

UNIT 6 ANALYSING TEXTS-III

Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
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6.0 OBJECTIVES

In the previous Unit, we have analysed several passages, focusing sometimes on the context of occurrence, and sometimes on the linguistic aspects. Now, we will look at some instances of poetry, sometimes just individual lines, sometimes, short poems. We have also given you practice with some passages.

Let us work through some questions on the extract given below:

Extract/ Poem 1

The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Burned on the water: the poop was beaten gold;
Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
The winds were lovesick with them...

(*Antony & Cleopatra*, II. ii, 196-97)

1. Which is the dominant consonant in the lines 'The barge...on the water'?

Which is the dominant consonant in the lines 'the poop... purple the sails'?

In the first case, the dominant consonant is /b/, while /n/ is the second most important. In the second case, /p/ is the dominant consonant, with /l/ as the second most important. Notice that /b/ is the voiced counterpart of /p/, both being bilabial plosives, and thus, they are very similar in sound. Notice also that /n/ and /l/ are both continuants.

2. What is the effect of these sounds on the meaning to be conveyed?

/b/ being voiced, is much harder in quality than /p/ (voiceless) which is softer. The barge comes out, as it should, as much heavier and more solid (because of the voiced sound) than the poop and the sails (because of the voiceless sound). However, the two are integrally related, because of the similarity in kind of consonant. The continuants provide the liquid nature of the sounds. The first part appears to glisten and shine, and the second to glide and flow.

3. What information do the dominant vowels/ diphthongs provide?

The vowels/ diphthongs used here are mainly front sounds, or central sounds, which are similar in that they are also unrounded. There are only three back vowels/ diphthongs (rounded). The rounded sounds stand out, against a strong background of vowels produced with spread lips. Strength is being suggested by the front and central sounds, and the glory of the boat by the back sounds.

4. What are these lines about?

The surface meaning is the description of a boat. The deeper meaning is that the boat and its various parts are a means of indirectly describing the occupant of the boat, namely Cleopatra. So Cleopatra is seen to be an exotic creature, full of intensity and passion. She is also delicately and lyrically feminine. All this is being suggested by the vowels and consonants used.

Notice also that all the four elements go into her composition – earth (matter, the boat); water; air (*the winds*); fire (*burned*). She is thus seen as the complete woman, a microcosm of the universe.

Now let us look at another extract:

Extract/ Poem 2

Viciousness in the kitchen!

The potatoes hiss.

It is all Hollywood, windowless. (Sylvia Plath: from 'Lesbos')

1. What is the dominant consonant here? What effect does it create?

The /s/ or /ʃ/ sound, which creates the effect of the hissing of a snake.

2. Which are more prominent - the back vowels or the front vowels (including the central vowels)?

The front vowels. There are only 3 rounded sounds: (potatOEs , HollywOOD; windOWless). The front vowels create a sense of the sharp tone, the harsh, almost claustrophobic effect of the kitchen.

3. What is the meaning of the passage?

On the surface, it is about the kitchen and what is cooking. But really it is about something much deeper.

4. Who is in the kitchen?

A woman, of course. Who else?

5. Is she alone?

Yes.

6. What is her age?

Youngish.

7. What is the size of the room?

Kitchens are known to be the smallest and least attractive of the rooms in an average home. And yet, the woman is expected to spend a great deal of her day there.

8. How do we know all this – it is not mentioned.

The lines seem to suggest this.

9. So, what is the real meaning?

The woman in the kitchen, who is cooking the most ordinary of vegetables, the potato, is so tired of the paralysingly humdrum nature of her life, that like the steam escaping from the potatoes on the boil, she is exploding with frustration. The room becomes even smaller and more airless than it is, because of the steam and her overflowing frustration.

10. The room is also compared with Hollywood. Why?

Hollywood is the home of illusions, where the unreal is made to pass as the real. Marriage, which seems the be-all and end-all of a young girl's existence is seen as a hoax, which promises all that is attractive – love, passion, freedom, but ends up as quite the opposite, because in fact, marriage seems to imprison the woman in the home, and particularly in the kitchen.

The lines are a blighting commentary on the life of women. It is an intensely feminist statement.

Now let us now look at a short poem.

Extract/ Poem 3

Sally in March

In the lost gardens my little daughter
Taps pond-ice with her spade.
Round her long snow-lawns turn to water
Where flocks of exiled sea-gulls wade.

