains the sense of a poem written to be set to music; the *hymn,* for example, is a lyric on a religious subject that is intended to be sung.

24. **Metaphysical Poets:** John Dryden said in his Discourse Concerning Satire (1693) that John Donne in his poetry "affects the metaphysics," meaning that Donne employs the terminology and abstruse arguments of the medieval Scholastic philosophers. In 1779 Samuel Johnson extended the term "meta-physical" from Donne to a school of poets, in the acute and balanced critique which he incorporated in his "Life of Cowley." The name is now applied to a group of seventeenth-century poets who, whether or not directly influenced by Donne, employ similar poetic procedures and imagery, both in secular poetry (Cleveland, Marvell, Cowley) and in religious poetry (Herbert, Vaughan, Crashaw, and Traherne).

Attempts have been made to demonstrate that these poets had in common a philosophical worldview. The term "metaphysical," however, fits these very diverse writers only if it is used, as Johnson used it, to indicate a common poetic style, use of figurative language, and way of organizing the meditative process or the poetic argument. Donne set the metaphysical mode by writing poems which are sharply opposed to the rich mellifluousness and the idealized view of human nature and of sexual love which had constituted a central tradition in Elizabethan poetry, especially in Spenser and the writers of Petrarchan sonnets; Donne's poems are opposed also to the fluid, regular verification of Donne's contemporaries, the Cavalier poets. Instead, Donne wrote in a diction and meter modeled on the rough give-and-take of actual speech, and often organized his poems in the form of an urgent or heated argument—with a reluctant mistress, or an intruding friend, or God, or death, or with himself. He employed a subtle and often deliberately outrageous logic; he was realistic, ironic, and sometimes cynical in his treatment of the complexity of human motives, especially in the sexual relation; and whether playful or serious, and whether writing the poetry of love or of intense religious experience, he was above all "witty," making ingenious use of paradox, pun, and startling parallels in simile and metaphor (see metaphysical conceit and wit).

25. Meter: Meter is the recurrence, in regular units, of a prominent feature in the sequence of speech-sounds of a language. There are four main types of meter in European languages: (1) In classical Greek and Latin, the meter was quantitative; that is, it was established by the relative duration of the utterance of a syllable, and consisted of a recurrent pattern of long and short syllables. (2) In French and many other Romance languages, the meter is syllabic, depending on the number of syllables within a line of verse, without regard to the fall of the stresses. (3) In the older Germanic languages, including Old English, the meter is accentual, depending on the number of stressed syllables within a line, without regard to the number of intervening unstressed syllables. (4) The fourth type of meter, combining the features of the two preceding types, is accentual-syllabic, in which the metric units consist of a recurrent pattern of stresses on a recurrent number of syllables. The stress-and-syllable type has been the predominant meter of English poetry since the fourteenth century.

The meter is determined by the pattern of stronger and weaker stresses on the syllables composing the words in the verse-line; the stronger is called the "stressed" syllable and all the weaker ones the "unstressed" syllables. (What the ear perceives as a strong stress is not an absolute quantity, but is relative to the degree of stress in the adjacent syllables.) Three major factors determine where the stresses (in the sense of the relatively stronger stresses or accents) will fall in a line of verse:

(1) Most important is the "word accent" in words of more than one syllable; in the noun "accent" itself, for example, the stress falls on the first syllable.

(2) There are also many monosyllabic words in the language, and on which of these—in a sentence or a phrase—the stress will fall depends on the grammatical function of the word (we normally put stronger stress on nouns, verbs, and adjectives, for example, than on articles or prepositions), and depends also on the "rhetorical accent," or the emphasis we give a word because we want to enhance its importance in a particular utterance.

(3) Another determinant of perceived stress is the prevailing "metrical accent," which is the beat that we have come to expect, in accordance with the stress pattern that was established earlier in the metrical composition.

A foot is the combination of a strong stress and the associated weak stress or stresses which make up the recurrent metric unit of a line. The relatively stronger-stressed syllable is called, for short, "stressed"; the relatively weaker-stressed syllables are called "light," or most commonly, "unstressed."

The four standard feet distinguished in English are:

(1) **Iambic** (the noun is "iamb"): an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable.