In the great house sun touches dust;
Huge cupboards stir from winter sleep.
The spade breaks silence. Over the pond's crust
Peninsulas of water creep.

(Brian Cox - *Collected Poems*)

1. Analyse the consonants in the first stanza.

/n/	:	voiced alveolar nasal
/l/	:	voiced lateral approximant (other terms might also be used)
/s/	:	voiceless alveolar fricative
/t/	:	voiceless alveolar plosive
/g/	:	voiced velar plosive
/d/	:	voiced alveolar plosive
/z/	:	voiced alveolar fricative
/m/	:	voiced labial nasal
/p/	:	voiceless labial plosive
/w/	:	rounded semi-vowel (in function a consonant)
/h/	:	voiceless glottal fricative
/r/	:	voiceless post-alveolar continuant/ approximant (other terms might be used as well)

2. Which consonantal sounds predominate in this poem? What is their effect on the poem?

There is a marked use of plosives in the poem, which gives it its earthy quality. The mystery and wonder is provided by the /s/ and /z/ sounds, and the fluidity of the movement by the /n/ and /l/ sounds. The consonant sounds in the poem are limited: The same sounds occur again and again. This does not create a sense of being closed in. On the contrary, there is a sense of

In the first stanza, voiced plosives seem to predominate, and in the second, voiceless plosives. The decisiveness of the action of the spade on the pond-ice is brought out by the voiced plosives. The voiceless plosives which seem to be slightly more frequent than voiced plosives in Stanza 2, bring in a sense of softness and mystery. This is reinforced by the sibilants which seem to pervade the poem. The laterals, nasals and /r/ make for the liquid movement of the whole.

3. Analyse the vowels in the second stanza.

front vowels: /i/ (WINter); /i:/ (sleep); /e/ (pen); /i/ (in); /a/ (peninsulAS); /i:/ (creep)

central vowels: /ʌ/ (cup); /ɜ:/ stir; /ə/ (winTER); /ə/ (the); /ə/ (silENCE); /ə/ (ovER); /ʌ/ (crust); /ə/ (of); /ə/ (waTER)

back vowels: /ɔ:/ (huge); /ɔ:/ (boards); /ə/ (from); /ə/ (ovER); /ɒ/ (pond's); /ɔ:/ (peninSulas); /ɔ:/ (WATER)

ii) front-oriented diphthongs :
/ei/ (spade); /ei/ (breaks); /ai/ (SILence)

back-oriented diphthongs: none
centre-oriented diphthongs: none

4. Which type of vowels and diphthongs predominate in the WHOLE poem? What is their effect on the poem?

/æ/ (taps)
/ɒ/ (lost, pond, long, flocks, pond)
/ɔ:/ (DAUGHter, lawns, water, water)
/ei/ (spade, wade, great, spade)
/ʌ/ (gulls, sun, dust, CUPboards, crust)
/i:/ (sleep, sea, creep)
/ai/ (ice, SILence, exILED)

There seems to be an even number of prominent front, back and central vowels/diphthongs, creating a sense of well-regulated harmony. The front sounds have a certain sharpness (and sometimes length), the back sounds a roundedness, the central sounds neutrality and sometimes length. The front vowels/diphthongs give rise to a sharp distinctness in the action and the musical flow (e.g. *taps, spade, exiled, wade, spade breaks silence*). The back vowels give rise to the rounded contours of 'pond', 'snow-lawns', 'peninsulas of water'.

5. What sort of phonological parallelism do you notice in the poem? What is its effect?

There is a great deal of alliteration and assonance in the poem. This makes for the limpid grace and musical flow of the poem. The alliteration/ assonance does not get out of control and begin to create music for its own sake. It is used only in order to express the meaning and feeling of the poem, which is the wonder and mystery of the world in springtime, located in a child's perceptions; huge spaces, emptiness, exile, now showing signs of change.

6. Is there any action in the poem? What sort of action do you notice?

Human action: e.g. The child's tapping the pond-ice

Non-human action: e.g. The snow-lawns turn into water

The exiled sea-gulls wade

The sun touches dust

The cupboards stir from winter sleep

The spade breaks silence

Peninsulas of water creep

The non-human action is partly factual and partly figurative (personification) as in 'cupboards stir' 'The spade breaks silence', and the figurative aspect is the child's perceptions being concretised. The human action is simple and matter of fact, while the non-human action evokes wonder in the child, and it is the child's perceptions that are being expressed. The poem is concerned with capturing the wonder and mystery of a child's awakening perceptions in springtime. She can act, decisively, but in a small way. Much more momentous action is taking place all around her. The vivid verbs (*wade, touches, stir, breaks, creep*) convey the sense of languid action, of an awakening from sleep. The dynamic verb reflecting the child's action (*taps*) is the only one which is conscious and willed. The rest reflect the natural processes of the forces of life.