The cúr I few tolls I the knéll I of par I ting day. I (Thomas Gray,
"Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard")

(2) **Anapestic** (the noun is "anapest"): two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable.

The Äs syr I iän came down I like ä wólf I on the fold. I (Lord Byron,
"The Destruction of Sennacherib")

(3) **Trochaic** (the noun is "trochee"): a stressed followed by an unstressed syllable.

There they I are, my I fif ty I men and I wó men. I
(Robert Browning, "One Word More")

Most trochaic lines lack the final unstressed syllable—in the technical term, such lines are catalectic. So in Blake's "The Tiger":

Tí gér! I tí gër! I burn ing I bright I
In the I fo rest I of the I night. I

(4) **Dactylic** (the noun is "dactyl"): a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables.

Eve, with her I bas kët, was I
Deep in the I bells and grass. I

(Ralph Hodgson, "Eve")

Iambs and **anapests**, since the strong stress is at the end, are called "rising meter"; trochees and dactyls, with the strong stress at the beginning, are called "falling meter." Iambs and trochees, having two syllables, are called "duple meter"; anapests and dactyls, having three syllables, are called "triple meter." It should be noted that the iamb is by far the commonest English foot.

Two other feet are often distinguished by special titles, although they occur in English meter only as variants from standard feet:

Spondaic (the noun is "spondee"): two successive syllables with approximately equal strong stresses, as in each of the first two feet of this line:

Good stróngl thick stulpë fyl ing inlcënse smóke.I
(Browning, "The Bishop Orders His Tomb")

Pyrrhic (the noun is also "pyrrhic"): a foot composed of two succes-sive syllables with approximately equal light stresses, as in the second and fourth feet in this line:

My way I is to I be gin I with the I be gin ningl
(Byron, Don Juan)

A metric line is named according to the number of feet composing it:

Monometer: one foot
Dimeter: two feet
Trimeter: three feet
Tetrameter: four feet
Pentameter: five feet
Hexameter: six feet (an Alexandrine is a line of six iambic feet)
Heptameter: seven feet (a fourteener is another term for a line of seven iambic feet—hence, of fourteen syllables; it tends to break into a unit of four feet followed by a unit of three feet)
Octameter: eight feet

26. Miracle Plays, Morality Plays, and Interludes: Miracle Plays, Morality Plays, and Interludes are types of late-medieval drama, written in a variety of verse forms.

The **miracle** play had as its subject either a story from the Bible, or else the life and martyrdom of a saint. In the usage of some historians, however, "Miracle play" denotes only dramas based on saints' lives, and the term mystery play—"mystery" in the archaic sense of the "trade" conducted by each of the medieval guilds who sponsored these plays—is applied only to dramas based on the Bible.

Morality plays were dramatized allegories of a representative Christian life in the plot form of a quest for salvation, in which the crucial events are temptations, sinning, and the climactic confrontation with death.

Interlude (Latin, "between the play") is a term applied to a variety of short stage entertainments, such as secular farces and witty dialogues with a religious or political point.

Until the middle of the present century, concern with medieval drama was scholarly rather than critical. Since that time a number of studies have dealt with the relations of the texts to the religious and secular culture of medieval Europe, and have stressed the artistic excellence and power of the plays themselves.

27. Modernism and Postmodernism: The term modernism is widely used to identify new and distinctive features in the subjects, forms, concepts, and styles of literature and the other arts in the early decades of the present century, but especially after World War I (1914-18). The specific features signified by "modernism" (or by the adjective modernist) vary with the user, but many critics agree that it involves a deliberate and radical break with some of the traditional bases not only of Western art, but of Western culture in general. Important intellectual precursors of modernism, in this sense, are thinkers who had questioned the certainties that had supported traditional modes of social organization, religion, and morality, and also traditional ways of conceiving the human self—thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and James G. Frazer.

Literary historians locate the beginning of the modernist revolt as far back as the 1890s, but most agree that what is called high modernism, marked by an unexampled range and rapidity of change, came after the first World War. The year 1922 alone was signalized by the simultaneous appearance of such monuments of modernist innovation as James Joyce's Ulysses, T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land, and Virginia Woolf's Jacob's Room, as well as many other experimental works of literature. The catastrophe of the war had shaken faith in the moral basis, coherence, and durability of Western civilization and raised doubts about the adequacy of traditional literary modes to represent the harsh and dissonant realities of the postwar world.

A prominent feature of modernism is the phenomenon called the avant-garde (a military metaphor: "advance-guard"); that is, a small, self-conscious group of artists and authors who deliberately undertake, in Ezra Pound's phrase, to "make it new."

The term **postmodernism** is often applied to the literature and art after World War II (1939-45), when the effects on Western morale of the first war were greatly exacerbated by the experience of Nazi totalitarianism and mass extermination, the threat of total destruction by the atomic bomb, the progressive devastation of the natural environment, and the ominous fact of over-population. Postmodernism involves not only a continuation, sometimes carried to an extreme, of the counter traditional experiments of modernism, but also diverse attempts to break away from modernist forms which had, inevitably, become in their turn conventional, as well as to overthrow the elitism of modernist "high art" by recourse to the models of "mass culture" in film, television, newspaper cartoons, and popular music. Many of the works of post-modern literature—by Jorge Luis Borges, Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov, Thomas Pynchon, Roland Barthes, and many others—so blend literary genres, cultural and stylistic levels, the serious and the playful, that they resist classification according to traditional literary rubrics. And these literary anomalies are paralleled in other arts by phenomena like pop art, op art, the musical compositions of John Cage, and the films of Jean-Luc Godard and other directors.

28. Novel: The term "**novel**" is now applied to a great variety of writings that have in common only the attribute of being extended works of fiction written in prose. As an extended narrative, the novel is distinguished from the short story and from the work of middle length called the novelette; its magnitude permits a greater variety of characters, greater complication of plot (or plots), ampler development of milieu, and more sustained exploration of character and motives than do the shorter, more concentrated modes. As a narrative written in prose, the novel is distinguished from the long narratives in verse of Geoffrey Chaucer, Edmund Spenser, and John Milton which, beginning with the eighteenth century, the novel has increasingly supplanted. Within these limits the novel includes such diverse works as Samuel Richardson's Pamela and Laurence Sterne's Tristram Shandy; Jane Austen's Emma and V ginia Woolf's Orlando; Charles Dickens' Pickwick Papers and Henry James' T Wings of the Dove; Leo Tolstoy's War and Peace and Franz Kafka's The Tr Ernest Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises and James Joyce's Finnegans Wak Doris Lessing's The Golden Notebook and Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita.

The term for the novel in most European languages is roman, which is derived from the medieval term, the romance. The English name for the form, on the other hand, is derived from the Italian novella (literally, "a little new thing"), which was a short tale in prose. In fourteenth-century Italy there was a vogue for collections of such tales, some serious and some scandalous; the best known of these collections is Boccaccio's Decameron, which is still avail-able in English translation at any well-stocked bookstore. Currently the term "novella" (or in the German form, Novelle) is often used as an equivalent for novelette: a prose fiction of middle length, such as Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness or Thomas Mann's Death in Venice.

29. Objective and Subjective: The social critic John Ruskin complained in 1856 that "German dullness and English affectation have of late much multiplied among us the use of two of the most objectionable words that were ever coined by the troublesomeness of metaphysicians—namely, Objective' and 'subjective.'" Ruskin was at least in part right. The words were imported into English criticism from the post-Kantian German critics of the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and they have certainly been troublesome. Amid the great variety of sometimes conflicting ways in which the opposition has been applied to literature, one is sufficiently widespread to be worth specifying.

A subjective work is one in which the author incorporates personal experiences, or projects into the narrative his or her personal disposition, judgments, values, and feelings. An objective work is one in which the author presents the invented situation or the fictional characters and their thoughts, feelings, and actions and undertakes to remain detached and noncommittal.

Critics agree, however, that the difference between a subjective and objective literary work is not absolute, but a matter of degree.