Now, we turn again to prose passages. As you have had plenty of practice in handling these already, analyse the following, using the questions given below.

Passage 1

As everyone knows, the movie business isn't what it used to be. For many of us who used to work at the studios, the pleasant, oversized cheques that came every Thursday have stopped. The blow fell softly mainly because when the crisis developed we couldn't believe, or didn't want to believe that it was upon us. Some of us went back to the kind of work we had done before we were brought out to Hollywood. Others, like a certain group of people I had come to know, and saw almost every week, simply stayed on, hanging.

1. Analyse the clause structure of the passage, following the lines of previous analyses. What is the impact of clause structure on the effect of the passage?
2. Comment on the stylistic features used.

The answers are given later.

Now we turn to a brief extract from *The Tempest*. Answer the questions given below. By now, you should be in a position to answer them yourself. However, the answers are given later, in any case, for you check your responses.

Extract/ Poem 4

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Rounded with a sleep.

(from *The Tempest*: Act IV, Sc. I)

1. List the consonants occurring in the extract, stating the voicing, the place and manner of articulation.
2. Which type of consonants occur most frequently? What effect do these consonants have?
3. Which type of vowels/ diphthongs occur in the extract? List them in the categories: Front vowels/ front-oriented diphthongs; Central vowels/ centre-oriented diphthongs; and back vowels and back-oriented diphthongs.
4. Which type of vowels occur most frequently? What effect do they have?
5. Comment on the striking phonological features of the extract, and give examples of these features.

Answers to questions on Extract/ Poem 4

1. List the consonants occurring in the extract, stating the voicing, the place and manner of articulation.

/ð/ voiced interdental fricative
 /z/ voiced alveolar fricative
 /k/ voiceless velar plosive
 /t/ voiceless alveolar plosive
 /f/ voiceless labial fricative
 /l/ voiced post-alveolar palatal
 /d/ voiced alveolar plosive
 /w/ semi-vowel
 /s/ voiceless alveolar fricative
 /p/ voiceless bilabial plosive
 /r/ voiced post-alveolar fricative
 /n/ voiced alveolar nasal
 /m/ voiced bilabial nasal
 /b/ voiced bilabial plosive
 /v/ voiced labial fricative
 /ç/ voiceless interdental fricative
 /g/ voiced velar plosive
 /d / voiced alveolar plosive

2. Which type of consonants occur most frequently? What effect do these consonants have?

Voiceless plosives and fricatives predominate. There is a sprinkling of voiced plosives and fricatives. The voiceless sounds create the atmosphere of insubstantiality, of a fairy world, and this is the primary effect, while the voiced sounds bring in the element of hard reality which is being abandoned and left behind.

3. Which type of vowels/ diphthongs occur in the extract? List them in the categories: Front vowels/ front-oriented diphthongs; Central vowels/ centre-oriented diphthongs; and back vowels and back-oriented diphthongs.

Front vowels/ diphthongs: /e/, /ei/, /i/, /æ/, /ai/, /i:/

Central vowels/ diphthongs: /ə/, /ʌ/ /eə/

Back vowels/ diphthongs: /au/, /ou/ /ɔ:/

4. Which type of vowels occur most frequently? What effect do they have?

Front vowels/ diphthongs are much more frequent than back or central, though back vowels occur in some of the important words, e.g. 'foretold',

'cloud' 'towers' 'gorgeous' 'solemn' 'globe' 'not'. The back vowels create the impression of roundedness, of grandeur, of glory which has been conjured up by the magic of the performance. The front vowels present what the magician started with and is now being left with - bleak and thin as it is.