30. Ode: A long lyric poem that is serious in subject and treatment, elevated in style, and elaborate in its stanzaic structure. As Norman Maclean has said, the term now calls to mind a lyric which is "massive, public in its proclamations, and Pindaric in its classical prototype" ("From Action to Image," in Critics and Criticism, ed. R. S. Crane, 1952). The prototype was established by the Greek poet Pindar, whose odes were modeled on the songs by the chorus in Greek drama. His complex stanzas were patterned in sets of three: moving in a dance rhythm to the left, the chorus chanted the strophe; moving to the right, the antistrophe; then, standing still, the epode.

The regular or Pindaric ode in English is a close imitation of Pindar's form, with all the strophes and antistrophes written in one stanza pattern, and all the epodes in another. This form was introduced into England by Ben Jonson's ode "To the Immortal Memory and Friendship of That Noble Pair, Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison" (1629); the typical construction can be conveniently studied in this poem or in Thomas Gray's "The Progress of Poesy" (1757). The irregular ode was introduced in 1656 by Abraham Cowley, who imitated the Pindaric style and matter but disregarded the recurrent stanzaic pattern in each strophic triad; instead, he allowed each stanza to establish its own pattern of variable line lengths, number of lines, and rhyme scheme. This type of irregular stanzaic structure, which is free to alter in accordance with shifts in subject and mood, has been the most common for the English ode ever since; Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" (1807) is representative.

The Horatian ode was originally modeled on the matter, tone, and form of the odes of the Roman Horace. In contrast to the passion, visionary boldness, and formal language of Pindar's odes, many Horatian odes are calm, meditative, and colloquial; they are also usually homostrophic (that is, written in a single repeated stanza form), and shorter than the Pindaric ode. Examples are Marvell's "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland" (1650) and Keats' ode "To Autumn" (1820).

31. Plot: The plot (which Aristotle termed the mythos) in a dramatic or narrative work is constituted by its events and actions, as these are rendered and ordered toward achieving particular artistic and emotional effects. This description is deceptively simple, because the actions (including verbal discourse as well as physical actions) are performed by particular characters in a work, and are the means by which they exhibit their moral and dispositional qualities. Plot and character are therefore interdependent critical concepts—as Henry James has said, "What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?" Noti also that a plot is distinguishable from the story—that is, a bare synopsis of the temporal order of what happens.

As a plot evolves it arouses expectations in the audience or reader about the future course of events and actions and how characters will respond to them. A lack of certainty, on the part of a concerned reader, about what is going to happen, especially to characters with whom the reader has established a bond of sympathy, is known as suspense. If what in fact happens violates any expectations we have formed, it is known as surprise. The interplay of suspense and surprise is a prime source of vitality in a traditional plot. The most effective surprise, especially in realistic narratives, is one which turns out, in retrospect, to have been grounded in what has gone before, even though we have hitherto made the wrong inference from the given facts of circumstance and character.

A plot is commonly said to have ‘unity of action’, if it is apprehended by the reader or auditor as a complete and ordered structure of actions, directed toward the intended effect, in which none of the prominent component parts, or incidents, is nonfunctional; as Aristotle put this concept, all the parts are "so closely connected that the transposai or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoint and dislocate the whole." Aristotle claimed that it does not constitute a unified plot to present a series of episodes which are strung together simply because they happen to a single character.

32. Poetic Justice: The term **diction** signifies the types of words, phrases, and sentence structures, and sometimes also of figurative language, that constitute any work of literature. A writer's diction can be analyzed under a great variety of categories, such as the degree to which the vocabulary and phrasing is abstract or concrete, Latin or Anglo-Saxon in origin, colloquial or formal, technical or common.

Many poets in all ages have used a distinctive language, a "poetic diction," which includes words, phrasing, and figures not current in the ordinary discourse of the time. In modern discussion, however, the term **poetic diction** is applied especially to poets who, like Edmund Spenser in the Elizabethan age or G. M. Hopkins in the Victorian age, deliberately employed a diction that deviated markedly not only from common speech, but even from the writings of other poets of their era.

33. Pre-Raphaelites: In 1848 a group of English artists, including Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt, and John Millais, organized the "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood." Their aim was to replace the reigning academic style of painting by a return to the truthfulness, simplicity, and spirit of devo-tion which they attributed to Italian painting before the time of Raphael (1483-1520) and the high Italian Renaissance. The ideals of this group of painters were taken over by a literary movement which included Dante Gabriel Rossetti himself (who was a poet as well as a painter), his sister Christina Rossetti, William Morris, and Algernon Swinburne. Rossetti's poem "The Blessed Damozel" typifies the medievalism, the pictorial realism with symbolic overtones, and the union of flesh and spirit, sensuousness and religiousness, associated with the earlier writings of this school.

34. Prose: Prose is an inclusive term for all discourse, spoken or written, which is not patterned into the lines either of metric verse or of free verse. It is possible to discriminate a great variety of non-metric types of language, which can be placed along a spectrum according to the degree to which they exploit, and make prominent, modes of formal organization. At one end is the irregular, and only occasionally formal, prose of ordinary discourse. Distinguished written discourse, in what John Dryden called "that other harmony of prose," is no less an art than distinguished verse; in all literatures, in fact, artfully written prose seems to have developed later than written verse. As written prose gets more "literary"—whether its function is descriptive, expository, narrative, or expressive—it exhibits more patent, though highly diverse, modes of rhythm and other formal features. The prose translations of the poetic books of the Old Testament in the King James Bible, for example, have a repetition, balance, and contrast of clauses which approximate the form that in the nineteenth century was named "the prose poem."

Prose poems are densely compact, pronouncedly rhythmic, and highly sonorous compositions which are written as a continuous sequence of sentences without line breaks. Examples of prose poems are, in French, Charles Baudelaire's Little Poems in Prose (1869) and Arthur Rimbaud's Illuminations (1886), and in English, excerptible passages in Walter Pater's prose essays, such as his famous meditation on Leonardo da Vinci's painting the Mona Lisa, in The Renaissance (1873). John Ashberry's Three Poems (1972) are prose poems, in that they are printed continuously, without broken lines. Farther still along the formal spectrum, we leave the domain of prose, by the use of line breaks and the controlled rhythms, pauses, syntactical suspensions, and cadences that identify free verse. At the far end of the spectrum we get the regular, recurrent units of weaker and stronger stressed syllables that constitute the meters of English verse.

35. Problem Play: A type of drama that was popularized by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. In problem plays, the situation faced by the protagonist is put forward by the author as a representative instance of a contemporary social problem; often the dramatist manages by the use of a character who speaks for the author, or by the evolution of the plot, or both to pro pose a solution to the problem which is at odds with prevailing opinion. The issue may be the drastically inadequate autonomy, scope, and dignity allotted to women in the middle-class nineteenth-century family (Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House, 1879); or the morality of prostitution, regarded as a typical product of the economic arrangements in a capitalist society (George Bernard Shaw's Mrs. Warren's Profession, 1898); or the crisis in racial and ethnic relations in present-day America (in numerous current dramas and films).

36. Prosody: Prosody signifies the systematic study of versification in poetry; that is, a study of the principles and practice of meter, rhyme, and stanza forms. Some-times the term "prosody" is extended to include also the study of speech-sound patterns and effects such as alliteration, assonance, euphony, and onomatopoeia.

37. Refrain: A line, or part of a line, or a group of lines, which is repeated in the course of a poem, sometimes with slight changes, and usually at the end of each stanza. The refrain occurs in many ballads and work poems, and is a frequent element in Elizabethan songs, where it may be merely a nonverbal carrier of the melodic line, as in Shakespeare's "It Was a Lover and His Lass": "With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino." A famous refrain is that which closes each stanza in Edmund Spenser's "Epithalamion" (1594)—"The woods shall to me answer, and my echo ring"—in which sequential changes indicate the altering sounds during the successive hours of the poet's wedding day.

A refrain may consist only of a single word—"Nevermore" as in Poe's "The Raven" (1845)—or of an entire stanza. If the stanza-refrain occurs in a song, as a section to be sung by all the auditors, it is called the chorus; for, ex-ample, in "Auld Lang Syne" and many other songs by Robert Burns in the late eighteenth century.