5. Comment on the striking phonological and other stylistic features of the extract, and give examples of these features.

a. Phonological features: Alliteration and vowel harmony

i) Alliteration

There is a fair amount of alliteration in the extract, which make for the easy flow and liquidity of the movement of lines. The lightness of the lines strengthens the notion that a magician by the wave of a hand can create an illusion and then make it fade.

e.g. cloud-capp'd; great globe; solemn temples (the /m/ sound)

ii) Foregrounding of rounded consonants

By and large, there are front and central vowels, and front and central-oriented diphthongs. These provide the background, the dissolving of the illusion. Foregrounded are the glorious things which dissolve, and each of these, 'the cloud-capp'd towers'; 'the gorgeous palaces'; 'the solemn temples'; 'the great globe itself' has at least one rounded (back) vowel/ back-oriented diphthong. The roundedness of the sounds stands out against the background of the sounds produced with spread lips (front sounds) and provides a sense of the glory of these things which are doomed to fade.

b. Parallelisms

e.g. These our actors As I foretold you
 melted into air into thin air
 the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
 the solemn temples, the great globe itself, all which it inherit

c. Pauses:

A large number of pauses occur, separating a list of objects. Because of the parallelisms and pauses, these objects are made to appear similar, or at least as those which fall into the same category, namely the category of the glorious things of this world. Individual objects like 'the cloud-capp'd towers' are made to seem as important as the larger whole which contains these, that is, 'the great globe itself'.

Answers to Questions on Passage 1

3. Analyse the clause of the passage, following the lines of previous analyses. What is the impact of clause structure on the effect of the passage?

[[As everyone knows], the movie business isn't [what it used to be]].
 MCI ACI NCI

[For many of us [who used to work at the studios],
 MCI RCI

the pleasant, oversized cheques [that came every Thursday]
 RCI

have stopped.] [The blow fell softly], [mainly because
 MCI MCI

[when the crisis developed] we couldn't believe] or [didn't want [to believe]
 ACI MCI NCI

[that it was upon us]. [Some of us went back to the kind of work [we had
 NCI MCI RCI
 done [before we were brought out to Hollywood.]]] [Others, like a certain
 ACI (Passive) MCI
 group of people <[I had come [to know,]> and <[saw almost every week,]>
 RCI NCl coordinate to RCI
 simply stayed on, [hanging.]
 ACling

Main Clauses: 7

Subordinate Clauses: 19

ACI: 3; ACling : 1; NCI: 2; NCl: 2; RCI: 5

Adverbial clauses, Noun Clauses and then, Relative clauses occur most frequently. The Adverbial (time) and Relative clauses make it descriptive, while the Noun clauses make us consider the reason why the over-sized cheques did not come in any more. The fact that there are 5 non-finite clauses adds to the abstraction and the stativeness of the passage. There is no movement or action: there is merely a discussion of the reason why such a state of affairs came into being.

2. Comment on the stylistic features used.

Parallelisms: The passage becomes interesting because of the parallelisms, which add rhythm to the lines e.g.

- i. 'Some of us went back to the kind of work we had done before we were brought out to Hollywood.'
 'Others, like a certain group of people I had come to know, and saw almost every week, simply stayed on'
- ii. 'I had come to know'
 'saw almost every week'

Phrases: Prepositional phrases are the most prominent. Of necessity, they contain Noun phrases. Prepositional Phrases introduce both an adverbial and a nominal element. Thus, there is both description as well as abstraction from a context, analysis and reflection. Within these, notice the long noun phrases, such as
 'the pleasant, oversized cheques that came every Thursday'
 'the kind of work we had done'

Verbs: The verbs are mainly dynamic (approx. 18), but there is an unusually large number of stative verbs as well, almost one per Main Clause (5). The dynamic verbs provide the action, while the stative verbs provide scope for abstraction, reflection. The passage provides both action and reflection. It presents the mind of the writer looking back on a situation.

Foregrounding: Foregrounded are:
 The adjective *oversized*
 The adverb *softly* in 'The blow fell softly'
 The present participle *hanging* in the last sentence.
 The use of very precise and effective words, along with the rhythmic parallelisms make the passage very readable.

Now analyse the following passage:

Passage 2

(S1) They were prancing past this hill, they were streaming to battle. (S2) Going to battle! (S3) He realized that he had not taken in precisely this thin high sensuous

breath of pleasure in close to twenty-four years, not since the first time he had gone into combat, and found to his surprise that the walk towards the fire-fight was one of the more agreeable – if stricken – moments of his life. (S4) Later, in the skirmish itself it was less agreeable – and he had perspired so profusely he had hardly been able to see through his sweat – much later, months later, combat was disagreeable, it engaged to consist of large doses of fatigue, the intestinal agitations of the tropics, endless promenades through mud, and general apathy towards whether one lived or not. (S5) But the first breath had left a feather on his memory, it was in the wind now; he realized that an odd, yes, a zany part of him had been expecting quietly and confidently for years, that before he was done he would lead an army. (S6) The lives of Leon Trotsky and Earnest Hemingway had done nothing to dispel this expectation.
(from *Armies of the Night* --Norman Mailer)

1. Look at S1. Is there any movement or action in this sentence? How does it compare, in this respect, with the rest of the sentences?

There is plenty of action in S1, and none at all in the rest of the sentences.

2. What sort of action is there in S1? Through what part of speech is this action indicated? What can you say about it?

There is physical movement, a very precise description of movement, created by both the use of dynamic verbs and the parallelism of clauses. The parallelism of the clauses

'They were prancing past this hill'

'they were streaming to battle'

enhances the sweep of the movement. One part of the parallelism reinforces the other. It is a highly visual, almost cinematic image, which, so to speak, covers the whole screen.

3. Look at S2. There is no finite verb here. Technically it is not a sentence at all. Who is speaking? The author? The author on behalf of the character? The character himself?

Only one non-finite verb occurs here – a present participle. Notice that the meaning would change substantially if the sentence ran, 'We were going to battle'. It would, for one thing, be impossible to put an exclamation mark after it. The sentence would become merely a mundane statement of activity. The actual formulation conveys a sense of thrill and excitement, which would disappear if reformulated by using 'going' as a finite verb. This verbless sentence, which is grammatically incomplete, and therefore, incorrect, is therefore, perfectly appropriate in its context and conveys a specific meaning.

S2 is able to take us, from the full-scale vision of an army sweeping to battle presented in S1, directly into the protagonist's mind. Moreover, we enter his mind without any previous introduction to him, or through any intervention by the author, in terms of the author reporting the character's speech. So, what we have in S2 is the character's thoughts given to us directly. There is no reported speech or reported thought. It is not even the writer's interpretation of what the character thinks. It is the character's thought processes directly presented. Notice that before we even see the character we enter his mind. (In this extract we don't see the character at all.) The only objective, external activity is in S1. Thus, S2 is the writer's presentation of the character in the process of thinking. This is what is called 'free indirect speech'.

Also, look at S6. It is a comment on the protagonist's realisation that he had expected to lead an army at some stage in his life. The realisation is the protagonist's, but what about the comment? It is a wryly ironical observation. Is it made by the protagonist or the author? Is the author distancing himself from his

character by putting this in? Or is the character capable of seeing himself in perspective and mocking his own ambitions?

I think that the writer has deliberately left this question open. The comment could have been made by the character himself, because he has given plenty of evidence of his ability for self-analysis in S3, S4 and S5. But it could also very easily have been made by the author. This also, therefore, is an instance of free indirect speech, with the character's thought processes and the author's comment being inextricably linked.

4. Analyse the chronology of the passage. Write down what happened when, in its actual order of occurrence.

24 years ago: walk towards the fire-fight: An agreeable, even though stricken moment of his life.

Later in the skirmish: Events appear less agreeable

Months later: combat appeared disagreeable

Now: i. Movement of the army which he is leading (S1)

ii. The thrill of battle once again (S2)

iii. Realisation: a) had been unconsciously expecting to head an army at some stage in his career (S5)

- b) Ironical realisation that he had not learned the lesson that the lives of Trotsky and Hemingway should have taught him. He should have realised from the lives of these two persons that leaders can be discarded and thrown away by an ungrateful people, and that however idealistic you might be and however skilfully you fight or command, you will not save the world. (S6)

5. Which types of phrases are prominent in the passage?

From S3 onwards the noun phrases are long and frequent, e.g.

'this thin high sensuous breath of pleasure'

'the walk towards the fire-fight'

'one of the more agreeable – if stricken – moments of his life'

'large doses of fatigue, the intestinal agitations of the tropics, endless promenades through mud, and general apathy towards whether one lived or not'

'the first breath'

'a feather on his memory'

'an odd, yes, a zany part of him'

'the lives of Leon Trotsky and Ernest Hemingway'.

The passage is light and flowing, in spite of the long noun phrases, and that is partly due to the adverbial constructions, adverbs and prepositional phrases (which have an adverbial function).

There are a large number of these prepositional phrases, e.g.:

'in close to twenty-four years'

'towards the fire-fight'

'in the skirmish itself'

'in the wind now'

6. Analyse the verbs in the passage. Contrast the verbs in S1 with those in the rest of the passage. What do they tell us about the nature of the passage?