38. Renaissance: Renaissance ("rebirth") is the name commonly applied to the period of European history following the Middle Ages; it is usually said to have begun in Italy in the late fourteenth century and to have continued, both in Italy and other countries of western Europe, through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In this period the European arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, and literature reached an eminence not exceeded in any age. The development came late to England in the sixteenth century, and did not have its flowering until the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods; sometimes, in fact, John Milton (1608-74) is described as the last great Renaissance poet.

39. Rhyme: In English versification, standard rhyme consists of the repetition, in the rhyming words, of the last stressed vowel and of all the speech sounds following that vowel: láte-fáte; fóllow-hóllow.

End rhymes, by far the most frequent type, occur at the end of a verse-line. **Internal rhymes** occur within a verse-line, as in the Victorian poet Algernon Swinburne's

Sister, my sister, O *fleet sweet* swallow.

A stanza from Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" illustrates the patterned use both of internal rhymes (within lines 1 and 3) and of an end rhyme (lines 2 and 4):

In mist or *cloud,* on mast or *shroud,*
It perched for vespers *nine-,*
Whiles all the *night,* through fog-smoke *white,*
Glimmered the white *moon-shine.*

40. Setting: The overall setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which its action occurs; the setting of a single episode or scene within such a work is the particular physical location in which it takes place. The overall setting of Macbeth, for is medieval Scotland, and the setting for the particular scene in which Macbeth comes upon the witches is a blasted heath. When applied to a theatrical production, "setting" is synonymous with décor, which is a French term *denoting* both the scenery and the properties, or movable pieces of furniture, on the stage. The French *mise* *en scène* ("placing on stage") is sometimes used in English synonymously with "setting"; it is more useful, however, to apply the term more broadly, as thè French do, to signify a director's overall conception, staging, and directing of a theatrical performance.

41. Seven Deadly Sins: In medieval and later Christian theology these sins were usually identified as Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, Anger, and Sloth. They were called "deadly" because they were considered to put the soul of anyone manifesting them in peril of eternal perdition; such sins could be expiated only by absolute penitence. Among them, Pride was often considered primary, since it was believed to have motivated the original fall of Satan in heaven. Sloth was accounted a deadly sin because it signified not simply laziness, but a torpid and despondent spiritual condition that threatened to make a person despair of any chance of achieving divine Grace. Alternative names for sloth were accidie, "dejection," and "spiritual dryness"; it was a condition close to that which present-day psychiatrists diagnose as acute depression.

The seven deadly sins were balanced by the *seven cardinal virtues*. Three of these, called the "theological virtues" because they were stressed in the New Testament, were *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity*. "And now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three." The other four, the "natural virtues," were derived from the moral philosophy of the ancient Greeks: justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude.

42. Soliloquy: Soliloquy is the act of talking to oneself, whether silently or aloud. In drama it denotes the convention by which a character, alone on the stage, utters his or her thoughts aloud. Playwrights have used this device as a convenient way to convey information about a character's motives and state of mind, or for purposes of exposition, and sometimes in order to guide the judgments and responses of the audience. Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus (first performed in 1594) opens with a long expository soliloquy, and concludes with another which expresses Faustus' frantic mental and emotional condition during his belated attempts to escape damnation. The best-known of all dramatic soliloquies is Hamlet's speech which begins "To be or not to be."

43. Sonnet: A **lyric** poem consisting of a single stanza of fourteen iambic pentameter lines linked by an intricate rhyme scheme. There are two major patterns of rhyme in sonnets written in the English language:

(1) The Italian or Petrarchan sonnet (named after the fourteenth-century Italian poet Petrarch) falls into two main parts: an octave (eight lines) rhyming abbaabba followed by a sestet (six lines) rhyming cdecde or some variant, such as cdccdc. Petrarch's sonnets were first imitated in England, both in their stanza form and their subject—the hopes and pains of an adoring male lover—by Sir Thomas Wyatt in the early sixteenth century. The Petrarchan form was later used, and for a variety of subjects, by Milton, Wordsworth, Christina Rossetti, D. G. Rossetti, and other sonneteers, who sometimes made it technically easier in English (which

does not have as many rhyming possibilities as Italian) by in-troducing a new pair of rhymes in the second four lines of the octave.