The tense of the verbs changes in accordance with the time period referred to. S1 has the past continuous tense (to give a sense of immediacy to a story which is being told basically in the past tense). S3 has the simple past tense (the normal tense for narrating a story), which then moves into the past perfect, when the character is dealing with events further in the past. Notice that 'found to his surprise' implies 'had found'. What he found 'was' 'one of the more agreeable...life'. 'Was' is not in the past perfect, but in the simple

past tense, because it expresses his finding, and as this remains true for him at any time, it is stated in the tense in which he is telling the story. In S4, he seems to take the period of 24 years ago as the base line, and therefore the main verbs are in the simple past. Only the parenthetical utterance is in the past perfect – this is because the change in tense helps to differentiate the parenthesis from the regular story. In S5, the past ‘*had left*’, ‘*had been expecting*’ is distinguished from the present ‘*was*’ because it is different periods of time that are being dealt with.

Notice also that many of the verbs are to do with mental activity, e.g. ‘*realised*’ (S3 and S5), ‘*found*’ ‘*had been expecting*’. The metaphor in S5. ‘*But the first breath... in the wind now*’ is also dealing with mental activity. The verb ‘*to be*’ is very frequently used. This is the linking verb, or the verb of existence, which is also stative.

Non-finite verbs (e.g. ‘*engaged to consist of*’; ‘*to dispel* this expectation’) and modals (‘*would lead* an army’) are also used which emphasise the stativeness of what is being presented.

7. What can you say about the other parts of speech used?

Hardly any adjectives stand out. ‘*Agreeable*’ occurs twice, then ‘*disagreeable*’, but these are very mundane adjectives, becoming even more mundane through the repetition. The ones that stand out are: ‘*sensuous*’, ‘*stricken*’, ‘*intestinal*’, ‘*endless*’ and ‘*zany*’. But the adjectives are not packed in. There is no sense of density of language or a richness of mosaic. The language is clear and sinuous. It is even fast-paced considering that it is dealing with mental action.

If anything, the adverbs are more prominent, but in a quiet way. ‘*precisely*’ ‘*so profusely*’ ‘*quietly and confidently*’

8. S1 was a fairly short sentence, and S2 very short indeed. In contrast, S3 is long and S4 very long. Again S5 is fairly long, while S6 is the only sentence of average length. What can you say about sentence length in the passage?

The sentences in which the character is drawing on his memory of the past are full of dependent clauses and are very long. The other sentences are much shorter. The variation in sentence length, along with other features of the style employed make for a limpidity and flow, which is difficult to believe, given the complexity of sentences 3 and 4. Mailer is, obviously, a master of style.

9. Comment on the imagery in the passage.

There is a very strong visual image in S1 of a whole army sweeping forward to battle. The suggestion is of light-heartedness, self-confidence, and of a large contingent of the army in movement.

Subsequently, in S5 there is an image in the form of a metaphor, of a feather in the wind:

‘*But the first breath had left a feather on his memory, it was in the wind now*’
The first breath of pleasure had made an impression on him, and this impression is now activated.

The metaphor provides a sense of lightness and a touch of poetry to his reminiscences. This enables us to get a varied picture of the man. There is the word ‘*prancing*’ used earlier, and the self-mockery in the last line, and along with the poetry of this line, we get a varied and complex image of the

man. Note that this image of the protagonist is provided without directly describing him at all.

Now read the following passage, and analyse it from the point of view of the similes used, and the effect of the similes.

Passage 3

She wanted to get out of this fixed, leaping, forward-travelling movement, to rise from it as a bird rises with wet, limp feet from the sea, to lift herself as a bird lifts its breast and thrusts its body from the pulse and heave of the sea that bears it forward to an unwilling conclusion, tear herself away like a bird on wings, and in the open space where there is clarity, rise up above the fixed, surcharged motion, separate speck that hangs suspended, moves this way and that, seeing and answering before it sinks again, having chosen or found the direction in which it shall be carried forward.

(from D.H. Lawrence: *The Rainbow*)

1. What is the predominant image in the passage?

Of the bird. Notice that the same image is expanded on, and different aspects of the bird are seen. The woman is not visualised at all, except as a bird.

2. What are the figures of speech used?

The **simile**, mainly. There are 3 uses of this:

'as a bird rises...' 'as a bird lifts its breast...' 'tear herself away like a bird...'