(2) The Earl of Surrey and other English experimenters in the sixteenth century also developed a stanza form called the English sonnet, or else the Shakespearean sonnet, after its greatest practitioner. This sonnet falls into three quatrains and a concluding couplet: abab cdcd efef gg. There was one notable variant, the Spenserian sonnet, in which Spenser linked each quatrain to the next by a continuing rhyme: abab bebe cdcd ee.

44. Stanza: A **stanza** (Italian for "stopping place") is a grouping of the verse-lines in a poem, often set off by a space in the printed text. Usually the stanzas of a given poem are marked by a recurrent pattern of rhyme and are also uniform in the number and lengths of the component lines. Some unrhymed poems, however, are divided into stanzaic units (for example, William Collins' "Ode to Evening," 1747), and some rhymed poems are composed of stanzas that vary in their component lines.

Of the great diversity of English stanza forms, many have no special names and must be described by specifying the number of lines, the type and number of metric feet in each line, and the pattern of the rhyme. Certain stanzas, however, occur so often that they have been given the convenience of a name. Some literary scholars apply the term "stanza" only to divisions of four or more lines. This entry, however, follows a widespread application of the term also to divisions of two and three lines.

A **couplet** is a pair of rhymed lines that are equal in length. The octosyllabic couplet has lines of eight syllables, usually consisting of four iambic feet.

Terza rima is composed of tercets which are interlinked, in that each is joined to the one following by a common rhyme: aba, beb, ede, and so on.

The **quatrain**, or four-line stanza, is the most common in English versification, and is employed with various meters and rhyme schemes.

The **heroic quatrain**, is stanza with iambic pentameter with abab rhyming.

Ottava rima, as the Italian name indicates, has eight lines; it rhymes abababcc.

Spenserian stanza is a still longer form devised by Edmund Spenser for *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96)—nine lines, in which the first eight lines are iambic pentameter and the last iambic hexameter (an Alexandrine), rhyming ababbcbcc.

- **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-1**

CHOOSE THE CORRECT OPTION FROM GIVEN BELOW.

1) Act is introduced by ___________________________
   a) Elizabethan dramatist
   b) Shakespeare
   c) Milton
2) The initial version of a ballad was composed by a ------------------ author
   a) Single

b) double
c) triple

3) --------------------defined biography as "the history of particular men's lives.
a) John Dryden
b) Milton
c) Wordsworth

4) The term postmodernism is often applied to the literature and art after ---------------------
a) World War I
b) World War II
c) None of the above

5) A long lyric poem that is serious in subject and treatment, elevated in style, and elaborate in its stanzaic structure., is known as -------
a) Ode
b) Novel
c) Short story

- **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-2**

Explain in detail: What is a stanza? Explain different types of stanza?

17.4 LETS US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt;

- A few selected literary terms, along with their detail meaning.
- About association of the terms discussed in this unit.

17.3 KEY WORDS

Division: the action of separating something into parts or the process of being separated.

Protagonist: he leading character or one of the major characters in a play, film, novel, etc.

Tragedy: an event causing great suffering, destruction, and distress, such as a serious accident, crime, or natural catastrophe.

Transmitted: passed on from one person or place to another.

Ancient: belonging to the very distant past and no longer in existence.

17.5 SUGGESTED READING

1. Abrams, Meyer Howard, and Geoffrey Harpham. *A glossary of Literary Terms*. Cengage Learning, 2011.
2. Baldick, Chris. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford University Press, 1996.
3. Cuddon, John Anthony. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. John Wiley & Sons, 2012.
4. Childs, Peter, and Roger Fowler. *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Routledge, 2006.

17.6 WEB-RESOURCES

1. https://mthoyibi.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/a-glossary-of-literary-terms-7th-ed_m-h-abrams-1999.pdf
2. https://www.uv.es/fores/The_Routledge_Dictionary_of_Literary_Terms.pdf
3. http://armytage.net/pdsdata/%5BChris_Baldick%5D_The_Concise_Oxford_Dictionary_of_L(BookFi.org).pdf

Answer

1-A, 2-A, 3-A, 4-B, 5-A