After this, there are no explicit similes, the woman has become the bird. The repeated similes of the woman with the bird, and the final identification of the two, make the bird **symbolic** of the woman.

3. What stylistic features support this symbolisation?

The parallelisms which give rise to rhythm and lyricism:

'to get out of this fixed...movement'

'to rise from it...from the sea'

'to lift herself... of the sea'

'tear herself away...bird on wings'

'rise up ...surcharged motion'

These support the bird image and make us accept the simile so completely that finally the bird is not just being compared to the woman, it becomes a symbol for the woman.

Now read this final passage and answer the questions given below. No answers are provided.

Passage 4

(S1) A scream, the echo of a scream hangs over that Nova Scotian village. (S2) No one hear it; it hangs there for ever, a slight stain in those pure blue skies, skies that travellers compare to those of Switzerland, too dark, too blue, so that they seem to keep on darkening a little more around the horizon – or is it around the rims of the eyes? – the colour of the cloud of bloom on the elm trees, the violet on the fields of oats; something darkening over the woods and waters as well as the sky. (S3) The scream hangs like that, unheard, in memory – in the past, in the present, and those years between. (S4) It was not even loud to begin with, perhaps. (S5) It just came there to live, for ever – not loud, just alive for ever. (S6) Its pitch would be the pitch of my village. (S7) Flick the lightning rod on top of the church steeple with your fingernail and you will hear it.

- a) What do you think the passage is about? Do you think there is a real scream to be heard?
- b) Is there a difference between the surface meaning and the implied meaning? What is the relationship between the surface and the implication?
- c) What is likely to have caused this 'scream'?
- d) Look at the passage carefully. Mark out the types of phrases that seem to occur again and again (such as Noun Phrases, Adverbial Phrases, etc.). Which types are most frequent?
- e) What do you think is the effect of these phrases?
- f) What can you say about the use of colour in the passage? What is the effect of the colours used?
- g) Consider the similes and implicit comparisons in the passage. What is their effect?
- h) There is a great deal of imagery from nature. Why has this been introduced?
- i) What is the necessity of the reference to the Church?
- j) Comment on the verbs used.
- k) Do you notice any parallelisms in the passage? Indicate the instances of parallelism and the type of parallelism used.
- l) What can you say about the length of sentences in the passage?
- m) Analyse the clause structure of the passage. Are there many dependent clauses? Which predominate? What does the clause structure reveal about the nature of the passage?

Now analyse the following extract from a poem. No answers are given to the questions asked.

Extract/ Poem 5

Yes, I know all that. I should be modern.
Marry again. See strippers at the Tease.
Touch Africa. Go to the movies.

Impale a six-inch spider
under a lens. Join the Test-
ban, or become The Outsider.

Or pay to shake my fist
(or whatever-you-call-it) at a psychoanalyst.
And when I burn

I should smile, dry-eyed,
and nurse martinis like the Marginal Man.
But, sorry, I cannot unlearn

conventions of despair.
They have their pride.
I must seek and will find

My particular hell only in my hindu mind.
(from 'Conventions of Despair' – A.K. Ramanujan)

1. What are the striking features of the poem? Analyse it from the point of view of
 - i) Parallelisms. List them and comment on them. Does parallelism of structure lead to parallelism of meaning?
 - ii) Pauses. What is the effect of these on the tone of the extract?

- iii) Vocabulary. Comment on the words used and on the introduction of the concepts, 'The Outsider', 'Marginal Man'.
2. What is the addresser-addressee relationship?
 3. State the central idea of the poem in a few words.
 4. Comment on the vowels and consonants used and their effect on the poem.

I am sure that by now you will be able to work out the answers for yourself. If you go over the previous analyses, and practice this type of analysis on poems and prose extracts, you will soon become proficient at it and be able to get a great deal more out of reading literature.

6.2 LET US SUM UP

You have analysed poems, extracts of plays and passages. It is hoped that you have enjoyed working through these extracts and have got fresh insights into what goes into the making of literature. Stylistics as a tool enables us to get a precise impression of the literary work, through close analysis of the language used. It is hoped that you will continue to apply these insights in your reading of English literature.

6.3 KEY WORDS

- symbolic:** anything that stands for or represents something else beyond it - usually an idea conventionally associated with it.
- lyricism:** a fairly short piece of literature which expresses personal mood, feeling or mediation of a single speaker.

6.4 REFERENCES

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